

## **Course Description**

### **RELI 3840 – Who Wrote the Bible? With Sarah Cook**

We have clues about who the authors of the Hebrew Bible may have been, and we have traditional suspects. The phrase “the Torah of Moses” suggests that the first five books of the Hebrew Bible might have been the work of history’s most put-upon prophet. Biblical books with names like “Joshua,” Samuel,” and “Jeremiah” offer us even more suspects who were especially popular among the rabbis as well as Christian scholars throughout the ages. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, European scholars, armed with Enlightenment Rationality, started to develop their own theories about the nature and origin of this foundational western text. In this course, we will explore the rich history of theories regarding biblical authorship and draw upon both material culture and literary evidence to form our own theories. We will consider questions including: how did authorship work in the ancient world? Why did people write? Where and how did they write? How can we effectively use the available literary evidence to theorize about the authorship of a text? By drawing on as many categories of evidence as possible and noticing where the evidence converges, we will attempt to answer the question of who wrote the Hebrew Bible.