

Simeon B. Chavel
Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible
The University of Chicago Divinity School

APPOINTMENTS

- 2009– The University of Chicago Divinity School
- 2006–09 Lecturer, Princeton University: Department of Religion, Program in Judaic Studies
- 2005–06 Instructor, Haifa University: Department of Bible
- 2000–05 Instructor, The Hebrew University: Department of Bible, Rothberg School for Overseas Students, Melton Center for Jewish Education

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Department of Bible, The Hebrew University, December 2006 (Advisor: Israel Knohl)
Thesis: *Law and Narrative in Four "Oracular Novellae" in the Pentateuch: Lev 24:10–23; Num 9:1–14; 15:32–36; 27:1–11*
- M.A. Religious Studies, Indiana University Bloomington, June 1995 (Advisor: James Ackerman)
Thesis: *'Nabal Redivivus!' — David's Response to Nathan's Ewe-Lamb Parable in 2 Sam 12:1–7*
- B.A. English Literature, Yeshiva University, January 1992 (Advisor: Will Lee)
Thesis: *Jesus the Silent Hero: An Exegesis of Carlyle's On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

1. *Oracular Law and Priestly Historiography in the Torah* (FAT II, 71; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014)

IN PROGRESS

2. *The Song of Songs*, in *The Five Scrolls in The Hebrew Bible Critical Edition*, ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Ronald Hendel (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature)
3. *The Songs of Songs: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, in *The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary*, ed. John Collins (outgoing), Candida Moss (incoming) (New Haven: Yale University Press)
4. *A History of the Religious Imagination in Ancient Israel and Judah*
5. *The Limits of Coherence in Biblical Literature*

EDITING

6. *Reading the Song of Songs in a #MeToo Era: Women, Sex, and Public Discourse* (Leiden: Brill, 2023) (with Elaine T. James)
7. *Maarav — A Journal for the Study of Northwest Semitic Languages and Literature* (American Schools of Overseas Research; University of Chicago Press)

IN PROGRESS

8. *The Five Scrolls*, in *The Hebrew Bible Critical Edition*, ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Ronald Hendel (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature)
9. *New Directions in the Study of Priestly Literature and Ideas in Honor of Israel Knohl* (FRLANT; Tübingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) (with Rachel Frish and Joachim Schaper)
10. *The Sage in Chinese and Jewish Traditions* (with Haun Saussy)

ARTICLES

1. "'Let My People Go!' Emancipation, Revelation, and Scribal Activity in Jer. 34.8–14," *JSOT* 76 (1997) 71–95
2. "At the Boundary of Textual and Literary Criticisms: The Case of כִּי in Lev 20:9," *Textus* 20 (2000) 61–70
3. "Leviticus 24: Appendix D — Lev 24:10–23: Apostasy in H," in Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 2140–2145
4. "Compositry and Creativity in 2 Sam 21:1–14," *JBL* 122 (2003) 23–52
5. "The Second Passover, Pilgrimage and the Centralized Cult," *HTR* 102 (2009) 1–24
6. "'Oracular Novellae' and Biblical Historiography: Through the Lens of Law and Narrative," *Clio* 39 (2009) 1–27
7. "Num 15:32–36 — A Microcosm of the Living Priesthood and Its Literary Production," in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debate and Future Directions* (ed. S. Shechtman and J. Baden; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2009) 45–55
8. "The Legal Literature," in *The Literature of the Hebrew Bible: Introductions and Studies* (ed. Zipora Talshir; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2011), vol. 1, pp. 227–272 [Hebrew]
9. "The Literary Development of Deuteronomy 12: Between Religious Ideal and Social Reality," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. T. Dozeman, K. Schmid, and B.J. Schwartz; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 303–326
10. "The Face of God and the Etiquette of Eye-Contact: Visitation, Pilgrimage and Prophetic Vision in Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish Imagination," *JSQ* 19 (2012) 1–55
11. "Prophetic Imagination in the Light of Narratology and Disability Studies in Isaiah 40–48," *JHS* 14.3 (2014) 1–48
12. "A Kingdom of Priests and Its Earthen Altars in Exodus 19–24," *VT* 65 (2015) 169–222
13. with Mira Balberg, "The Polymorphous Pesah: Ritual Between Origins and Reenactment," *JAJ* 8/3 (2017) 292–343
14. "Knowledge of the Lord in the Hebrew Bible," *KNOW* 2/1 (2018) 47–83
15. "The Utility and Futility of Poetry in *Qohelet*," in *Biblical Poetry and the Art of Close Reading* (ed. Elaine James and J. Blake Couey; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 93–110
16. with Jessie DeGrado, "Text- and Source-Criticism of 1 Samuel 17–18: A Complete Account," *VT* 70 (2020) 553–580
17. "Yahweh Become a Temple? MT Ezekiel 11:16 מִקְדָּשׁ קָדֵשׁ Revisited," in *Contextualizing Jewish Temples: Challenges and Opportunities* (ed. T. Ganzel and S. Holtz; Leiden: Brill, 2021) 103–122
18. "Biblical 'Alternation' and Its Poetics," in *"Like 'Ilū Are You Wise': Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Dennis G. Pardee* (ed. H.H. Hardy II, J. Lam, and E.D. Reymond; Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 73; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2022) 179–203
19. "Song of Songs 1:1—Text and Paratext," *VT* 73/2 (2023) 220–238
20. with Elaine T. James, "Introduction: The Song of Songs and Women's Voices," in *Reading the Song of Songs in a #MeToo Era: Women, Sex, and Public Discourse* (ed. E. James and S. Chavel; Leiden: Brill, 2023) 1–12
21. "The Speaker of *The Song of Songs* and Her Publics," in *Reading the Song of Songs in a #MeToo Era: Women, Sex, and Public Discourse* (ed. E. James and S. Chavel; Leiden: Brill, 2023) 62–90
22. "Intergenerational Punishment: A New History," in *The Pentateuch and Its Readers* (ed. J. Baden and J. Stackert; FAT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023) 285–306
23. "The Biblical Legal Collections: The Narrative Context of the Collections," in *The Cambridge Companion to Law in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Bruce Wells; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2024) 95–113
24. "Race and Ethnicity at Genesis 10 and the Idea of 'Semites,'" *VT* Sep2024 online, pp. 1–33
25. "The Poetry of *The Songest of Songs*: Definitions, Concepts, and Devices," in *The Voices of the Song: The Diversity of the Bible's Only Love Poem* (ed. Philip Esler and Anselm Hagedorn; Leiden: Brill, exp. 2025)

