

**THEO3213/5950 Biblical Studies: Special Topics I:  
Introduction to Deuterocanonical Literature**

Monday evenings: 14:30 – 17:15

Venue: ELB 403

Lecturer: Prof. Nancy Tan

Office: LKK 324; Letterbox #128

[nancytan@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:nancytan@cuhk.edu.hk)

Course Description

The pre-requisite to this course is a passing grade for THEO1211/5311 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible or THEO5919/RELS5219 Hebrew Bible in Contexts. The Deuterocanonical Literature or sometimes called the Apocrypha are given a secondary status with regards to the Protestant canon. The collection of what makes up this collection called “Deuterocanonical” or “Apocrypha” differs among the various Christian traditions. This course first delineates the history of the Jewish community from the Hellenistic to the Roman era (ca. 330 BCE – 70 CE). Then it will survey and study the composition of each book, in particular, highlighting issues such as Hellenism, identity, wars, apostasy, persecution and martyrdom, diaspora and the female presence/absence; and also how they carry on earlier traditions from the Hebrew Bible and develop them. This course traces the challenges – events and “other” peoples – that the Jewish community face and how they survive religiously, culturally and politically in this period. We will take the approach that each composition is in dialogue with other texts.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge Outcomes

- (1) Describe
  - a. what the list of the Apocrypha and the Protestant Deuterocanonical Literature (DL) constitutes.
  - b. the general background and contents of each book.
  - c. the general history and **highlight** crucial events for the period 330 BCE–70 CE.
- (2) Explain
  - a. the issues of Hellenism, identity, wars, apostasy, persecution and martyrdom, and diaspora as they relate to each book.
  - b. the different perspectives each book presents in relation to the issues mentioned above.
- (3) Carry out the process of tradition-historical research with the help of academic resources: finding a particular tradition found in the DL and trace them from the Hebrew Bible. Observe and explore the nuances that change the respective tradition in the light of historical development.
- (4) Carry out inter-textual studies with the help of academic resources: study two selected texts between one in DL and another passage of the Hebrew Bible and interpret and proffer reasons why the DL authors compose the text alluding to the Hebrew Bible.
- (5) List the theological motives and evaluate and synthesize theories on the perspectives on wars in the DL books in particular.

- (6) Examine the issues facing the diaspora from the books and reconsider how each book is motivated to raise certain issues. Evaluate and synthesize theories of these issues.
- (7) Reflect on the implications of these studies and consider the significance of these books to the Christian communities. What can the Protestant communities learn from the DL? How can you integrate the lessons learned from this course the issues confronting your contexts today?

**Attitude Outcomes:**

- (1) Appreciate the diverse interpretations of scriptures throughout history and their historical and contextual developments.
- (2) Respect for the academic development in this collection of literature as they contribute to the understanding to the rise and development of Judaism and Christianity.
- (3) Develop keen insights to read texts meaningfully and responsibly – for the sake of peace and justice, understanding and acceptance to all humanity and living creatures of God’s creation.

**List of Topics**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Canon	What makes this collection called “Deuterocanonical Literature” (=DL) will be covered. The difference in the Christian traditions with regards to “canon” indicates this process is not a straightforward unanimous process, but a long process of deliberation among the different communities. The final outcomes and their implications of the process will be considered.
History and texts	Significant events that are mentioned and alluded to in 1 and 2 Maccabees will be outlined. In particular, an overall macro chronological timeline from 330 BCE – 70 CE will be presented and issues that arose from the significant events covering this period will be highlighted. It will also include an overview of the recension of each book.
Note: Each book in the DL constitutes a topic in itself. We shall cover the general background, purposes for composition, dating and general contents. In addition, for the lectures on the books, we will attempt to study together the following topics.	
Hellenism	“Hellenism” is first mention in 2 Macc 4:13–14. What it entails and how the different sovereignty in their policies and campaigns signify Hellenization that impacts the Jewish communities deserves critical evaluation.
Apostasy and Persecution	Is the Jewish identity only tied to its religious practices? Can we discern a consistent definition of what constitutes apostasy and not? What is religious persecution? How do the authors present their confrontations? How may we draw boundaries between these concepts as each book portrays these themes?
Wars	How did the different DL authors justify and react to wars?

