Hammurabi's Law Code

Honors 340
Writing Scripture Law
Syracuse University
Fall 2018

Time: 3:45-5:05 on Mondays & Wednesdays
Place: Bowne Hall 306D

Instructor: Jim Watts (PhD)
Office: Hall of Languages 501
Office Hours: TTh 5-6 pm and by appointment
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Office Phone: 443-5713

Course Description: Written texts direct our behavior every day. Whether the U.S. Constitution or the syllabus for this class, we regularly grant normative authority to writing on paper. This course explores how and why writing gained such normative power. We will focus on the ancient history of writing and of normative texts, starting with the invention of writing in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. We will examine the growing authority of ritual texts, and then turn to religious scriptures, especially the Torah of Judaism and the Bible of Christianity. The course will conclude by examining the religious and legal motives behind the collections of Roman law by Christian emperors that laid the basis for later Western national law. Throughout the course, we will engage the social power of writing in economics, law and religion, and we will also pay close attention to the social impact of the material forms and visual displays of written texts. The course includes a field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collections of ancient texts and artifacts in New York City.

Audience: Students interested in law, literature, history, political science and religion, and the humanities generally.

Honors Attributes: Completing this course counts towards Honors Program attributes in the Humanities, Global Awareness, and Interdisciplinarity.

Course Objectives: The goals of this course goals are to have students

1. gain sufficient familiarity with evidence for the origins of writing to be able to assess the original and secondary functions of written texts;
2. develop an understanding of how written texts shape individual and social behavior;
3. recognize the social possibilities and dangers of normative textuality in past and contemporary societies.

Course Requirements: The course consists of class discussions, student study and research, and, most of all, readings. This course is a *reading* course, and students' completion of all reading assignments is essential for their success. Assignments, discussions, lectures and tests all presuppose that students have read carefully and on schedule the assigned readings. Questions to guide students' reading can be found in the schedule below.

Evaluations of students work:

Daily reading responses due at 12:00 noon on days with assignments	15%
Three papers due by 3:45 pm on Oct 1, Oct 29 and Dec 12	25% each
Attendance and participation	10%

The grading scale is: A+ = 100, A = 95, A- = 92, B+ = 88, B = 85, B- = 82, etc. The grades of late assignments will be reduced by one grade level (e.g. B to B-). Incidents of plagiarism or cheating result in no credit (0) for the test or assignment and may result in further disciplinary action (see academic integrity statement below).Students may check their grades online through the *Blackboard Learning System*.

Are YOU participating?

Attendance isn't enough. To succeed in this class, you must fully engage in activities and discussions. These criteria determine your participation grade.

EXCELLENT: You're present, prepared, and engaged. You consistently refer to the readings, lectures, and class discussions from other weeks. You encourage others' comments and questions in a productive and respectful manner.

GOOD: You're present and prepared, and you offer thoughtful questions and comments that demonstrate your preparation for discussion and attention to readings and lectures.

ADEQUATE: You're present and prepared, but limit your contributions to several surface-level observations or clarifying questions about lectures or readings.

MINIMAL: You usually make a single comment during discussions in response to another student's observations or insights. ("I agree with them.")

Class-room Behavior: A successful learning experience depends on students' behavior in class, as much as on the quality of their work and on the teacher's presentations.

- I encourage energetic discussion of relevant topics and expect different opinions among class members, but always express your ideas with respect for those who may disagree with you or have different life experiences from yours.
- Arrive on time. If you must be late, enter quietly. Do not leave during class except for emergencies.
- Turn off cell phones, laptops, and tablets. If you need to use an electronic device for class work (notes, assignments), you *must sit where I can see the screen*. Texting, e-mailing or web browsing during class are grounds for being dismissed from that day's class.

Academic Integrity: Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. Syracuse University students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

Students will submit their own papers and other written assignments to Turnitin via Blackboard, where both students and instructor can view the results. Turnitin compares submitted documents against documents on the Internet and against student papers submitted to Turnitin at Syracuse University and at other colleges and universities. I will take your knowledge of the subject matter of this course and your writing level and style into account in interpreting the originality report. Keep in mind that all papers you submit for this class will become part of the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

In this course, students found cheating on an assignment will receive zero (0) credit for that test or assignment and may result in further disciplinary action. For more information and the complete policy, see the Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS) in Bird Library or at http://class.syr.edu/.

Religious Observances Policy: SU religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to are religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through *MySlice/StudentServices/Enrollment/MyReligiousObservances* from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

Disability-Related Accommodations: If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) located at 804 University Avenue, third floor or go to the ODS website at disabilityservices.syr.edu and click current students tab to register on-line. You may also call 315.443.4498 to speak to someone regarding specific access needs. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue 'Accommodation Letters' to students as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. My goal as your instructor is to create a learning environments that are useable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, I invite you to meet with me to discuss additional strategies beyond accommodations that may be helpful to your success.

