

RELS 101-07 and 09, Introduction to the Biblical Tradition, Fall 2004

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Religious Studies 101: Introduction to the Biblical Tradition
Rhodes College/Department of Religious Studies
Fall 2004

Instructor:

Patrick Gray
Clough Hall 203
Office Hours: MW 8:00-9:00; TTh 9:30-11:00; and by appointment
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Time/Place:

Section 07: TTh 8:00-9:15/Clough 300
Section 09: TTh 12:30-1:45/Palmer 211

Course Description:

This course is the first in the “Life: Then and Now” program, a four-course sequence of Bible and Bible-related courses by which students may fulfill the college’s basic humanities requirement. The primary aim is to introduce students to the academic study of the Bible. This includes the study of the various historical, cultural, and social contexts in which it was written as well as a consideration of the different methods for interpreting it. A few basic questions will guide our reading in the course: What is the author trying to say? How is he or she trying to say it? And what understandings of God and the world does one encounter in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament? In trying to answer these questions, we not only want to examine the specific themes and arguments finding expression in these writings; we also want to cultivate skills and strategies for interpreting these and other texts.

Required Texts:

Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3rd edition (=NOAB)

Course Requirements:

Class Participation and Writing Exercises: Participating in class presupposes attendance and preparation. You are allowed three absences; after that, your grade will be lowered one-half of a letter for each subsequent absence. You must read all assigned texts. Class discussions will be based on the assigned readings and writing exercises. Over the course of the term, students will hand in ten written responses to some aspect of the reading for a given week. Completion of these short written exercises (approx. one to two type-written pages) will facilitate class discussion. Guidelines will be distributed ahead of time. *Late papers will not be accepted.* However, students may drop the lowest score. *Together with class participation, these written responses will constitute 30% of your final grade.*

Quizzes: There will be ten short quizzes given over the course of the term. The dates for these quizzes will not be announced ahead of time *and may not be made up.* Students may drop the lowest score. *Quizzes will constitute 20% of your final grade.*

Mid-term Examination: The mid-term exam will include both objective and essay sections. *The mid-term exam will constitute 25% of your final grade.*

Final Examination: This will be an in-class exam during the week of finals and will include both objective and essay sections. *The final examination will constitute 25% of your final grade.*

****All work for this course should be completed in conformity with the College Honor Code.****

Course Schedule:

- Aug 26 Course introduction
- Aug 31 Prolegomena
Reading: "Translation of the Bible into English" (NOAB, 466-471)
Writing Exercise #1 due at class time
- Sept 2 Modern and Pre-modern Approaches to the Study of the Bible
Reading: "The Interpretation of the Bible" (NOAB, 488-497); "Introduction to the Pentateuch" (NOAB, 3-7)
Writing Exercise #2 due at class time
- Sept 7 "In the Beginning . . ."
Reading: Genesis 1-11 (NOAB, 9-27)
- Sept 9 Genesis: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
Reading: Genesis 12-35 (NOAB, 27-60); Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 44-48
Writing Exercise #3 due at class time
- Sept 14 "Let My People Go"
Reading: Exodus 1-15 (NOAB, 82-105); "Cultural Contexts" (NOAB, 509-510)
- Sept 16 Law and Covenant
Reading: Exodus 19-23; 32 (NOAB, 109-116; 128-130); Deuteronomy 1-4; 31; 34 (NOAB, 240-251; 298-300; 307-308)
- Sept 21 Entering and Settling the Land
Reading: "Cultural Contexts" (NOAB, 510-511); Joshua 1-8 (NOAB, 314-328); Judges 1-21 (NOAB, 353-390)
Writing Exercise #4 due at class time
- Sept 23 The Rise of the Monarchy: Saul and David
Reading: "Cultural Contexts" (NOAB, 511-512); 1 Samuel 8-20 (NOAB, 398-399; 409-433); 2 Samuel 1-7; 11-18 (NOAB, 446-458; 460-474)
- Sept 28 The End of the United Kingdom
Reading: "Cultural Contexts" (NOAB, 512-514); 1 Kings 1-4; 10-21 (NOAB, 487-497; 508-530); 2 Kings 17-25 (NOAB, 560-575)
- Sept 30 The Prophets: The Nature of Prophecy in Ancient Israel
Reading: "Introduction to the Prophetic Books" (NOAB, 969-973); Hosea 1-3; 11-14 (NOAB, 1278-1282; 1290-1294); Amos (NOAB, 1302-1317); Isaiah 5-11 (NOAB, 974-977; 984-995)
Writing Exercise #5 due at class time
- Oct 5 The Prophets: Responses to Crisis
Reading: Jeremiah 1; 7-9; 26; 31 (NOAB, 1073-1076; 1088-1094; 1119-1121; 1126-1130); Isaiah 40-55 (NOAB, 1030-1056)
- Oct 7 Wisdom Literature: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
Reading: Proverbs 1-9 (NOAB, 904-915); Ecclesiastes (NOAB, 944-958)
Writing Exercise #6 due at class time
- Oct 12 Wisdom Literature: Job
Reading: Job 1-14; 38-42 (NOAB, 726-742, 768-774)
Review for exam
- Oct 14 Mid-term exam
- Oct 19 Fall Break—No Class
- Oct 21 Israel and the Nations
Ezra 1; 9-10 (NOAB, 671-673; 683-687); Ruth (NOAB, 391-397); Jonah (NOAB, 1321-1324)
Writing Exercise #7 due at class time
- Oct 26 The Apocrypha
Reading: "Introduction to the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books" (NOAB, 3-10); 1 Maccabees 1-4 (NOAB, 201-214); Prologue of Sirach (NOAB, 101-102); and either Susanna (NOAB, 194-197) or Bel and the Dragon (NOAB, 198-200)
- Oct 28 The Historical and Cultural Context of Early Christianity
Reading: "The NT Interprets the Jewish Scriptures" (NOAB, 474-478) "The

- Roman Period” (NOAB, 519-525)
- Nov 2 Introducing Jesus and the Gospels
 Reading: “Introduction to the Gospels” (NOAB, 3-6); Mark (NOAB, 56-92);
 Johnson, *The Real Jesus*, 1-27
- Nov 4 Matthew’s Gospel
 Reading: Matthew (NOAB, 7-55)
 Writing Exercise #8 due at class time
- Nov 9 Luke’s Gospel
 Reading: Luke (NOAB, 93-145)
- Nov 11 The Acts of the Apostles
 Reading: Acts (NOAB, 183-239)
- Nov 16 Paul: 1 Corinthians and Philemon
 Reading: “Letters/Epistles in the NT” (NOAB, 240-241); 1 Corinthians
 (NOAB, 267-292); Philemon (NOAB, 366-368)
- Nov 18 Paul: Romans and Galatians
 Reading: Romans (NOAB, 242-266); Galatians (NOAB, 309-319)
 Writing Exercise #9 due at class time
- Nov 23 No Class
- Nov 25 Thanksgiving--No Class
- Nov 30 The Letter to the Hebrews
 Reading: Hebrews (NOAB, 369-385)
 Writing Exercise #10 due at class time
- Dec 2 Johannine Christianity
 Reading: Gospel of John (NOAB, 146-182); 1 John (NOAB, 406-412)
- Dec 7 Revelation
 Reading: Revelation (NOAB, 420-449)
 Course Evaluation
- Dec 9 Reading Day

Final Exam: Time and Date to be announced