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RELS 101-05 and 06, The Bible: Texts and Contexts, Fall 2006

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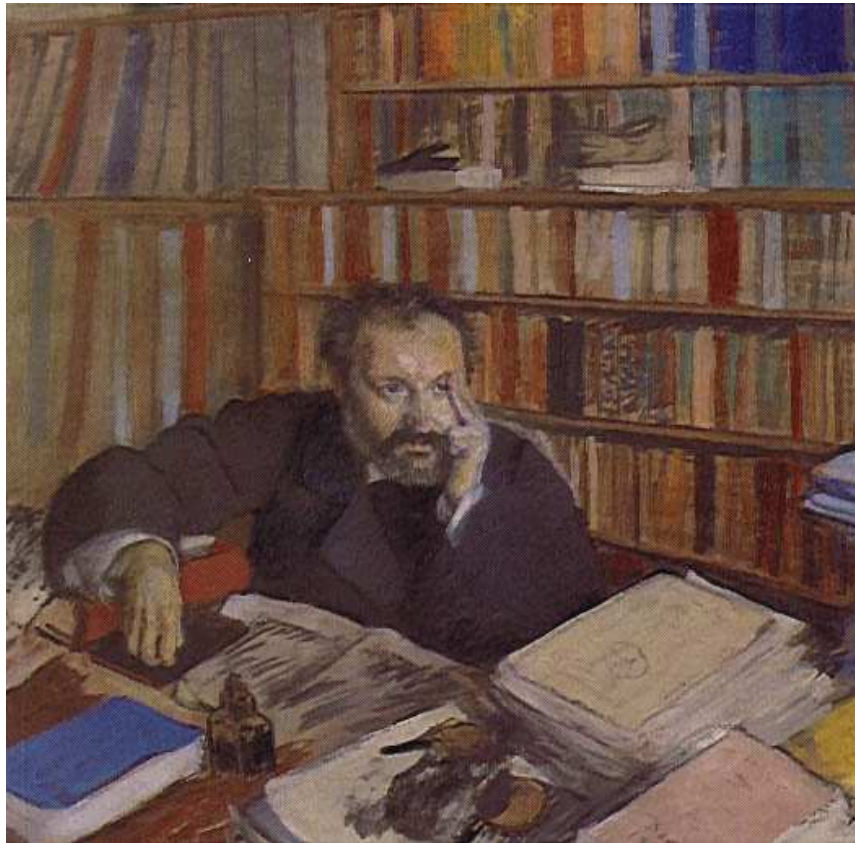
The Bible

Texts and Contexts

FALL 2006

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 101-05 • CRN 17315

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 101-06 • CRN 17316



Dr. Ryan Byrne

byrner@rhodes.edu

901-843-3258

Clough 101 (office)

Kennedy 101 (Archaeology laboratory)

Office Hours: MWF 9:30-10:30 AM in Middle Ground or by appointment

Required Materials

Alberto Manguel. *A History of Reading*. New York: Penguin, 1996.

John Riches. *The Bible: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

L. Michael White. *From Jesus to Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

*Abbreviated in syllabus as **FJC**

Michael D. Coogan, ed. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. 3rd ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

*Abbreviated in syllabus as **NOAB**

Bart D. Ehrman. *Misquoting Jesus: The Story behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

Course Expectations

A. Weighting of Course Elements

See the Course Elements section below for a description of these assignments.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Attendance/Participation (including Gnosis) | 25% |
| • Critical Response Papers (3 total) | 30% |
| • Midterm Examination | 20% |
| • Final Examination | 25% |

B. Grading

The semester grade is based on a 100 percent scale, which correlates to 100 points. The numerical equivalents for letter grades break down as follows:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Typical Performance</u>
100-92%	A	superior effort, highest quality work, exhaustive preparation
91%	A-	
90%	B+	
89-81%	B	satisfactory participation and quality of work, complacent effort relative to abilities
80%	B-	
79%	C+	

78-71%	C	average quality of work and energy, lacks sensitivity to detail, banal or superficial interaction with materials
70%	C-	
69%	D+	
68-61%	D	bare minimum effort, lacks focus and respect for class goals
60%	D-	

What do letter grades mean to the professor?

