

<b>Module Title:</b>	<b>Hebrew Biblical Literature and the Pentateuch</b>
<b>Module Code:</b>	<b>506 TPEP</b>
<b>Level:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Credit Rating:</b>	<b>20 Credits</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	<b>Student Learning Time: 200 hours</b>
<b>Teaching Hours:</b>	<b>40 Hours</b>
<b>Academic Responsibility:</b>	<b>Séamus Mulholland OFM PhD</b>

### **Module Aims:**

1. To introduce students to the Bible as a work of literature
2. To identify and examine various genres and types of literature found in the Bible
3. To show how the literature communicates its theological sense
4. To communicate the importance of a knowledge of the Pentateuch and its significance.
5. To re-examine theories of literary construction in the light of contemporary scholarship.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this module students should:

1. Be able to recognise the various genres of biblical literatures.
2. Have an understanding of other literary texts of the Mesopotamian basin.
3. Have gained a knowledge of the various methods and styles of literary construction and interpretation.
4. Identify and elucidate the main themes of the Pentateuch
5. Understand the key theological ideas in Pentateuchal literature

### **Indicative Module Content:**

The module introduces students to the bible as a literary text, albeit a literary text to which it is difficult to assign a type/genre descriptor. The module explores various forms and genres of literature in the bible: myth, poetry, legend, saga, hymn, wisdom, prophecy, history etc. And will also introduce students to other literatures from the Mesopotamian region e.g. The Epic of Gilgamesh, Armana Tablets, Ras Shamra . After identifying the literary genre, the module will then move to apply one or more of the methods of interpretation to designated texts that reflect the genre so that students understand and can apply the tools of criticism to biblical texts. Particular attention is paid to aspects of the Pentateuch as demonstrative of these genres and forms. Texts considered will be Genesis 1.1-10; 2.4ff and the Book of the Exodus [especially Ex.3 and 19] and 2nd millennium BC suzerainty treaties and a treatment of the Code of Hammurabi when dealing with Covenant and Law. Finally, the module moves to consider the significance of the literature as a multiform story at the historical, social,

political and religious level.

### **Learning and Teaching Strategies:**

The basic format of presentation will be four weekly lectures systematically treating the subject matter as described in the Indicative Module Content. Students are given specific weekly reading assignments as well as directed toward extra-curricular reading proposed by the instructor. Research interests are quickly identified and tutorial sessions, depending on individual needs of the students, arranged for clarification and direction, inclusive of suggested extra-curricular reading. Within the classroom context of lectures, active participation of students in terms of questions and, especially, discussion is strongly encouraged as a primary way of developing analytical skills, critical thinking, and clarity of expression.

### **Assessment:**

The module will be assessed by an essay of 2,500 words

### **Indicative Essay Titles**

1. The Creation narrative of Genesis 1-3 is sometimes referred to as 'mythopoetry'. What do you think is meant by this expression and is this an adequate way of describing this text?
2. Compare and contrast the form of the Sinaitic Covenant with the suzerain treaties of the Ancient Near East from the second millennium BC.
3. The Biblical text has literary genres such as legend, saga and heroic epic. In what way can we speak of the 'Abraham legend', the 'Moses saga'; the 'Exodus epic'?
4. The Bible is a collection of literary documents that is the result of human endeavour, and must be spoken about in that way. Whether it is also the revealed word of God is a matter of each student's/person's individual faith. DISCUSS

### **Illustrative Bibliography**

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- Coats, G. W., (2008) *Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable: Narrative Forms in Old Testament Literature* (JSOT supplement) Continuum International Publishing Group, Sheffield

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