	Can we classify and quantify which wars justify?
Martyrdom	This topic, sometimes called “noble death” is closely related to the two mentioned above. It is an emerging theology in this period and dealt with from different perspectives by the authors, while some remain silent about it. It is a contending one with regards to its theology during that period and we shall study and appreciate the complex considerations given to this topic in this period.
Life after Death	How is life after death, or the resurrection from the dead are described and understood by the different authors will be studied. Certainly not all Jewish communities in that period accept this as a natural outcome after death – how then can we appreciate the origin and development of the concept as it becomes a core theology in Christianity?
Diaspora	This is an inevitable and huge topic in the deuterocanonical literature. It entails notions on the Jewish identity in foreign lands – how and to what extent practices are acceptable assimilation, or separation for survival, help us to appreciate the authors’ perspectives and their purpose for their mention.
Women and Femininity in DTL	The presence and absence of women, the feminine metaphorization and personification will also be given space for study and observation. How can we speak of the portrayal of women’s space, mobility and voice in the DL?

### Course Components:

The course consists mainly of lectures, interwoven with class discussion, independent reading, and research activities. The time allocation (on average per week) of the learning activities is as follows:

Lecture		Class discussion		Excursion/ Web-based repor		Reading and research		Written assignments	
In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class
2-2.5 hrs	NA	0.5-1 hr	0.2	0 hr	0 hr	0.5 hr	3 hrs	0.5 hr	2 hrs
M		M		NIL		M/O		M	
M: Mandatory activity in the course					O: Optional activity				

### Required Texts:

1. The Protestant Deuterocanonical Books. Read NRSV Apocrypha online: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/apocrypha/nrsa/>
2. Martin Goodman (ed.), *The Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2012). [available as electronic source in cuhk library]
3. Other Required Readings:
  - \*a. John J. Collins, “Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenization in Judea,” in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2005), 22–43. **(By Week Two)**
  - b. Shmeul Shepkaru, “To Die For: The Evolution of Early Jewish Martyrdom,” in Margo Kitts (ed.), *Martyrdom, Self-Sacrifice, and Self-Immolation:*

*Religious Perspectives on Suicide* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2018). DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190656485.003.0002.

c. Judith Lang, “The Lord Who Crushes Wars: A Study on Judith 9:7; 16:2 and Exodus 15:3,” in Géza Xeravits, *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith* (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies, vol. 14; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 179–87.

d. C.D. Elledge, “Diversity,” in *Resurrection of the Dead in Early Judaism, 200 BCE-CE 200* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2017). DOI:10.1093/oso/9780199640416.003.0002.

**The above 4 articles will help you with your first essay. You must complete the above before 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. The three below will help you with the second essay and must be completed before 19<sup>th</sup> Nov.**

e. Tessa Rajak, “The Jewish Diaspora in Graeco-Roman Antiquity,” *Interpretation* 72.2 (2018): 142–62.

f. John J. Collins, “Wisdom and Immortality” in *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 178–95.

g. Tan, N.N.H., “Disappearing ‘Daughters’ in the Tradition of David (Sir. 47:6),” in Mischel Caspi and John Greene (eds.), *Portraits of a King Favored by God: David the King: God’s Poet, Warrior, and Statesman* (Proceedings of the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar in Biblical Characters in Three Traditions, 2010; New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2012), 255–65. (an example on reception history tracing a tradition from the HB and later texts).

