

The Bible as Historical Literature

Reading Judges, Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel

Course #	19FBH
Format:	Seminar
Moderator(s):	Gerald Goldman
Date and Time:	Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 8 weeks, starting September 24
Location:	UMass University without Walls, Hadley
Maximum number of participants:	15
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to 2

Purpose: Participants will experience a thousand years of Jewish history from the origins of the nation in Judges, to their return from exile in Ezra and Nehemiah, to a profound longing in Daniel for the End of Days, a century before the dawn of Christianity.

Description: There are four books in the Hebrew Bible which are rarely read yet filled with dreams, intrigue and surprises. Judges tells the story of the earliest settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan, an amalgam of tribes led by warlords. Ezra and Nehemiah tell of a period seven hundred years later, when the Persian king sends an emissary to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and capitol. His colleague reads to the people from a Torah scroll they appear not to have seen before, translates it into Aramaic from the Hebrew they no longer speak, and expounds on its teachings, marking the beginning of a People of the Book led by neither prophets or kings but by rabbis. And still another three hundred years later, in the book of Daniel, a visionary reveals encoded dreams of the approaching End of Time.

Role of participants: Each participant will choose several chapters from one of the four books and lead a discussion on those chapters.

Resources: Tanakh: *The Holy Scriptures – The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. (Inexpensive used hardcover copies are available.)

About the Moderator: I am a retired rabbi who has taught this material for many years.