

Course Prospectus

For THL 332 The Biblical Text

Overview

The word of God, the Hebrew Scriptures and its apostolic complement known as the New Testament, is the foundation of knowledge. God's Word, the Holy Bible, is the account of God's action in the world and his purpose with all creation. The Bible, composed of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament in seven distinct parts, provides examples, admonitions and instructions that reveal a way of life for modern humankind. The writing of the Bible took place over sixteen centuries and is the work of over forty divinely inspired human authors. The Bible is the source of truth, the standard for meaningful life, the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the key to true values, freedom, and liberty. The purpose of this course is the exploration of the word of God through detailed study of the biblical text within its historic contexts and its use in modern worldwide contexts.

Course catalog description for this course

This course deals with the authority, inspiration, canonization, literary unity, and textual criticism of the biblical text. Emphasis is on Bible translations, versions, textual analysis, exegesis, and research. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate the fundamentals of interpretation and textual research.

Prerequisites and corequisites

There are no Prerequisites or Corequisites for this course.

Course credit

Three (3) semester hours.

Instructional objectives

On successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Define key terms relating to the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament;
2. Identify contemporary issues in current scholarship relating to the study of biblical texts;
3. Identify aspects of the socio-cultural world in which the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament were written;
4. Demonstrate the inspiration, canonization, literary unity, and textual criticism of the biblical text; and
5. Demonstrate the contemporary relevance of biblical texts.

Students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities have a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students having a disability requiring an accommodation should inform the instructor through the "Contact Instructor" link on the course home page.

Technology access

This course requires web access and the student has to have an established e-mail account. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. One can download the reader free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

Course evaluation

Student input is welcome for improving this course. Making suggestions by e-mail is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course students have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make e-learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions concerning a student's experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate students letting us know how we can improve our products and services for them and other distance learners.

Textbooks

Textbooks for this course are:

Arnold, Bill T. and Bryan E. Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998; and.

Elwell, Walter A and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

These may be ordered through the University Bookstore.

The textbooks used in this course are commercial publications. They represent the views and ideas of their authors, editors, and publishers. Living University does not endorse these texts nor vouch for their accuracy. We simply employ them in helping you master the content of the course.

Icebreaker assignment

To begin this course, students must complete an icebreaker assignment to introduce themselves to their classmates through the posting of a short autobiography on the course Forum. The icebreaker assignment is due by the eighth day of the semester. Students post their biographies as a reply to the "Bios" topic on the course forum. A student can earn 25 bonus points in this course by doing so "on time." As there are people from all over the world enrolled in this course each autobiography will help all know, understand and appreciate each other. Students are to read and comment on each other's bios throughout the first week of class.

Course requirements and grades

Due dates and extensions

Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

Reading and writing exercises

Refer to "Course outline and assignments" section for reading assignments.

Filing writing assignments

For instructions in how to post assignments is provided by visiting the Frequently Asked Questions pages through the link on the course homepage.

Study tips

Distance learning emphasizes self-motivation. The instructor functions as a facilitator with the student as the driving force in mastering course content. Students are encouraged not to put off completing their readings and assignments. While there are many different learning styles, the following strategy should serve the needs of most students.

- Look over assigned readings.
- Read the assigned readings making notes before viewing the assigned lecture.

- Define terms in the assignment. The exams will specifically test basic terminology. Students should develop their biblical and theology vocabulary as they proceed assignment by assignment.
- As students view lectures they should complete their notes.
- Complete the answers for the writing assignment.
- Each week students should review notes, geographical terms and locations, and the words they defined.
- If a student has a question, ask. Questions should arise in the teaching-learning process. By bringing questions to our attention, students not only acquire assistance but they also maintain the interaction necessary in higher education. Use the Inbox on the course home page to send questions.

Lectures

This course includes several lectures by Mr. Ames and some guests. Links to lectures are placed in lessons.

Quizzes and examinations

Each of the twelve lessons has an associated online exam of not more than 28 questions. They are open book exams, but under no circumstances are students to print the quiz. An open book quiz is not a workbook exercise. It is a test where the student can consult his or her notes and books. Students have ninety minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes are objective tests (which may include true/false, matching, multiple-choice questions covering lectures, readings, vocabulary words and discussion topics.

Grading

A course grade will be determined based on the number of points a student has earned over the semester as follows:

- Writing Assignments (ten, each worth 50 points, for a total of 500 points)
- Quizzes (ten, each worth 25 points, for a total of 250 points; online, open book]
- Team Project (worth 250 points)
- TOTAL 1,000 points

Posting the autobiography on time can earn a student 25 bonus points. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing.