### Assessment Scheme

Task Nature	Purpose	Learning Outcomes
<p>A. Reading based assignments:  <b>1. 20% Reports</b>            There will be group and class discussions during lecture periods. You are to upload your contributions to Blackboard.  <b>Submission dates: the day after the lecture.</b>  <b>There is no need to submit these reports to Veriguide.</b></p>	<p>1. To ensure students have completed and keep up with their required readings before lecture.            2. To help students engage proactively in the group/class discussions.            3. To stimulate students to think deeply on the issues raised in lectures.            4. To provide a foundation and basis for further self-directed studies.</p>	<p>1. Students pick up important points in their readings.            2. Students engage in active dialogue with their peers on the related contents.            3. Students are stimulated to think on different perspectives and platform to appreciate the text and issues.</p>
<p>As mentioned above, depending on the nature of the discussions in class, if it is a group discussion, the whole group will submit their work and receive the same grade for that particular week for the main contents. Each student, however, should submit their own reflection in at least 2 sentences. As for individual contribution, grades will be allotted according to participation. Grading rubric: 30% Relevance – of the ideas and points raised in relation to the topics. 30% citation of the reading materials and accuracy of materials. 30% novelty of ideas. 10% - reflection of the ideas/points mentioned in class.</p>		
B. Research-based	1. To let students	1. Study the purposes of the

<p>Assignments:  <b>1. 40% An Essay on Wars</b>  Students compose an essay about wars according to the instructions stated below.  <b>Final submission date: 19 Oct 2019</b>  <b>You must submit your essay to Veriguide.</b></p>	<p>showcase their grasp of the historical and literary contexts of a particular passage about wars in the DL and its counterpart/s in the other books of DL or the Hebrew Bible.  2. To give space for students to reflect on the purposes of the DL authors as they portray wars.  3. To help students seriously consider the issues related to wars – especially in religious writings.</p>	<p>compositions about wars in the context of religions.  2. Observe the nuances different authors portray in the light of their respective eras as well as perspectives.  3. Consider the voices of silence that the text marginalizes or omits.  4. Apply the steps for doing tradition-historical approach and also inter-textual studies.  5. Select relevant and appropriate resources for the essay.</p>
<p>Write an essay within the range of 2,700-3000 words including footnotes on an essay about wars. You may choose to do the following:  Select a passage about wars from one of the books in the DL and find another passage or passages from the Hebrew Bible that you think the author of the DL book attempt to follow. Compare how these passages were composed and their respective contexts. Propose reasons why you think the DL author chose that HB passage. What are the significance? Consider these reasons in the light of the historical events.  Example 1: scholars may observe that some of the wars portrayed in 1 Maccabees are following the portrayal of David’s wars. Select one of the wars in 1 Maccabees and compare them to one of David’s in the Hebrew Bible (maybe in the books of Samuel or 1 Chronicles?)  Example 2: you may choose to pursue an issue concerning wars, such as the justification of war in a particular passage or book. Or, you may also develop from this passage or book to compare the results from that of another book.  * You need to remember, this is a biblical interpretation course and so the bulk of your work must still return to the interpretation of the passages and deal with the text’s historical contexts.  At the end of the essay, you need to devote at least 250 words, but not more than 400 words on your reflection of the outcome. Consider how the outcome of what you have derived can speak to your current context.</p> <p>Note: If you choose to make a comparison, please be aware that the grade is not about how many comparisons can be made, rather, how you draw these comparisons to highlight the significance of the composition for the DL’s text (e.g., you may highlight on the reasons how the different authors emphasize or de-emphasize different aspects); and how you support your argument and articulate your ideas.  Please refer to Blackboard for details of the grading rubric.  8<sup>th</sup> Oct is scheduled for all credit taking students to give a brief report on what they intend to write. Students are expected to have done preliminary research before the class. It means, students have read through the respective DL book and the related chapter in Goodman, at least one of the commentaries, and also at least 2 related essays or articles found through CUHK Lib search. Failure to do so will result in a proportional penalization of the grade for this component.</p>		

