

Course Prospectus

For THL 332 The Biblical Text

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| OVERVIEW | 1 |
| Course description..... | 2 |
| Prerequisites and corequisites..... | 2 |
| Course credit..... | 2 |
| INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES..... | 2 |
| YOUR INSTRUCTORS | 2 |
| COURSE PROTOCOLS | 3 |
| Technology access | 3 |
| Students with disabilities | 3 |
| Attendance in this online course | 3 |
| Withdrawing from or dropping this course | 4 |
| Terms and phrases | 4 |
| Study tips | 4 |
| TEXTBOOKS | 5 |
| COURSE REQUIREMENTS..... | 5 |
| Due dates and extensions | 5 |
| Icebreaker assignment | 5 |
| Reading assignments..... | 6 |
| Discussion forums..... | 6 |
| Writing assignments..... | 6 |
| Team project..... | 6 |
| Quizzes and examinations..... | 6 |
| Course evaluation..... | 6 |
| GRADING | 7 |
| ACADEMIC IRREGULARITY | 7 |
| COURSE OUTLINE..... | 8 |

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.

Course Prospectus THL 332- The Biblical Text

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 description

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 generate an evidence-based explanation of the formation of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament and 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. Demonstrate the skills necessary for effective Bible study and understanding and explaining biblical passages contextually;
2. Identify aspects of the sociocultural world in which the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament were written;
3. Demonstrate the inspiration, canonization, literary unity, and textual criticism of the biblical text;
4. Demonstrate the skill sets needed for lifelong biblical and theological study;
5. Identify contemporary issues in current scholarship relating to the study of biblical texts;
6. Demonstrate the contemporary relevance of biblical texts; and
7. Define key terms relating to the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

Your Instructors

The instructor of record for this course is Peter G. Nathan. Mr. Richard F. Ames serves as the supporting instructor. To contact them on course details and issues, please use the email feature in the E-Learning system (Populi).



The Rylands Library Papyrus P52, also known as the St John's fragment, is a fragment from a papyrus codex, measuring only 3.5 by 2.5 inches (8.9 by 6 cm) at its widest; and conserved with the Rylands Papyri at the John Rylands University Library (Gr. P. 457), Manchester, UK. The front (recto) contains lines from the Gospel of John 18:31–33, in Greek, and the back (verso) contains lines from verses 37–38. The fragment, found in Egypt, dates to ca. 115 CE.



Peter G. Nathan



Richard F. Ames

This course includes several lectures by Mr. Ames and some guests. Links to lectures are on the individual lesson webpages.

Course Protocols

Technology access

This course requires web access and the student has to have an established email 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>.

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 by email (on the course “Info” page click on the instructor’s name and then select “Send Email”).

Attendance in this online course

One of the most vital aspects of the college and university experience is attendance and punctuality in the learning environment. Regularity of attendance is necessary for students to derive maximum benefit from a course and to maintain a satisfactory academic record, whether in an online course or in an on-campus course. We have noticed that students who fall behind in their coursework typically drop out. Therefore, we highly encourage you to complete your assignments on time, as we want you to succeed. Remember Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.”

Please be aware that all students who fall behind in an online course and do not complete twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the total assignments and other required activities for a course, on or before “Last day to withdraw from a course” without a grade penalty as set forth in the University Academic Calendar, will receive a grade of “W” for it. After that date, the grade will be a “WF” and counted in a student’s GPA. Moreover, an instructor may drop a student from a course whenever the instructor concludes that a student’s class attendance or punctuality endangers the student’s success or places other students at risk.

Withdrawing from or dropping this course

It is the responsibility of a student to drop a course if he or she cannot meet the requirements of the course. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing from it risks receiving a punitive grade for that course. A student who finds it necessary to drop a course after the Late Registration (Drop/Add) Period must notify the Registrar's Office in writing. Please note the following:

- If a student drops a course on or before the "Last day to withdraw from a course without a grade penalty" as published in the University Academic Calendar, even if his or her work is not of a passing grade, then a "W" is recorded.
- If a course is dropped after that date, but before the last 21 calendar days of the semester, then the instructor determines the grade. The faculty member will at this time record a grade of "W" if passing (not computed in GPA) or "WF" if failing (computed in GPA).
- Students who drop a course, yet remain in one or more other courses during the last 18 calendar days of the semester, will receive a grade of "WF."
- Students who completely withdraw from the University at any time during the semester may be given a grade of "W" on all courses.

If students do not initiate the withdrawal process, the instructor is required to initiate the administrative process and to record a grade of "W" or "WF" for the course depending on the date the faculty member drops the student from the course. Students who register for a course as an audit, but then withdraw will be assigned a grade of "W" for the course.

Terms and phrases

Each assignment includes a set of terms and phrases for you to learn. This exercise is to help you develop and expand your biblical and theological vocabulary as you proceed through the lessons and to help you focus on the context of the content you are reading. Examinations will specifically test your mastery of the basic terminology of this course. Many students find looking over vocabulary words just as they go to bed at night and as they arise in the morning helps commit them to memory. Be sure to review your definitions before an examination.

