

**Syllabus  
Winter, 2011**

**RS 130  
The Bible: History, Literature, and Scripture**

Instructor: Derek Suderman  
Teaching Assistant: Kim Penner  
Time: Tues., Thurs. 1:00-2:20 PM  
Place: Room 1111, Conrad Grebel University College  
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**I. Introduction**

**A. Course Description**

This course will introduce the Bible as history, literature, and scripture. Particular emphasis will be placed on considering different approaches to this material, becoming familiar with resources for biblical study, and exploring the social, historical, and literary contexts from which this material emerged. Since Jewish and Christian Bibles differ, it will also explore various versions and consider the understanding and role of the Bible in both Jewish and Christian religious communities. *No knowledge of or religious conviction regarding the material is assumed.*

**B. Student Objectives**

During this course students will:

- identify various types of material and where they are found in the Bible;
- explore its relationship to the social settings and traditions of some other Ancient Near Eastern civilizations;
- consider the value and limitations of various modes of inquiry to the Bible;
- gain some experience with various tools used in biblical study (concordances, Bible dictionaries, biblical commentaries);
- gain experience writing academic papers at a university level;
- be introduced to faculty and courses relating to the Bible at the University of Waterloo;
- identify several differences between Jewish and Christian Scripture, and consider how they function within these distinct communities;
- describe some of the challenges (problems and opportunities) presented by this material for a 21st century reader.

**II. Course Requirements**

**A. Textbooks**

The following materials are required.

**1. The Bible**

This is *the most important textbook in the course*. Students must each have their own copy, which they are expected to bring it to class. No one version is required — in fact, having a diversity present can enrich class discussion enormously. ***However, paraphrases and Bibles which use a ‘dynamic equivalence’ approach to translation will not be appropriate for this course (the Message, Good News Bible, Today’s English Version, etc.).*** Part of the course will include New Testament readings, so people who use a Tanakh (Jewish Publication Society Bible) will need access to a New Testament as well. Though we will not be discussing the Apocrypha/Deutero-canonical material in this course, consider purchasing a Bible with this as well.

“Study Bibles” of various versions are also available (TNIV, NRSV, NASB, etc), and can provide helpful additional information. Students are welcome to choose from among:

- *Tanakh* (JPS - Jewish Publication society )
- *New American Bible* (NAB)
- *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) or the older *American Standard Version* (ASV)
- *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) or the older *Jerusalem Bible* (JB)
- *21<sup>st</sup> Century New King James Version*, or the *New King James Version* (NKJV), or the venerable *Authorized or King James Version* (AV or KJV)
- *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) or the older *Revised Standard Version* (RSV)
- *Revised English Bible* (REB) or the older *New English Bible* (NEB)
- *Today’s New International Version* (TNIV) or the older *New International Version* (NIV)
- *Net Bible* (available free on-line at <http://www.bible.org>). This can be used for comparison, but students will be expected to bring Bibles to class so this will not be sufficient as the only version.

**\*\*Note: If you consider yourself an experienced Bible reader, consider purchasing and reading a different version. This often proves helpful for hearing material in a new way.**

2. Clyde E. Fant, Donald W. Musser, and Mitchell G. Reddish, *An Introduction to the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001). and *Course Reader*.

For the rest of the syllabus this textbook will be referred to by first author and chapter number (ie: Fant, ch. 2). The textbook will be supplemented by readings from a course reader, also available at the bookstore. *Readings are due in preparation for the class in which they are listed*, and will be assumed rather than rehearsed. ***You will be responsible for information from the textbook and readings on both the test and the exam.***

3. Michael Harvey, *The Nuts & Bolts of College Writing* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 2003). This book is an excellent resource to use throughout your university program. It provides a helpful guide to the style, grammar, writing and formatting of academic papers. Written assignments in this class will be linked directly to this resource, so buy it and use it!

\*\* An online guide to research, write, and format academic papers can also be downloaded for free from the *Beginning Researcher* website: <http://www.beginningresearchers.com/>. This program attends to various steps involved, including giving a description and examples of the proper use and formatting of footnotes, bibliography, etc.