<p><b>2. 40% An Essay on Diaspora</b>  Students compose an essay about the Jewish Diaspora according to the instructions stated below.  <b>Final submission date: 6 Dec 2019</b>  <b>You must submit your essay to Veriguide.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To let students showcase their grasp of the historical and literary contexts of a particular passage about the diaspora in the DL and its counterpart/s in the other books of DL or the Hebrew Bible.</li> <li>2. To give space for students to reflect on the purposes of the DL authors as they portray the different factors the diaspora confront.</li> <li>3. To help students seriously consider the issues related to diaspora – especially in terms of how different authors prioritize which issue is most pressing.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Study the purposes of the compositions in view of the diasporic communities and their contexts.</li> <li>2. Learn to pick out the issues pertinent to the author.</li> <li>3. Consider the voices of silence that the text marginalizes or omits.</li> <li>4. Apply the steps for doing tradition-historical approach and also inter-textual studies.</li> <li>5. Select relevant and appropriate resources for the essay.</li> </ol>
<p>Write an essay within the range of 2,700-3,000 words including footnotes on an essay on the subject diaspora. It may be about one of the issues, such as a treatment on the Jewish identity in a particular book or compare it with another book to highlight how the authors choose to emphasize the different perspectives, and consider the purposes. One example is, you may write on how the Jews are expected to behave or present themselves when they encounter non-Jews in particular situations. Or, you may compare what might constitute apostasy – a betrayal to Jewishness – between 2 DL books. Or, the significance of the Additions – that may highlight what is Jewishness, if without as in the versions found in the HB.</p> <p>At the end of the essay, you need to devote at least 250 words, but not more than 400 words on your reflection of the outcome. Consider how the outcome of what you have derived can speak to your current context.</p> <p>Note: If you choose to make a comparison, please be aware that the grade is not about how many comparisons can be made, rather, how you draw these comparisons to highlight the significance of the composition for the DL’s text (e.g., you may highlight on the reasons how the different authors emphasize or de-emphasize different aspects); and how you support your argument and articulate your ideas.  Please refer to Blackboard for details of the grading rubric.  19<sup>th</sup> Nov is scheduled for all credit taking students to give a brief report on what they intend to write. Students are expected to have done preliminary research before the class. It means, students have read through the respective DL book and the related chapter in Goodman, at least one of the commentaries, and also at least 2 related essays or articles found through CUHK Lib search. Failure to do so will result in a proportional penalization of the grade for this component.</p>		

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. In the case of group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible should there be any plagiarized contents in the group project, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed directly or indirectly to the plagiarized contents.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide. The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submission. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

### Course Schedule

**Note:** You are expected to complete the required readings found in NRSV, on each book of the DL, and their introduction in Goodman before each lecture as arranged below. Note that I am not following the sequence according to these books.

<b>Week One</b> 03 Sep	Introduction to DTL; Course Syllabus Significance of the topics in relation to DL Canon and DL
<b>Week Two</b> 10 Sep	History and Texts (ca 330 – 70 CE) 1 Maccabees (part One)
<b>Week Three</b> 17 Sep	1 Maccabees (part Two) and 2 Maccabees
<b>Week Four</b> 24 Sep	The Book of Judith
<b>Week Five</b> 01 Oct	Public Holiday
<b>Week Six</b> 08 Oct	Discussion on Students' proposal for Assignment 2A. Wisdom of Ben Sira (part One)
<b>Week Seven</b> 15 Oct	Wisdom of Ben Sira (part Two)
<b>Week Eight</b> 22 Oct	Wisdom of Solomon

<b>Week Nine</b> 29 Oct	Tobit
<b>Week Ten</b> 05 Nov	Additions to Esther and Additions to Daniel
<b>Week Eleven</b> 12 Nov	Baruch and Letter of Jeremiah
<b>Week Twelve</b> 19 Nov	Discussion on Students' proposal for Assignment 2B. 1 Esdras
<b>Week Thirteen</b> 26 Nov	Conclusion