The Greatest Story Ever Told: An Introduction to the Bible as Literature
CS 3328—Course Syllabus
Fall 2016
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Course Description

The Bible is, without question, the most influential collection of writings in the Western world. The course is designed to provide a general introduction to the Bible, including its composition, transmission, reception, interpretation, and translation, as well as an orientation to the “biblical metanarrative.” The course is intended to prepare students for rigorous biblical and theological study through familiarization with issues surrounding the interpretation of the biblical texts as well as the content of the texts themselves. It further will orient students, in a preliminary way, to the impact the Bible has had on Western culture, law, and literature.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1) Understand the history of the composition and reception of the Bible, including languages, textual issues, socio-cultural and historical backgrounds of the Bible, etc.
2) Understand the reception and canonization of the Bible
3) Have a basic familiarity with the concepts of history of hermeneutical theory
4) Recognize and recall the overarching story of the Bible, from creation to redemption
5) Discuss the various genres and collections in the Bible
6) Recall key texts from the various collections of the Bible

Required Texts

A study Bible of some kind (e.g. Oxford Annotated, Harper Collins) is required in a contemporary translation—ESV, NIV, etc.


Scripture Typer Bible Memory System (or some other Bible memorization program/system).

Course Requirements

Regular attendance and participation is required. Students must read the relevant texts and readings from the textbooks and be prepared to discuss them in class. Students should be in class promptly at the start. Consistent tardiness and absences will negatively affect your grade for the course.

Four exams: 80%
Quizzes: 10% (Regular reading quizzes will be drawn from the listed page numbers)
Memorization: 10%

Course schedule: (ital. = suggested reading)

Week 1
8/24: Introduction to the course; Introduction to the Bible as book and library

Week 2
8/29: Introduction to the Bible; Introduction to the Old Testament—Pentateuch & History

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 3–8; 73–76; 78–80; 83–84; 86–87; 88–89
Gorman, Chapter 1 (pp. 3–21)
Kugler & Hartin, chapter 2 (pp. 7–17)

8/31: Introduction to the Old Testament—Pentateuch & History

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 165–169
Gorman, chapter 3 pp. 44–69
Kugler & Hartin, chapter 5–6 (pp. 45–57), chapter 12 (113–117)
Reading quiz

Week 3
9/7: Introduction to the Old Testament—Pentateuch & History cont’d

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 301–305
Kugler & Hartin, chapter 20, 22 (pp. 187–188, 197–211)
Orientation to tools within your Bibles (bring a Bible to class!)

Week 4
9/12: Wisdom & Prophets

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 375–379; 489–495
Kugler & Hartin, chapters 26–27 (pp. 227–240)
Memorization due: Exodus 20:1–11
9/14: Survey of Intertestamental/Apocryphal literature Introduction to the New Testament—Backgrounds; Gospels & Acts

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 499–513, 517–521
Gorman, chapter 4 (pp. 71–90)
Kugler & Hartin, chapter 50 (pp. 366–379)

Reading quiz

Week 5

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 630–641
Kugler & Hartin, chapters 52–53 (pp. 403–414, 417–425)


Kugler & Hartin, chapter 61 (501–511)
Fee & Hubbard, pp. 719–721 (pp. 722–737)

Week 6
9/26: Introduction to the New Testament: Letters; Apocalypse; Test review

Kugler & Hartin, chapter 62 (pp. 512–522)
Fee & Hubbard, pp. 722–737

9/28: Exam #1—Survey of Bible

Memorization for test: Deuteronomy 6:1–9

Week 7
10/3: Inspiration and Revelation

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 15–17, pp. 741–745

10/5: Development of the Canon

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 18–25
Kugler & Hartin, chapter 44 (pp. 319–325)
Gorman, chapter 5 (pp. 71–90)

Week 8
10/10: Development of the Canon; Textual transmission, OT

Kugler & Hartin, chapter 63 (pp. 523–531)
Gorman, chapter 6 (pp. 103–118)

Reading quiz over this and last weeks’ readings
10/12: Textual transmission, OT

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 25–30
Gorman, chapter 7a (pp. 119–124)
Handout, “Text, Hebrew, History of” from New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary

Week 9
10/17: Textual transmission, OT; Test prep

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 31–34
Handout, “Text, Hebrew, History of” from New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary
Handout, “Text Criticism, OT” from New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary

10/19: Exam #2—Development of the Canon

Memorization for test: Matthew 5:1–12

Week 10

Metzger Handout


Handout, “Text, NT” from New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary

Reading quiz

Week 11

Handout, “Text Criticism, NT” from New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary

11/2: Exam #3—Textual Transmission

Memorization for test: John 1:1–14

Week 12
11/7: History of Bible translation in Western Europe

11/9: History of the English Bible

Gorman, chapter 7b (pp. 124–130)
Handout, “Versions, English” from New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary (pp. 740–748)

11/14-11/16: NO CLASS—reading week
Week 13
11/21: History of the English Bible, cont’d.

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 39–42
Handout, “Versions, English” New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary (pp. 749–759)

Reading quiz

Week 14
11/28: Methods of interpretation

Kugler & Hartin, chapter 4 (pp. 35–41)
Gorman, chapter 9 (pp. 147–162)

Memorization: 1 Corinthians 15:1–10

11/30: Methods of interpretation; Final prep

Fee & Hubbard, pp. 35–38
Gorman, chapter 10 (pp. 163–175)

Week 15—Finals Week
12/5: Comprehensive Exam