

Judaism Exam  
Religions of Western Antiquity  
Department of Religion  
Florida State University

The Judaism Exam is designed to give the student a basic understanding of a wide range of texts and historical events from the Hellenistic period to rabbinic literature. The exam will also provide more specialized knowledge of a few topics determined by the student and his/her advisor. The exam consists of two main components—a general bibliography and a special topics bibliography. The general bibliography includes both primary sources and secondary literature.

### **1. Special Topics**

The student will choose a special topic in consultation with his/her advisor. It can be a theme, historical period or text. This will be an opportunity to explore potential dissertation topics. You will develop a bibliography of 8-10 books and articles on your special topic (the total amount of reading should be, at a minimum, approximately the total of 4 medium length books). The bibliography must be approved, and may be modified by, the student's advisor. The student **MUST** choose a special topic at the beginning of his/her preparation for this exam.

### **2. General Bibliography**

**Organizing Themes:** The student is required to be familiar with and formulate opinions about a large amount of primary and secondary material. To assist in this endeavor, the student, in consultation with his/her advisor, will decide upon two broad themes that are prominent in the material covered in the general bibliography. The student, when reading, will give particular attention to these themes. Some examples of themes include: apocalypticism, sectarianism, halakhah, biblical interpretation, angels, life after death, and the Temple. In consultation with his/her advisor, the student may slightly modify the general bibliography in light of these organizing themes selected. For example, if the student chooses "resurrection" as a theme, his/her advisor could replace, from the Dead Sea Scrolls section, the Habakkuk Peshet with 4Q521 or 4Q385 and, from the Secondary Sources section, substitute the reading from Kugel's *In Potiphar's House* with George Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (Harvard, 2006).

#### **2a. Primary Sources**

The student is expected to have a basic knowledge of all the literature listed in this section. The student should learn the general content and main themes of each text, and its date and provenance. In the oral component of the exam the faculty may ask general questions regarding a few items from this list, and you will show that you have some basic (if brief) knowledge of the text. It is expected that you, when reading each selection, read several articles about it in general surveys (e.g., Nickelsburg, Barclay) and encyclopedias (such as *ABD* or the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*).

##### 2a1. Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Literature

- 1, 2, 3, 4 Maccabees
- The Wisdom of Solomon

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- Ben Sira
- 4 Ezra

### 2a2. Pseudepigrapha

- *2 Baruch*
- *1 Enoch*
- *Joseph and Aseneth*
- *Jubilees*
- *Letter of Aristeas*
- *Sibylline Oracles* (3 and 5)
- *Testament of Moses*
- *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs* (read only *T. Joseph* and *T. Levi*)

### 2a3. Other Diaspora Literature

- Philo, *On the Creation of the World* and *Life of Moses* (can be replaced by other writings of Philo, with advisor's permission)
- Josephus, *Antiquities* 1-2, 18-20; *Jewish War* 2, 5-7 (can be replaced by other texts of Josephus, with advisor's permission)

### 2a4. The Dead Sea Scrolls

- The Community Rule (1QS)
- The Damascus Document (CD)
- Habakkuk Peshar (1QpHab)
- The Hodayot
- 4QMMT
- Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400-407)
- The War Scroll (1QM)

### 2a5. Rabbinic Literature

Mishnah (Danby). Read the following tractates:

- Berakhot
- Avot
- Kiddushin

Babylonian Talmud.

- Berakhot 2a-3a. Read Robert Goldenberg, "Talmud," in Holtz, *Back to the Sources* [see General Bibliography], pp. 129-75.

- Berakhot 8. Read Jacob Neusner, *Invitation to the Talmud* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998; orig. pub., 1973), pp. 1-115 (Intro; m. Ber. 8; t. Ber. 5:21-31; y. Ber. 8:1), 167-222 (b. Ber. 51b-52b).
- Selections from Jeffery Rubenstein, *Rabbinic Stories* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002). Read pp. 1-22 (Intro), 67-87, 121-135, 163-185, 215-244.
- Selections from Jeffery Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). Read pp. 21-33 (Intro), 139-175 (analysis of b. Gittin 55b-56b).

#### Midrash.

- Genesis Rabbah 8. Read the translation and exposition of this chapter in Gary G. Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash* (Hoboken, Ktav, 1985) 161-82—also read pp. 1-18.
- Selections from Mekhilta Bahodesh on the Ten Commandments. Read Reuven Hammer, *The Classic Midrash: Tannaitic Commentaries on the Bible* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), pp. 143-66.

### 2b. Secondary Sources

The student is expected to know the main themes and theses of the following books. It is strongly recommended that you look at book reviews to see how they contribute to scholarship. In terms of the surveys of texts and historical periods in this list (e.g., Grabbe, Nickelsburg) you need to have a basic understanding of the material they cover.

1. Barclay, John M.G., *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
2. Cohen, S.J.D., *From the Maccabees to the Mishna* (2d ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2006), 51-110, 184-204 ("Jewish 'Religion': Practices and Beliefs," "The Community and its Institutions," and "Canonization and Its Implications").
3. Collins, John J., *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
4. Idem, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).
5. Idem, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Eerdmans, 2010).
6. Idem, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). Read chs. 1-2 ("Hellenistic Judaism in Recent Scholarship"; "Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenization in Judea"; Prof. Goff has pdfs of these).
7. Fonrobert, C.E. and M.S. Jaffee, *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007). Read S.J.D. Cohen, "The Judaeen Legal Tradition and the Halakhah of the Mishnah," 121-143.
8. Grabbe, Lester L., *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992). Read vol 1.: pp. 204-59, 269-311; vol. 2, pp. 337-66, 399-464, 526-54, 569-75, 584-604
9. Idem, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period* (London: Routledge, 2000), 183-209.
10. Goodman, Martin, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Read Seth Schwartz, "Historiography on the Jews in the 'Talmudic Period'" (pp. 79-114).

11. Gruen, Erich S., *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
12. Holtz, Barry, ed., *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992). Read Barry Holtz, "Midrash" (pp. 177-211).
13. Kraemer, Ross Shepard, *Her Share of the Blessings* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Read pp. 93-127.
14. Kugel, James L., *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretative Life of Biblical Texts* (New York: HarperSan Francisco, 1990) 1-124, 247-70.
15. Moore, George Foot, *Judaism in the First Three Centuries of the Christian Era* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927). Read pp. 2.323-95 (Messianism and Eschatology).
16. Mulder, Martin Jan, ed., *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading & Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004 [orig. pub., 1988]). Read Emanuel Tov, "The Septuagint" (pp. 161-88); Philip S. Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures" (pp. 217-53).
17. Neusner, Jacob, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; New York, 1979). Read pp. xix-11, 45-96, 143-172.
18. Nickelsburg, George W.E., *Jewish Literature between the Bible and Mishnah* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). Skip chapter 6, "Israel in Egypt."
19. Schenck, Kenneth, *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).
20. Stone, Michael E., ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). Read H.W. Attridge, "Historiography"; "Josephus and His Works" (pp. 157-232).
21. VanderKam, J.C., *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 175-217 ("Synthesis: Leaders, Groups, and Institutions").
22. Idem, and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance For Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus and Christianity* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002).