For some terms and phrases, we have given a scriptural link. We selected the NKJ, the New King James Version, as our default for scriptural text. When alternate scriptures appear, we provide the appropriate link as NASB, KJV, RSV, NIV, and the like.

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 lesson. The exams will specifically test basic terminology. Students should develop their biblical and theological vocabulary as they proceed lesson by lesson.
- As students view lectures they should complete their notes.
- Participate in any assigned lesson discussion forums.
- Complete the answers for the writing assignment.

Course Prospectus THL 332- The Biblical Text

- 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. To submit a question just click on the instructor's name on the course "Info" webpage and send your question by email through the Populi system.

Textbooks

Textbooks for this course are:

Arnold, Bill T., and Bryan E. Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015.

Elwell, Walter A., and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

Lutzer, Erwin W. *Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1998.

Woodard, Lee. *First Century Gospels Found!* Tahlequah, OK: LaSalleMonument.com, 2008.

You may order these items through the University Bookstore. Living University is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to amazon.com. 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.

Course Requirements

Due dates and extensions

Submit all assignments on or before the due dates. Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

Icebreaker assignment

To officially begin this course you must complete an Icebreaker assignment by which you introduce yourself to your classmates through posting a short autobiography on the course Discussion Forum. A student can earn **30 points** by posting the Icebreaker assignment on time. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing this course.

- The icebreaker assignment must be submitted not later than the eighth day of classes.
- Post your biography as a reply to the "Icebreaker" topic on the lesson "Welcome and Overview" Discussion Forum.
- Please read and comment on at least two other bios by the due date in order to get credit.
- Full credit for this assignment will only be given if all three of the above requirements are met.

Course Prospectus THL 332- The Biblical Text

Do NOT create a NEW discussion. Simply tell the class about yourself and your goals. This is not the place for a profession of faith, or the details your conversion experience, or problems you have had with previous fellowships, as that information is more of a private nature. Here you inform your classmates what you would like them to know about you. As we have people from all over the world enrolled in this course, each autobiography will help us know, understand and appreciate each other.

Reading assignments

Reading assignments are located on the lesson pages at the course website.

Discussion forums

Each lesson will have an associated discussion question posted by the instructor. Students will be required to post online comments to the discussion thread and interact with fellow classmates.

Writing assignments

All writing assignments in this course should follow the MLA style as set forth in *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* by Lester and Lester. Please cite your sources and use quotation marks where needed. The Files feature on an assignment submission page lets you submit your work so your instructor can have it handy for download, review, and grading.

Team project

Students taking the class for credit will divide themselves into teams comprised of 2-3 members. Each team is tasked to conduct research on a project assigned by the instructor, and commit their findings to writing. The final paper presented by each team should have an introduction explaining the nature of the assignment, a final summary of their findings, and an appropriate conclusion. It should be presented in MLA format. Students should contact each other early in the semester and begin their discussion of how they are going to cooperatively develop this paper.

Quizzes and examinations

Each of the eight lessons has an associated online quiz of not more than 25 questions. They are open book quizzes, 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 sixty (60) minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes are multiple-choice questions covering lectures, readings, vocabulary words, and geographical terms and places.

There are two closed book exams of 45-50 objective questions each, to be taken online. **Only Exam 2 is to be proctored.** A proctored exam is one that is overseen by an impartial individual (called a proctor) who monitors or supervises a student while he or she is taking an exam. The proctor ensures the security and integrity of the exam process for all involved.

Course evaluation

Student input is welcome for improving this course. Making suggestions by email 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. By completing the assessment, you can earn **30 points** toward your final grade. 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.

Grading

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

- Icebreaker Assignment (30 points)
- Writing Assignments (eight, each worth 45 points, for a total of 360 points)
- Discussion Forums (eight, each worth 5 points, for a total of 40 points)
- Quizzes (eight, each worth 25 points, for a total of 200 points; online, open book]
- Team Project (100 points)
- Exams (two, each worth 100 points, for a total of 200 points; closed book; only Exam 2 is proctored)
- “What I Learned” Essay (40 points)
- Course Evaluation (30 points)
- TOTAL 1,000 points**

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. 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 may refuse to grade such papers or examinations, completely or in part, 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 outline

Welcome and Overview

Lesson 1 The Study of the Bible

Lesson 2 The Torah

Lesson 3 The Writings (The Historical and Poetical Books)

Lesson 4 The Prophets

Exam 1 (Lessons 1-4, Closed Book)

Lesson 5 The New Testament and the Gospels (The First NT Scroll/Codex)

Lesson 6 Acts and the General Epistles (The Second NT Scroll/Codex)

Lesson 7 The Epistles of Paul (The Third NT Scroll/Codex)

Lesson 8 The Revelation of Jesus Christ (The Fourth NT Scroll/Codex)

Exam 2 (Lessons 5-8, Proctored, Closed Book)