An A grade is not an entitlement for the completion of all assignments and perfect attendance. For our purposes, an A grade signifies a supreme effort with respect to the quality of one's work. An earned A grade indicates that one *could not* have performed more successfully or prepared more energetically. The results must reflect the effort committed.

The student deserving an A grade comes to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, demonstrates thoughtful analysis of the ideas and problems at hand, dares to offer opinions even at the risk of disagreement, listens respectfully to what others have to contribute, and seeks common ground with opposing viewpoints. In writing, this student is extremely attentive to detail on matters of prescribed guidelines, conceptual organization, substance of research, formatting, citation, grammar and spelling.

The student deserving a B grade typically turns in good work, but it is clear that better work was possible. This student engages in class discussion with a lower awareness of, or interest in, how her/his comments might improve the quality of discussion and contemplation for the entire class. The student's efforts are lackadaisical or complacent relative to her/his abilities. Written assignments are usually decent, but they fall short in one or more of the following areas: (1) attention to detail (e.g. formatting, citation, grammar and spelling) or (2) reflective analysis of the studied materials.

The performance of the student deserving a C grade suggests only a casual acquaintance with the assigned materials and/or a failure to reflect thoughtfully on the purpose and relevance of the assignments to class discussion. Her/his writing shows inattention to detail, a general indifference to the assignment's instructions, and/or a superficial response to the intellectual challenges encountered throughout the semester course. Attendance is semi-regular or regular but unprepared/nonparticipatory.

The student deserving a D grade performs only the very minimum requirements. Unsatisfactory effort in the areas of attendance, class participation, quality of written work, and/or familiarity with assigned readings will earn a student a D grade.

C. Classroom Behavior

Good faith is the currency of intellectual trust. It is a demonstration of earnest commitment to the class goals, open-mindedness toward the readings and the professor,

and, most importantly, a healthy measure of respect for one's fellow students and their perspectives. The classroom should be a safe haven where we all feel comfortable expressing ourselves. Classroom behavior should model community in its best sense. For this reason, I place a significant grading emphasis (see Attendance/Participation) on civility and peer encouragement in class discussions. That does not mean, however, that we need ever shy away from difficult topics or fear to ask penetrating questions. Critical inquiry at the college level requires each of us to ask hard-nosed questions about the subject matter — and disagreement is an important (indeed necessary) component of scholarship. It is possible for us to challenge each other with both intellectual rigor and mutual respect, and you may deem mastery of this balance a rewarding discursive skill in life. It falls to the professor to set an inclusive tone for an examination of the material, but the students play a symbiotic role in creating a safe haven for learning without fear and questioning without contempt.

Good faith may also come into play as a wild card for borderline grades or special requests. **Good faith is your political capital with the professor.** Please treat it seriously.

D. Honor Code Compliance

Academic honesty in the pursuit of pure and practical knowledge is the highest priority in college study. In solidarity with the Rhodes academic community, I will expect complete and unwavering commitment to the College's Honor Code. This means that one must not take credit for work originated by another. Your signatory adherence to the Code has earned you an incalculable trust from the faculty. Please treat that trust with the solemnity deserved.

What constitutes academic honesty and dishonesty is not clear to everyone. That is no excuse for unfamiliarity with the Honor Code, however. If you are ever uncertain about how the Honor Code applies to a particular assignment, **it is *always* better to ask for advice beforehand** than to turn in an assignment about which you might have misgivings. Please ask if something is unclear, and I will do my best to help. Tutors at the writing center are also at your disposal for help. Make use of this valuable campus service. Representatives of the Honor Council are also available for questions regarding the Honor Code and its governance of academic assignments.

Course Elements

A. Participation and Attendance

Students should arrive at class (1) on time (2) with the assigned readings completed and (3) ready to participate in classroom discussion.