Grades are in the traditional American style of an A, B, C, D, or F. In distance learning, we believe that the measure of mastery of course subject matter is completion of 80% of the objectives for a course. That means that we want students to earn at least 800 points in this course. If they do not do so then they have not achieved the level of the mastery we would like them to have.

We want this course to be competency-based and so it is possible for the entire class to receive an A or a B. There is no artificial curving of scores in the assignment of grades (if you do not know what that means, do not worry about it). Mastery of the material is what one's goal should be.

Grades, assigned by points, are as follows:

- A 900-1000 points
- B 800-899 points
- C 700-799 points
- D 600-699 points
- F Below 600 points

Academic irregularity

Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic

irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another's ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were the writer's own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned.

In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members are authorized to refuse to grade such papers, completely or in part, or examinations, and to record each of them as a failure.

If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of F;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University.

Course calendar

Lesson	Readings (this is not an exhaustive list, some additional readings will be added during the semester)
Lesson 1 THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE	
Topic 1 Overview	Winnail - <i>The Bible: Fact or Fiction</i> Millich - <i>The Bible - Foundation of Knowledge or Ignorance</i>
Topic 2 The Bible Questioned	Meredith - <i>Satan's Attack on the Bible</i> Meredith - <i>The Bible or Human Tradition?</i>
Topic 3 Inspiration of the Bible	Ogwyn - <i>How Did We Get the Bible?</i> Winnail - <i>Can You Believe the Bible?</i>
Topic 4 The Bible as God's Word	Meredith - <i>Does The Bible Really Mean What It Says?</i> Ames - <i>Principles of Bible Study</i>
Lesson 2 THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES	
Topic 1 The Ancient Near East	Arnold and Beyer Chapter 2 (pp. 35-59) Germano - The Three Age System Germano - Levantine Historical-Archaeological Periods Map of the Levant Levantine Trade Routes
Topic 2 Introduction to the Old Testament	Arnold and Beyer Chapter 1 (pp. 21-33) Germano - Classical Hermeneutics
Lesson 3 THE TORAH	
Topic 1 Introduction to the Pentateuch	Arnold and Beyer Chapter 3 (pp. 63-75)
Lesson 4 THE WRITINGS	
Topic 1 The Historical and Poetic Writings	Arnold and Beyer Chapters 10 (pp. 157-166), 19 (pp. 281-288) and 20 (pp. 289-301).
Lesson 5 THE PROPHETS	

Topic 1 The Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel)	Arnold and Beyer Chapter 24 (pp. 339-352) Ogwyn <i>The Bible: History Recorded in Advance</i>
Topic 2 The Minor Prophets ("The Twelve")	Arnold and Beyer Chapters 32 (pp. 439-450), 33 (pp. 451-462), and 34 (pp. 463-473)

Lesson 6 THE NEW TESTAMENT

Topic 1 The World of the First Christians	Elwell and Yarbrough Chapter 2 (pp. 39-68) Germano Comments on Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 2 (pp. 39-68) Germano - <i>The First Christians: Apostolic Christianity CE 30-135</i> Chapter 1 (pp. 11-40)
Topic 2 Introduction to the New Testament	Elwell and Yarbrough Chapter 1 (pp. 19-35) Germano - <i>New Testament: Authors, Dates, and Places of Writing</i>

Lesson 7 THE GOSPELS

Topic 1 The Gospels	Elwell and Yarbrough Chapters 3 (pp. 69-76), 10 (pp. 153-167), and 11 (pp. 169-179) Germano - <i>Thoughts on the Gospel According to Matthew</i>
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Lesson 8 THE ACTS

Topic 1 The Acts of the Apostles	Elwell and Yarbrough Chapters 13 (pp. 193-207) and 14 (pp. 209-222)
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Lesson 9 THE EPISTLES

Topic 1 The General Epistles	Elwell and Yarbrough the James section of Chapter 22 (pp. 353-358) and 23 (pp. 361-374)
Topic 2 The Epistles of Paul	Elwell and Yarbrough Chapter 17 (pp. 253-271) and the Hebrews section of Chapter 22 (pp. 347-353) Germano - <i>The First Christians</i> Chapter 8 (pp. 279-338)

Lesson 10 REVELATION

Topic 1 The Revelation	Elwell and Yarbrough Chapter 24 (pp. 375-385)
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