IN PROGRESS

26. "P, J, and E: Histories or Literature?" (in Books: 9, above)

27. "Sage and Anti-Sage: *Proverbs* and *Qohelet*" (in Books: 10, above)
28. "Ekphrasis in the *Priestly Story* and in the *Book of Ezekiel*," in *Building the World with Words*, ed. Lisa Cleath, Alice Mandell, and Jeremy Smoak
29. "Simultaneous Narration in Biblical Literature," in *New Directions in Biblical Narrative: Contemporary Perspectives on Narrative Theory and Biblical Studies*, ed. Joseph Cross and Davide D'Amico
30. "The Literary Coherence and Historical Context of the *Book of Ezekiel*," in *Themes and Issues in the Book of Ezekiel*, ed. Anja Klein and Andrew Mein (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing)
31. "The Early Afterlife of the Altar-Law at Exod 20:18–22: A Case of Salvage Hermeneutics"
32. "The Curious Chapter-Division of the *Song of Songs* and the Blurry History of Its Text and Paratext"

DICTIONARY & ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

- 33–35. "Ephraim," "Gideon," and "Reuben," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (ed. R.J.Z. Werblowsky and G. Wigoder; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 230, 272, 583–584
36. "Cassuto, Umberto (Moses David)," in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, Volume 4 (ed. H.-J. Klauck and others; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012) 1031–1033
- 37–39. "Jeroboam," "Judges," "Samson," and "Solomon," in E. Orlin, ed., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Ancient Mediterranean Religions* (New York: Routledge, 2016) 472–473, 495, 843, 894–895

PRESENTATIONS (SELECT)

1. "The Shape of Canon — Law and Narrative from the Bible to Rabbinic Literature," *The Department of Hebrew Culture, Tel-Aviv University, 20 March 2006* [Hebrew]
2. "Israeli Currents in Pentateuchal Studies — in the Wake of Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*," *Pentateuchal Panel, Princeton Theological Seminary, 6 February 2007*
3. "Religious Thought and Political Text in Ancient Israel and Judah in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BCE," *Political Hebraism: Jewish Sources in the History of Political Thought, Princeton University, September 7–9, 2008*
4. "The Imagined Beginnings of the World and of Humanity in Genesis 1–3," *Imagined Beginnings: The Poetics and Politics of Cosmogony, Theogony and Anthropogony in the Ancient World, The Center for the Study of Ancient Religions at the University of Chicago and the Midwest Consortium on Ancient Religions, April 8–10, 2011*
5. "Literary Theory and Biblical Literature: Levels of Speakers in *Qohelet* and *Song of Songs*," *Society of Biblical Literature National Meeting, Baltimore, 23–26 November 2013*
6. "The Argumentative Nature of Ancient Authors and Their Biblical Works: The Law Codes," *Beyond the Book: Rethinking Biblical Religion, University of Michigan, 8 December 2016*
7. "Divine Presence and Its Representation in the Elohistic and Priestly Histories," *Society of Biblical Literature National Meeting, Boston, 18–21 November 2017*
8. "Intertextuality in Biblical Law," *Chicago-Yale Pentateuch Colloquium, Yale University, 25–27 February 2018*
9. "Ezekiel ben Buzi, the Raggedy-Ann Prophet," *Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting, Helsinki, 30 July–3 August 2018*
10. "The Life and Stratigraphy of Stones in Deuteronomy 27 and Related Texts," *Chicago-Yale Pentateuch Colloquium, The University of Chicago, 13–15 February 2019*
- 11–12. *The University of Texas Austin, 5 March 2019*
 - "Poetic Justice and the Conundrum in Biblical Law: 'An Eye for an Eye' and Other Troublesome Formulas"
 - "The Art of Divine Presence: Adoring Eyes, Pointing Fingers, and Other Meaningful Motifs"
13. "The *Song of Songs* — a Single Song and a Coherent Composition (שיר השירים - שיר אחד וחיבור אחד)," *Haifa University Bible Workshop, 21 December 2020* [Hebrew]
14. "*Qohelet* and *Job* as Genre-Breakers of Wisdom and Theology," *European Association of Biblical Studies, Wuppertal, 2–5 August 2021*

