

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.

Fee, Gordon D., and Hubbard Jr., Robert L., eds. *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. ISBN: 9780802838230

Gorman, Michael J., ed. *Scripture: An Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpreters*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. ISBN: 9780801046421

Kugler, Robert, and Hartin, Patrick. *An Introduction to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. ISBN: 9780802846365.

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

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

9/19: Introduction to the New Testament— Gospel & Acts; Letters

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

9/21: Introduction to the New Testament: Letters; Apocalypse

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

10/24: Textual Transmission: New Testament

Metzger Handout

10/26: Textual Transmission: New Testament

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

Reading quiz

Week 11

10/31: Text Criticism: New Testament

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**