The professor grades class participation heavily. Students who choose not to participate in class discussion during the semester will not earn high marks. Please govern your priorities accordingly. Students should be prepared to respond to questions from the professor as well as the ideas and directions of thought suggested by colleagues in class. In addition to participation in class discussion, your professor may require any of the following activities.

- Leading a discussion session
- Bringing prepared questions or comments to class
- Completing an in-class writing assignment or quiz
- Participating in small group discussion

Remember that the time in class is never sufficient to cover completely all the topics, ideas, arguments that may be important in an assignment. Your responsibility for the assigned reading, therefore, extends beyond what is explicitly covered in the class period.

This class does **not** meet outside. Please do **not** ask.

A1. Absences

Make certain to sign your name in the attendance roster passed out in class. Attendance and class participation together comprise twenty-five percent of the total grade. It is therefore absolutely critical that one avoids unnecessary absences from class. The first three absences are free passes; they are automatically excused without prejudice. Distribute these wisely. **Each absence after the free passes deducts 3.33 percent of your total semester points.** Every three absences after the first three instances will roughly lower your final point total by a full letter grade. Thus an excellent semester performance otherwise deserving of an A grade will automatically become a B with five total absences. With eight total absences, an A grade becomes a C grade, etc. A student with eight or more unexcused absences cannot pass the course.

Medical treatment with **documentation** and the *rare* prearranged exception approved by the instructor are the only excusable absences. If you are ill, get a note from the Health Center. A personal email does not excuse an absence. Chronic tardiness is also frowned upon; it may adversely affect one's attendance grade if unaddressed.

Student athletes and members of MUN and Mock Trial are permitted to make up a maximum of two missed classes under the following conditions. Students must make an

appointment to discuss the missed material with the professor and submit a one-page reflective summary of that day's assigned reading.

A2. Gnosis

The professor will occasionally assign a Gnosis query, the aggregate points of which may comprise a large percentage of the participation grade. This is a one-page writing assignment that requires the student to perform guided or unguided research on a selected topic prior to a class discussion.

B. Testing

There will be two examinations during the semester. These are the Midterm examination and the Final examination, the format for which the professor will detail in study guides distributed in advance of the test dates. Sometimes a student's parent will purchase an airline ticket home earlier than the scheduled Final examination. Please research all the designated exam dates and times for your classes. The Registrar assigns these dates and they will not be changed to accommodate cheap fares.

C. Writing and Papers

The professor will assign three critical response papers that make use of course readings.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

AUGUST

MONDAY	TUE.	WEDNESDAY	THU.	FRIDAY
21	22	23 General Housekeeping	24	25 Orality, Literacy, Authority <i>Manguel, A History of Reading,</i> pp. 41-53
28 Death of the Author, Power of the Reader <i>Gilgamesh Tablet XI (pdf);</i> <i>Manguel, A History of Reading,</i> pp. 177-85	29	30 Parablepsis Frank M. Cross, "Light on the Bible from the Dead Sea Caves" (pdf)	31	

SEPTEMBER

MONDAY	TUE.	WEDNESDAY	THU.	FRIDAY
				1 The Wolf on the Fold 2 Kings 18-19 (NOAB); Annals of Sennacherib (handout); Lord Byron, "The Destruction of Sennacherib" (handout or pdf)
4 Labor Day	5	6 Avatars William Schniedewind, <i>How the Bible Became a Book</i> , pp. 24-34 (handout or pdf)	7	8 Writing Systems of the Ancient World Assignment TBA
11 Iron Age Texts William Schniedewind, <i>How the Bible Became a Book</i> , pp. 35-47 (handout or pdf)	12	13 The Archaic Poem Judges 5; Exodus 15 (NOAB); William Schniedewind, <i>How the Bible Became a Book</i> , pp. 48-56 (handout or pdf)	14	15 Reading from a Distance Exodus 14; Judges 4 (NOAB); Manguel, <i>A History of Reading</i> , pp. 95-107
18 Toward a Judean Epic Lawrence Stager, "Forging an Identity" (pdf)		20 A Family History P. Kyle McCarter, "The Patriarchal Age" (pdf)	21	22 Patriarchal Narratives Genesis 12-22; 27 Map 1, The Land of Canaan: Abraham to Moses, NOAB
25 The Exodus, as Seen on TV! Exodus 1-7, 11-20	26	27 Legal Language on the Books Exodus 19-22; Leviticus 19; Deuteronomy 5-6, 21 (NOAB); Code of Hammurabi (handout or pdf)	28	29 Research Day PARENT/FAMILY WEEKEND