15. "The Hammurapi Monuments and the Pentateuchal Sources," *The Jewish Law Seminar Online, 2022–2023: The Introduction in Works of Halakhah*, 7 December 2022 [Hebrew]
16. "The Torah in the Persian Period: The Historical Conditions for its Reception and its Reception in *Ruth*," *Chicago-Yale Pentateuch Colloquium, The University of Chicago*, 26–28 February 2023
17. with Sarah Yardney, "The Song of Songs in CEDAR on OCHRE: Capabilities and Potential," *Conference of CEDAR Streams, the University of Chicago*, 22 May 2023
18. "The 'Divine Attributes' in the 'Ten Commandments,'" in *The Ten Commandments: A Symposium at the University of Chicago*, 23 May 2023
19. "The Voicing of and the Voices in Psalm 82, the Song of Songs, and Qohelet," *Bar-Ilan University Bible Department Annual Conference*, 7–8 June 2023 [Hebrew]
20. "A History of the Religious Imagination in Ancient Israel and Judea," *Breshit Forum for Early Scholars, Schechter Institute, Jerusalem*, 11 June 2023 [Hebrew]
21. "The Voice of the Song of Songs and a New Meaning for Black and Beautiful at Song 1:5–6," *European Association for Biblical Studies, Siracusa, Italy*, 10–13 July 2023
22. Book review panel, *Qohelet: Searching for a Life Worth Living* by Menahem Fisch and Debra Band (Baylor, 2023), *The Martin Marty Center*, 1 November 2023
23. "P, J, and E — Histories or Fiction?" *The Chicago-Yale Pentateuch Colloquium, Yale University*, 11–13 March 2024
24. "The Poetry of the Songest of Songs," *Cheltenham Conference on the Song of Songs, Gloucestershire, UK*, 21–23 May 2024
25. "The Book of Ezekiel — A Book of Promise," *The Bible and Its World—An International Academic Conference in Israel, Jerusalem*, 1–3 July 2024
26. "Law and Narrative, History vs. Fiction: The Case of P," *Conference: Priestly Texts and Traditions — Thirty Years After Israel Knohl's The Sanctuary of Silence, Jerusalem*, 8–9 July 2024
27. "Normative Hierarchy in the Sources Comprising the Torah," *The Jewish Law Seminar Online, 2024–2025: "Of Orayta" and "of Rabanan" and Normative Hierarchy in Halakhah*, 20 November 2024 [Hebrew]
28. "Sage and Anti-Sage: Proverbs and Qohelet," *The Ideal of the Sage in Jewish and Chinese Thought and Culture, Shandong University, Jinan, China*, 15–18 December 2024
29. "The Futility of Poetry in Ecclesiastes," *Wheaton College, Illinois*, 5 Feb 2025
30. "The Afterlife of the Altar-Law in E at Exod 20:18–22," *Chicago-Yale Pentateuch Colloquium, Chicago*, 23–25 February 2025
31. "Ekphrasis and Synesthesia in the Priestly Story and the Book of Ezekiel," *EABS, Uppsala*, 23–27 June 2025
32. "How Many Gods in Psalm 82? Help from Literary Theory," *EABS, Uppsala*, 23–27 June 2025
33. "Monuments and the Torah in Israel and Judah," *IOSOT, Berlin*, 11–15 August 2025

CURRENT PROJECTS & SERVICE

Advisor, CDB (Chicago Digital Bible), an ancient texts and digital humanities project at the University of Chicago (<https://divinity.uchicago.edu/cedar> and <https://voices.uchicago.edu/cedar/>)

Steering Committee, Annual Chicago-Yale Pentateuch Colloquium

Committee on Publications, American Society for Overseas Research

Board, Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies, The University of Chicago

CURRENT ASSOCIATIONS

American Society for Overseas Research

European Association of Biblical Studies

International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament

Jewish Law Seminar Online (hosted by Yair Lorberbaum, Bar-Ilan University)

Society of Biblical Literature

World Union of Jewish Studies