

RLST 10: INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
Winter 2009, Bourns Hall B118
MWF, 11:10am-12noon + discussion section
course homepage: <http://faculty.ucr.edu/~andrew/bible/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will be exploring the Jewish and Christian Bibles from primarily **historical** and **literary** perspectives. It is impossible to read and understand all sixty-plus books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament in ten short weeks. Our goals for this quarter are to:

- gain a general overview of the themes, ideas, and structure of the different sections and books of the Bible;
- understand how the Bible was composed and circulated;
- ask how and why the Bible is considered sacred (or otherwise authoritative) for billions of people.

As this is a lower division religious studies course, we will also try to place these goals in a broader religious studies context, asking such questions as:

- What can we learn about religious history, practices, and beliefs from the Bible?
- How and when does the Bible's authority extend beyond the bounds of religious identity?
- What role does the circulation and interpretation of sacred scriptures play in religious identities in general?

We do not expect you to have definitive answers to these questions by the end of the quarter (if you did, you'd be the first). Instead, you are going to acquire the skills and expertise that will allow you to continue to explore these issues after this course has ended.

This course is not a religiously oriented "Bible study": it is not appropriate to use this class as a forum for debating your own personal ideas about religion, the Bible, God, heaven, or hell. There are appropriate times and places for such discussion: Religious Studies 10 is not one of them. The Bible provokes strong feelings from most people; nevertheless, we shall try together to set personal feelings aside in the interests of academic exploration and discovery.

The course is divided into **lectures** and **discussion sections**.

LECTURES are conducted Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons (11:10am-12noon) in Bourns Hall B118. In lecture, the professor will go over the predominant themes and ideas concerning that week's topics, building on and supplementing the readings for the week. Although attendance is not mandatory, it is **highly recommended**.

To facilitate your preparation for lecture, topical outlines of each lecture can be found on the course website. Complete lectures will not be posted.

DISCUSSION SECTIONS are conducted on various days, at various times, in various locations throughout the week. Many sections meet at very strange times in very strange places, ranging from morning to nighttime: **make sure you know where and when your section meets**. Attendance and participation in discussion section is **mandatory**.

For each discussion section you will be closely discussing, as a group, a particular section of the Bible that is relevant for that week. The biblical readings for discussion sections are listed on the reading schedule, and further suggestions for discussion can be found on the course website.

You must have read the selection before coming to discussion section, and you must bring your Bible with you to facilitate discussion. Even if we haven't yet discussed that part of the Bible in lecture, you should still be able to find questions or comments for discussion section.

In discussion sections, the TAs will also try to answer your questions from lecture and generate discussions that will help you in your overall study of the Bible.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade will be based on a combination of participation and written assignments. The calculation of your grade is based on:

- * Participation in discussion sections: 15%
- * First Essay Assignment: 15%
- * Midterm examination: 20%
- * Second Essay Assignment: 15%
- * *Genesis, A Living Conversation* Assignment: 5%
- * Final Examination: 30%

Descriptions of the three written assignments (First and Second Essay and *Genesis, A Living Conversation* assignment) will be posted on the course website.

If you know **ahead of time** that you will be unavailable to take an exam, turn in a paper, or otherwise complete the required work speak to the professor or your Teaching Assistant as **soon as possible**. The class as a body will decide on the penalty for late work in the first two weeks of class.

Late work policy: all written assignments are due at the beginning of class. The students in RLST 10 will decide together, through online survey, when assignments are officially "late," and what the penalties will be for late assignments.

Also note: **no written work** will be graded until you have read, printed out, and signed the Pledge on Plagiarism (available on the website) and turned it in to your TA. You should be familiar with UCR's regulations on academic honesty and plagiarism; any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be punished with a zero grade and **will be referred** to the University administration for reprimand.

COURSE MATERIALS

The following required books are available for purchase at the UCR bookstore (copies will also be placed on reserve in Rivera Library):

An Introduction to the Bible: A Journey in Three Worlds, seventh edition. Ed. Christian E. Hauer and William A. Young. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2008

This is the main textbook for this course; you should consider it as "background" reading to help you understand the context and content of the biblical readings for the course; there is much more information in this book than you will probably need to know in order to understand the biblical assignments, but it is all valuable information. (You may use earlier editions of the book if you like; please make sure you are covering the same material.)

The HarperCollins Study Bible: Student Edition, Fully Revised & Updated (paperback). Ed. Harold Attridge. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006.

Although you may already own a Bible, I suggest you purchase the HarperCollins study Bible. It is relatively inexpensive (considering it's 1000s of pages long), contains useful notes, maps, and reading guides, and is in a clear, reliable translation. It also contains the Apocrypha/Deuterocanon, portions of which we will be reading.

Many versions of the Bible are difficult to understand (King James/Authorized Version) or are simply adaptations instead of translations (such as the Living Bible or New Living Translation Bible), inserting, removing, or changing the texts. If you are unsure whether your Bible is appropriate, check with the professor.

You can also access the Bible on-line: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/> contains an on-line reproduction of the Revised Standard Version, one of the most reliable and readable modern translations of the Bible. You can select individual books or chapters and print them out at your leisure.