Required Textbooks:
Robinson, Andrew. *Writing and Script: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Goody, Jack. *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Other required readings are available through the Blackboard System or online by links imbedded in the syllabus.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments:
- Reading assignments must be completed by class on the day listed. Keep the reading questions in mind as your read and make notes.
- **Textbook** = readings by page numbers from required books by Robinson and Goody
- **Pdf** = pdf files available here and in Blackboard > Information.
- **Online** = online readings hotlinked in the syllabus in Blackboard > Information.
- **Bible** = readings from the Bible by book name, chapter (before any colon) and verses (after the colon).

Dates	Topics	Assignments
Mon Aug 27	Introductions	
Wed Aug 29	Ancient Near Eastern History	**Pdf** Liverani, "Historical Overview"
Sep 3 Labor Day **NO CLASS**		
Wed Sep 5	Origins of Writing	**Online** BBC First Accountants **Pdf** Schmandt-Besserat, "Record Keeping Before Writing" **Textbook** Robinson 5-8 "Clay Tokens"
Mon Sep 10	Writing and Politics	**Online** Lanchester, "The Case Against Civilization: Did our hunter-gatherer ancestors have it better?" *New Yorker* **Online** Gilman, "Is Government a Protection Racket? How Wheat and Taxes Built the Ancient States," *LA Review*
Wed Sep 12	Origins of Cuneiform	**Textbook** Robinson 8-16 "Pictograms" & "… Full Writing" **Pdf** Cooper, "Babylonian beginnings"
Mon Sep 17	Origins of Egyptian Hieroglyphics	**Textbook** Robinson 74-91 "How Writing Systems Work" **Pdf** Baines "The Earliest Egyptian Writing"
Wed Sep 19	Texts as Artifacts	**MEET in Special Collections, Bird Library 6th floor** **Online** Haaretz, Truly Ancient Bibles **Textbook** Robinson 123-134 "Chapter 8: Scribes and Materials"
Mon Sep 24	Diffusion of Writing	**Textbook** Robinson 17-35 "Chapter 2: Development and Diffusion of Writing"
Wed Sep 26	Origins of the Alphabet	**Online** Illiterate Egyptian Miners, Phoenician Alphabet **Textbook** Robinson 92-109 "Chapter 6: Alphabets"
Mon Oct 1	NO CLASS	**First Paper DUE**
Wed Oct 3	Classical History	Planning for the Met: **Online:** download the museum map, find the ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian and Greek & Roman galleries. **Online:** Read Assyrian Sculpture Court, Artisan's Tomb, Temple of Dendur,
SATURDAY Oct 6 Trip to New York to the Metropolitan Museum of Art		
Mon Oct 8 NO CLASS		
Wed Oct 10	Art versus Writing	Debriefing the Met
Mon Oct 15	Contracts, treaties, covenants	**Online** Babatha's Marriage Contract **Online** Succession Treaties of Esarhaddon **Bible** Exodus 24 **Online** Hundley, "The Making of Monotheism"
Wed Oct 17	Torah as law and ritual text	**Bible** Exodus 19:1-8; Leviticus 1, 11, 19; Deuteronomy 31:9-13 **Pdf** Watts, "Political and Legal Uses"

Mon Oct 22	Christian Scripture	**Bible** [Romans 7:1-8:9](); [Matthew 5-7](); **Pdf** Verheyden, "New Testament Canon" **Pdf** Irenaeus
Wed Oct 24	Writing and Religion	**Texbook** Goody 1-13, 16-22, 26-32
Mon Oct 29	NO CLASS	**Second Paper Due**
Wed Oct 31	Currency as Text	**Online** Surowiecki, "[A Brief History of Money]()" **Pdf** Rahmatian, "Money as a Normative Text"
Mon Nov 5	Writing and Economy	**Textbook** Goody 45-67, 71-81
Wed Nov 7	Cuneiform Law Codes	**Online** [Hammurabi's Code]() (read beginning and end, and scan the laws)
Mon Nov 12	Files and Documentation	**Pdf** Vismann, Files
Wed Nov 14	Writing and Administration	**Textbook** Goody 87-99, 113-119, 124-126
Nov 17-25	**Thanksgiving Break**	
Mon Nov 26	Christian Roman Law	**Online** [Roman Law and Justinian's Code]() **Pdf** Humfress, "Judging by the Book"
Wed Nov 28	Medieval canon law	**Pdf** Hoeflich and Grabher"The Establishment of Normative Legal Texts"
Mon Dec 3	Writing as Law	**Textbook** Goody 127- 159
Wed Dec 5	Postscripts	No assignment: answer usual reading questions about entire course.
Mon Dec 12	5 p.m.	Final Paper Due

Bibliography:

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Parkinson, R. B., Whitfield Diffie, M. Fischer and R. S. Simpson. "Deciphering the Rosetta Stone." In *Cracking Codes: The Rosetta Stone and Decipherment*. London: British Museum Press, 1999.

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Verheyden, Joseph. "The New Testament Canon," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1 (ed. Joachim Schaper and James Carleton Paget; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 389-411.

Vesting, Thomas. "Legal theory as media theory (Supplement I) - Reflections on the necessity of linking theory of language and media theory," translated by Gareth Norbury, *Ancilla Juris* (2010), 47-88; online at http://www.anci.ch/.

Vismann, Cornelia. *Files: Law and Media Technology*. Tr. G. Winthop-Young. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008 (German original, 2000).

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