***All papers with citations will be required to use bottom-of-the-page footnotes according to either the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) demonstrated in the Appendix of Harvey or the ‘Turabian’ style guide provided on Beginning Researchers.*** Failure to do so will negatively impact your mark or require the paper to be resubmitted.

## B. *Student Evaluation*

<b>In-Class Questions</b>	10%
<b>ANE Comparison Assignment (DUE: Jan. 18)</b>	10%
<b>Test #1 (Jan. 27)</b>	15%
<b>Word Study</b>	
<b>Quiz (Feb. 3-4)</b>	5%
<b>Assignment (DUE: Feb. 15 )</b>	15%
<b>Gospel Assignment (DUE: Mar. 10)</b>	20%
<b>Final Exam</b>	25%

### 1. *Assignments*

Since the assignments will usually provide the basis for class discussion, extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Further instructions will be provided in class.

*In-Class Questions*

Sporadically throughout the term students will be asked to provide a very brief response to an in-class question. These will be marked out of 2 (with one point being your name!), which will make up 10% of your final mark. ***Consistent attendance will be crucial for success in this class.***

*ANE Comparison Assignment*

This assignment, consisting of a short paper (2 pp., 500-600 words), will allow students to explore how the broader literary context of biblical material may inform how it is read and understood. Students will compare and contrast a biblical passage with an apparent parallel from a different Ancient Near Eastern tradition.

*Word Study*

Students will take an on-line quiz, which will use Strong's concordance on-line to explore the "semantic range" of a specific term by tracing its Hebrew root and various possibilities for translation. Students will then look up their randomly-assigned word in two Bible dictionaries and write a brief paper (2-3 pp., 600-900 words) that discusses how this enhanced view of a specific term informs the understanding of a specific passage or story.

*Gospel Assignment*

Students will write a medium-sized paper (5-6 pp., 1500-1800 words) that explores a topic based on a specific passage in the Gospels. This assignment will provide a window into the dynamics of interpreting a specific biblical passage and introduce students to Bible commentaries and academic articles as resources for such work.

*2. Test and Exam*

The first test will take half of the class time for that day. The final exam will be scheduled in the exam period. Both will include material from lectures, Bible and secondary readings. The structure of each test will be provided in advance.

**III. Further Instructions****A. Academic Integrity**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (University):** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

**\*\* All submitted written material MUST provide both a word count and signed copy of the 'Academic Integrity Statement' (found on the UW-ACE site for this course) on the title page. Assignments without either of these features will NOT BE MARKED and returned to the student for re-submission.**

B. *Accommodation for Students with Disabilities*

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

C. *Academic Styles*

In addition to the description of styles listed under textbooks above, Biblical Studies employs certain conventions when citing biblical documents. See the appendix at the back of this syllabus for details on citing biblical material.

D. *On-line Questionnaire for Learning Styles*

I encourage students to take a short quiz in order to better understand their own learning style(s), *especially at the beginning of your university career*. I have found VARK to be particularly valuable in this regard. After a brief questionnaire, this tool provides very concrete suggestions for how to build upon your strengths in order to set up notes, study for tests, and proceed with research. It is available free on-line at: <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp>.

IV. **Class Schedule**

(Parentheses) indicate the section of the Bible as well as secondary readings to be done in preparation for each class. *You are not required to read ALL of the biblical material listed here; see the Reading Guides on the UW-ACE site for this course for the specific biblical passages. Readings below are listed on the dates to which they correspond and are expected to be done in preparation for class.*

A. **Introduction**

Jan. 4 - What is the Bible? Challenges and Opportunities of Reading the Bible as History, Literature, and Scripture; Syllabus Review

B. **Tanakh / Old Testament**

**Torah (Pentateuch)**

Jan. 6 - "In the beginning/When it all began," Men, Women, 'adam, and the "Fall" (Genesis 1-5; Fant ch. 1)

