

Scaffolding Assignments

To help students keep on top of their readings I assign two questions about the readings that the students have to respond to in 150 words (each). In *Introduction to Judaism*, I had the students then re-write these responses for their midterm, challenging them to revise and incorporate feedback into their responses.

Reading Responses and Midterm in ‘Introduction to Judaism’

The take home midterm was given to students one week in advance of the due date and gave students an opportunity to revise a previous response.

Reading Response #1

- Compare Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25. Provide at least 3 differences between these two creation narratives.
- Summarize the story of Abraham from his calling (Gen 12) to his death (Gen 25). For an explanation on how to write a summary see: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/paraphrase>

Reading Response #2

1. Moses is the most famous character in the Exodus, but there are many important supporting characters throughout the saga. Pick one of these characters and reflect on how this character is important to the narrative and why that task was assigned to that figure.
2. Read both Exodus 20 and then Deuteronomy 5 again, side by side. How do these two versions of the decalogue differ from one another? Why do you think these differences would occur? How might the people behind these two traditions differ from one another?

Reading Response #3

1. What are some characteristics of the Israelite leaders portrayed in these readings? Provide at least 2 examples.
2. How does Solomon gain wisdom? What kind of wisdom does he receive?

Reading Response #4

1. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are all considered prophets. Using your own words, describe the role of a prophet. What makes someone a prophet?
2. Ezekiel 37 offers a symbolic prophecy of the return of the Jews to their homeland. If you were a Jew living in the diaspora (= outside of the land of Israel), how might you react to this text? (*or* What is the significance of this chapter to the larger question of Jewish identity?).

Reading Response #5

1. According to Jewish tradition, the book of Proverbs was composed by King Solomon. In your opinion, do the views presented in the opening 2 chapters present a similar image of Solomon as we saw previously in 1 Kings, or does a different image of Solomon appear?
2. Describe one way in which the legacy of Solomon has continued into our present day. (Based on your reading of Weitzman’s chapter on Solomon).

Reading Response #6

1. Compare and contrast Jeremiah 52 and 2 Kings 25.
2. Explain how the themes of exile and diaspora appear in the books of Daniel, Esther, and Ezra. How does each text understand living outside of the land of Israel?

Introduction to Judaism - Midterm (Take Home)

Instructions:

- Answer each of the following questions in 150 words (+/- 25 words). Be sure to include in your response your own analysis/thoughts/reflections (this is what distinguishes a B from an A response).
 - Submit your responses to nathalie.lacoste@utoronto.ca as a word or pdf file.
 - If you do not receive an email in response from me within 24 hours (saying that I have received your response), please re-submit your response.
 - Please include your name and student number on your document.
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- Compare Genesis 1:1–2:4a and Genesis 2:4b–25. Provide at least 3 differences between these two creation narratives.
- How does Solomon gain wisdom in 1 Kings? What kind of wisdom does he receive?
- According to Jewish tradition, the book of Proverbs was composed by King Solomon. In your opinion, do the views presented in the opening 2 chapters of Proverbs present a similar image of Solomon as we saw previously in 1 Kings, or does a different image of Solomon appear?
- Explain how the themes of exile and diaspora appear in the books of Daniel, Esther, and Ezra. How does each text understand living outside of the land of Israel?
[This is very big question. You may choose to give an overview of all three books or simply choose one book and go into more depth.]
- Describe two ways that Jewish life changed following the events of 70CE. How did these events contribute to the development of Judaism?
- The Rabbis had many opinions about Genesis 1–3. Choose one interpretative motif and explain how it engages with the biblical text and the significance of such an interpretation.
[Example of an interpretive motif: 'Adam the Androgyne,' 'Eve, the improved version of Adam,' 'Satan and Eve share a birthday']