It is recommended that you bring your Bible to class and discussion sections in order to make the most of both. Reading guides for the biblical passages can be found on the course website. These guides are not a substitute for the reading, but are provided to help give you background and provide some thoughtful questions as you read.

Additional readings required for the class can be accessed through the course website: these on-line readings are also required for the course.

COURSE WEBSITE

This paper syllabus provides the bare minimum amount of information you need for this course. In order to get all necessary information concerning assignments, expectations, and resources for this course you must consult the course website regularly: <http://faculty.ucr.edu/~andrew/bible/>

On the course website you will find the following:

- * Announcements pertaining to the class (also posted to the Blackboard site)
- * Complete list of reading assignments , including links to online readings (which are required)
- * Discussion section meetings times and places, topics for discussion in sections, and suggested directions for discussion
- * Guidelines for written assignments, and the assignments themselves (note: written assignments will not be distributed in class; you must download them from the website)
- * Topical outlines of lectures (note: full lectures will *not* be posted online)
- * The “Pledge on Plagiarism “ (note: this must be read, signed, and turned in to your TA before any written work will be graded)
- * Contact information for the professor and teachings assistants
- * Frequently Asked Questions (including, “How can I do well in this class?”)
- * Study guides, including: reading guides for the biblical selections; terms and identifications for which you are responsible on exams; maps, timelines, and charts
- * Links to sites of interest related to biblical studies, including online Bibles

A **Blackboard** site will also be set up (go to <http://ilearn.ucr.edu/>) for this course, but the only functions operative will be **Announcements**, **Communications**, and **Discussion Boards**, so that you can communicate with the professor, TAs, and your fellow students. For now, students will be allowed to post anonymously (please do not abuse this courtesy). **Only** the announcements, communication, and discussion will be enabled on the **Blackboard** site: for all other information, go to the main course website.

A word about email: All UCR administrative business is conducted through your email account. Your TAs and professor will also use your email address to contact you, should the need arise. If you are not already doing so, you need to check your email account **regularly** in order to be sure you are keeping up with all necessary information and class updates.

IMPORTANT DATES

Mark your calendars now! *Hurry!*

January 16: In-class screening of episode 4 of *Genesis, a Living Conversation*

January 23: Written assignment for *Genesis, a Living Conversation* due at the beginning of class

February 9: **Last day** to turn in your first essay assignment at the beginning of class

February 13: In-class midterm (no blue books required)

March 2: **Last day** to turn in your second essay assignment at the beginning of class

March 18: Final exam, 8am-11am (**bring blue books**)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Here you will find the schedule of readings for the course, broken down into weeks and days. For each week, you will find listed the topic for discussion section (be sure to check the [discussion section](#) page for more detailed information). For each week, links are also provided for the [guides to the biblical reading](#) and the [lecture outlines](#).

For each class session, topics and readings are listed in three categories: **Textbook**, **Bible**, and **Online**. Online readings can be obtained by clicking the link on the Syllabus & Readings page of the course website. **You are expected to have done all the reading for that day before coming to class.**

Intro = Hauer and Young, *Introduction to the Bible* followed by **chapter** numbers or (in some cases) **chapter and page** numbers.

Biblical readings are given by book and chapter number. For example, Genesis 8 = the eighth **chapter** of the book of Genesis.

WEEK ONE

BIBLE BASICS

Discussion Section Topic: **Open discussion and Bible orientation**

Jan. 5 (Mon.): **Introduction to the course**

No readings

Jan. 7 (Wed.) **What is/are the Bible(s)?**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 1, **pp. 1-21**

Online: Review [Tables of Biblical Contents](#)

Jan. 9 (Fri.) **Place and Time: Biblical Backdrops**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 1, **pp. 21-35**

Online: Review [Maps of the Ancient World](#); review [Timeline of the Ancient and Biblical Worlds](#)

WEEK TWO

Discussion Section Topic: **Genesis 1-11: Fact, fiction, mythology?**

Jan 12 (Mon.) **Historical Criticism and Comparison**

Bible: Genesis 8; Exodus 21

Online: Selections from the [Epic of Gilgamesh](#) ; selections from the [Code of Hammurabi](#) ; [Colin Humphreys, "Science and the Miracles of Exodus," Europhysics News \(May/June 2005\), 93-96 .](#)

Jan. 14 (Wed.) **Biblical Criticism**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 2

Bible: Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20

Jan. 16 (Fri.) **IN-CLASS SCREENING: *Genesis, A Living Conversation: Apocalypse***

Bible: Review Genesis 6-8

Online: PBS website for [Genesis, A Living Conversation](#)

WEEK THREE

Discussion Section Topic: **No discussion sections**

TORAH

Jan. 19 (Mon.): MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY

Jan. 21 (Wed.) **The Torah Story**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 3

Bible: Genesis 1-17, 37-50; Exodus 1-4

Jan. 23 (Fri.) **The Torah Message**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 4