Jan. 11 - Family Matters: Names and Social/Geographical Context (Genesis 11-35; Fant ch. 4; Meyers<sup>1</sup>)

Jan. 13 - Out of Egypt "with a mighty hand" (Exodus 1-15, 19, 32-34; Fant ch. 5)

Jan. 18 - An 'Eye for an Eye' a *Good Thing*?! Reading Law in the Bible (Law, the Covenant Code/Laws of Hammurabi) (Exodus 20-24, skim 25-30, 31-34)

**\*\*ANE Comparison Assignment DUE**

Jan. 20 - *Workshop: How the Questions We ask affect the Answers We Find* (Fant ch. 3, skim 2)

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<sup>1</sup>Carol L. Meyers, "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," *The Women's Bible Commentary*, Ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 244-51.

Jan. 25 - “Remember... and Choose Life!” (Deuteronomy; Berlin<sup>2</sup> ); Covenant and the Remarkably Unharmonized Voice(s) of Scripture...

\*\*Jan. 27 - **Test #1**; and Introduction to ‘Biblical History’/‘Former Prophets’

### **Prophets (“Historical Books” and Prophets)**

Feb. 1 - Entering the Land, and from Judges to Kingship (Joshua, Judges, I Samuel; Fant ch. 6)

Feb. 3 - of Prophets and Kings, and finally Exile (II Samuel, I-II Kings; Fant ch. 7-8)

\*\* *Feb. 3-4 --- You are required to do the Word Study Quiz On-Line (More instructions to come)*

Feb. 8 - Prophets and Prophecy (selections from Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah; Fant ch. 9)

Feb. 10 - From Exile to Restoration (Fant ch. 12)

Feb. 15 - *Workshop on Ruth: Word Study Assignment DUE*

### **Writings**

Feb. 17 - Are Psalms Prayers? (Bono, “Introduction”)

\*\**Feb. 21-25: Reading Week*

Mar. 1 - Wisdom: Its Possibilities and Limits (Fant ch. 13)

### **C. Second Temple Period and New Testament**

Mar. 3 - New Testament: Setting the Stage... (Fant ch. 14)

Mar. 8 - *Workshop: A Case study contrasting the Four Gospels* (Neusner<sup>3</sup>)

Mar. 10 - Life and Teachings of Jesus (Fant ch. 16) [Tom Yoder-Neufeld??]

\*\**Gospel Assignment DUE*

Mar. 15 - The “Passion” and Aftermath (Fant ch. 17, 18)

Mar. 17 - Letters to early “churches”: Paul (Fant ch. 20, 21)

Mar. 22 - Facing New Circumstances and Issues: Other Letters (Fant ch. 22)

Mar. 24 - Revelation, and contrasting the ‘forms’ of Christian and Jewish Bibles (Fant ch. 23)

### **D. Scriptures and Traditions...**

Mar. 29 - Function of Scripture in Judaism: “The Binding of Isaac” in Gen. 22 as a Case Study [Oral and Written Torah, Midrash, Mishnah, Talmuds] (Kugel<sup>4</sup> ) [James Diamond??]

Mar. 31 - Function of Scripture in Christianity: “The Sacrifice of Isaac” in Gen. 22 as a Case Study

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<sup>2</sup>Adele Berlin, “Numinous *Nomos*: On the Relationship Between Narrative and Law,” *“A Wise and Discerning Mind”*: Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long, Ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley, Brown Judaic Studies.325 (Providence, R.I.: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000) 25–31

<sup>3</sup>Jacob Neusner, “The Pharisees: Jesus’ Competition,” *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 45–61.

<sup>4</sup>James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007) 119–32, 688–89.

[development and “canonization” of Scripture (MT, LXX, Vulgate, Vernacular); balance of Scripture and Tradition (Reformation), etc.] (Brueggemann<sup>5</sup>)

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<sup>5</sup>Walter Brueggemann, “Biblical Authority,” *The Christian Century* 3–10 Jan. 2001 2001: 14–20.