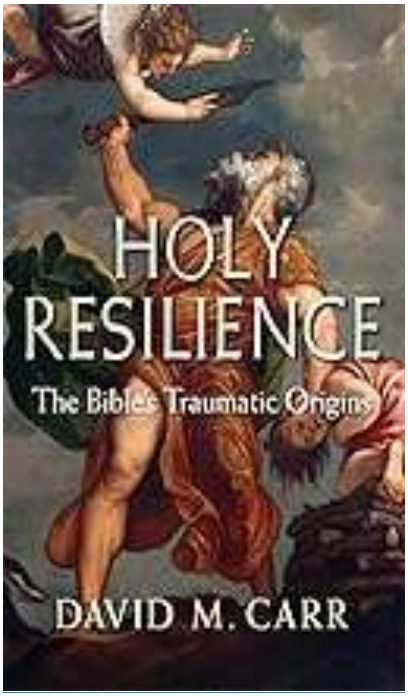
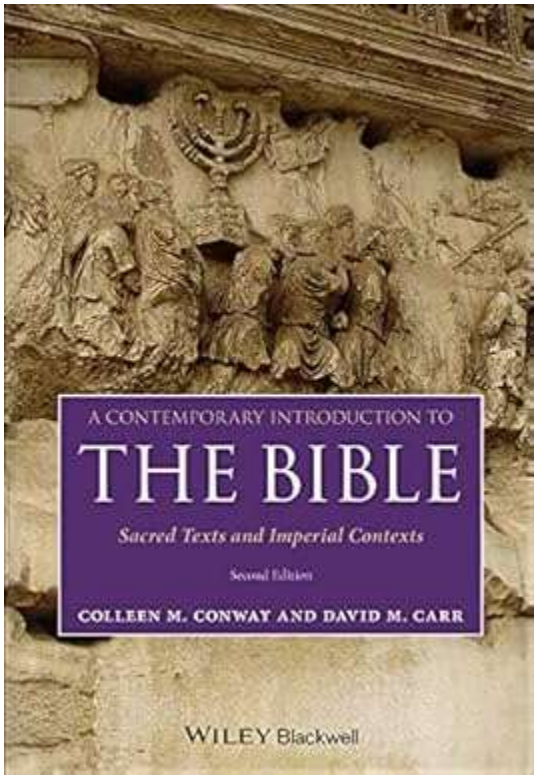


The Hebrew Bible and Old Testament
in the Order They Were Written

This 12-session class will cover the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament in a different way than how they are usually taught: Rather than reading in the order they appear in our current-day bibles, we will consider the stories in the order in which they first developed in oral tradition, how they were written down, and the process of becoming the Jewish canon. We will reframe the story in light of the traumatic history of the Jewish people and how their exiles influenced the writing, editing and coming together of their scripture. Understanding homelessness, loss of their Temple, and threatened lost identity is an important window into scriptural formation and also is a continuing theme in reading scripture today. As we come to understand the ongoing trauma of many peoples coming from countries suffering from colonialism including those in our own SGS community, we will read the Bible anew and as meaningful today as it was 2,000 years ago.



There are two sources among several that have been employed in developing this course but they are not required reading. They were authored by David. M. Carr, a biblical scholar from the Quaker tradition: ***The Hebrew Bible: A Contemporary Introduction to the Christian Old Testament and the Jewish Tanakh*** (2021) and ***Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins*** (2014). The Bible's ability to speak to suffering is a major reason why the sacred texts of Judaism and Christianity have retained their relevance for thousands of years. In his gripping reinterpretation of the Bible's origins, Dr. Carr tells the story of how the Jewish people and Christian communities had to adapt to survive multiple catastrophes and how their holy scriptures both reflected and reinforced each religion's resilient nature.

Carr's thought-provoking analysis demonstrates how many of the central tenets of biblical religion, including monotheism and the idea of suffering as God's retribution, are factors that provided Judaism and Christianity with the strength and flexibility to endure in the face of disaster. In addition, the author explains how the Jewish Bible was deeply shaped by the Jewish

exile in Babylon, an event that it rarely describes, and how the Christian Bible was likewise shaped by the unspeakable shame of having a crucified savior.