Bible: Exodus 5-23; Leviticus 11-15; Deuteronomy 5-6, 33-34

RESPONSE TO GENESIS, A LIVING CONVERSATION DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

WEEK FOUR

Discussion Section Topic: **Ezekiel 16: God, Israel, and Sexual Betrayal**

Jan. 26 (Mon.) **The Torah, Deconstructed**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 3, pp. 70-73; chapter 4, pp. 94-99

Bible: Review Genesis 1-2, 6-8

Online: [Documentary Hypothesis Chart](#)

PROPHETS

Jan. 28 (Wed.) **The Prophets Story**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 5

Bible: 1 Samuel 1-12, 16-17; 2 Samuel 5-7, 11-12; 1 Kings 6-8, 16-18; 2 Kings 2-11, 24-25

Jan. 30 (Fri.) **The Prophets Message**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 6

Bible: Isaiah 1-4; Ezekiel 16; Amos (entire book)

WEEK FIVE

Discussion Section Topic: **Song of Solomon: Gender, God, and Israel**

Feb. 2 (Mon.) **Catastrophe and Exile**

Textbook: Review *Intro*, chapters 5 & 6

Bible: Isaiah 42-45; Jeremiah 29-30; Haggai (entire book)

WRITINGS

Feb. 4 (Wed.) **Songs, Emotion, and Community**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 7

Bible: Psalms 13, 23, 106, 113, 132, 137, 138; Lamentations (entire book); Song of Solomon (*aka* Song of Songs) (entire book)

Feb. 6 (Fri.) **Wisdom Literature: Intellect and Understanding**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 8

Bible: Proverbs 8-15; Ecclesiastes 1-3; Job 1-3, 38-42

WEEK SIX

Discussion Section Topic: **Open discussion and midterm review**

Feb. 9 (Mon.) **Stories from the Exile**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 9

Bible: Ruth (entire book); Daniel (entire book)

LAST DAY TO TURN IN ESSAY #1 (DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS)

Feb. 11 (Wed.): **MIDTERM REVIEW**

Feb. 13 (Fri.): **IN-CLASS MIDTERM**

WEEK SEVEN

Discussion Section Topic: **No discussion sections**

GOSPELS

Feb. 16 (Mon.): NO CLASS (President's Day)

Feb. 18 (Wed.): **Apocalypticism and the Jesus Movement**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapters 10-11

Bible: 1 Maccabees 1 (Apocrypha), Review Daniel 7, 11-12

Online: excerpt from the "Letter of Aristeas" ; The "War Scroll" (from Qumran); Apocalypticism (Frontline PBS website)

Feb. 20 (Fri.) **Gospels I: Mark and Matthew**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 12, **pp. 261-72**

Bible: Mark 1-5, 16; Matthew 1-7, 13, 26-28

Online: "What Can We Really Know About Jesus?" (Frontline PBS website) ; Four-Source Hypothesis Chart

WEEK EIGHT

Discussion Section Topic: **Matthew 27:24-66; Mark 15; Luke 23:13-56; John 19: The Passion Story**

Feb. 23 (Mon.) **Gospels II: Luke and John**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 12, **pp. 272-88**

Bible: Luke 1-6, 15-16, 22-24; John 1-5, 10-11, 16-21

Online: Four-Source Hypothesis Chart ; skim "Color-Coded Luke"

PAUL

Feb. 25 (Wed.) **Take one: Acts of the Apostles**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 13

Bible: Acts of the Apostles (entire book)

Feb. 27 (Fri.) **Take two: Paul's Letters**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 14

Bible: 1 Thessalonians (entire book); Galatians (entire book)

Online: Paul's New Testament Letters

WEEK NINE

Discussion Section Topic: Revelation 13-14: Symbol, Prophecy, and The End of the World

Mar. 2 (Mon.) **Paul's Mature Gospel**

Textbook: Review *Intro*, chapter 14

Bible: 1 Corinthians (entire book); Romans (entire book)

Online: "Paul's Mission and Letters" (Frontline PBS website)

LAST DAY TO TURN IN ESSAY #2 (DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS)

Mar. 4 (Wed.) **Liberation and Accommodation**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 15 (begin)

Bible: 1 Timothy (entire book); Ephesians (entire book)

Online: "The Acts of Paul and Thecla"

Mar. 6 (Fri.) **Resistance and Revelation**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 15 (finish)

Bible: 1 John (entire book); 1 Peter (entire book); Revelation (entire book)

WEEK TEN

CANON AND CULTURE

Discussion Section Topic: Open discussion and final exam review

Mar. 9 (Mon.) **Canon and Apocrypha**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 15 (review)

Online: Gospel of Thomas ; Gospel of Mary

Mar. 11 (Wed.) **Bible in U.S. Culture**

Textbook: *Intro*, chapter 16

Online: The First Amendment ; Adele Reinhartz, "Passion-ate Moments in the Jesus Film Genre," *Journal of Religion and Film* 8.1 (2004)

Mar. 13 (Fri.) **Final Review and Questions**

Please bring any and all questions about the final exam, the Bible, this course, religious studies to this last class: all will be revealed!

FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2009, 8am-11am