OCTOBER

MONDAY	TUE.	WEDNESDAY	THU.	FRIDAY
<p style="text-align: right;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Torah! Torah! Torah!</p> <p>2 Kings 22-23; Nehemiah 8 (NOAB); Shabaka Stone (pdf)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MIDTERM</p> <p>Bring bluebooks and writing implements</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">5</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Mother of All Etiologies</p> <p>Genesis 1-3 (NOAB); Gilbert and Zevit, "Congenital Human Baculum Deficiency" (pdf)</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Primeval Tidbits</p> <p>Genesis 4-9 (NOAB)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">10</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Theodicy or Tautology?</p> <p>Job 1-14, 38-42 (NOAB); Babylonian texts (handout or pdf)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">12</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">13</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hellenism and Hellenization</p> <p>Selections from <i>Oxford History of the Classical World</i> (handout or pdf);</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fall Break</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jewish Responses to Hellenization</p> <p>1 Maccabees 1-4 (NOAB); Levine, "The Age of Hellenism" (handout or pdf); 4 Maccabees 1-10 (NOAB); Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i> (selections distributed in class)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">19</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Translator Traduces</p> <p>Septuagint (handout or pdf); <i>Letter of Aristeas</i> (handout or pdf); A. Nicolson, <i>God's Secretaries</i>, pp. 82-83 (handout or pdf); Manguel, <i>A History of Reading</i>, pp. 261-77</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Theories of Reading and Writing</p> <p><i>FJC</i>, pp. 1-8</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Curiosity of Canon</p> <p><i>FJC</i>, pp. 439-58</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">26</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pax Romana</i></p> <p><i>FJC</i>, pp. 11-39</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mediterranean Mysteries</p> <p><i>FJC</i>, pp. 40-66</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">31</p>			

NOVEMBER

MONDAY	TUE.	WEDNESDAY	THU.	FRIDAY
		1 Judaisms of the Roman Occupation <i>FJC</i> , pp. 67-92, 217-31	2	3 Early Christianities Film and popcorn
6 Reading Paul's Mail Galatians; 1 Corinthians 7 (<i>NOAB</i>); <i>FJC</i> , pp. 143-68	7	8 Paul the Character <i>The Acts of Paul and Thecla</i> (pdf); <i>FJC</i> , pp. 401-3	9	10 Posture and Imposture Pastoral Epistles (selections in <i>NOAB</i>); <i>FJC</i> , pp. 426-33
13 Paul the Character in Orthodox Memory Acts 13-28 (<i>NOAB</i>); <i>FJC</i> , pp. 247-58	14	15 Judas redivivus <i>The Gospel of Judas</i> (handout or pdf)	16	17 Research Day
20 Research Day	21	22 Thanksgiving Break	23	24 Thanksgiving Break
27 Jesus, Spoken For <i>Gospel of Thomas</i> (handout or pdf); <i>FJC</i> , pp. 301-4	28	29 Jesus, Narrated Gospel of Mark (<i>NOAB</i>); <i>FJC</i> , pp. 231-38	30	

DECEMBER

MONDAY	TUE.	WEDNESDAY	THU.	FRIDAY
				1 Fleshing out the Biography, Part 1 <i>Infancy Gospel of Thomas</i> (handout or pdf)
4 Fleshing out the Biography, Part 2 Gospel of Matthew (selections TBA from <i>NOAB</i>); Gospel of Luke (selections TBA from <i>NOAB</i>)	5	6 Recap Assignment TBA	7	8 FINAL EXAM for the 11:00 AM section, 1:00 PM-3:30 PM Clough 302
11 FINAL EXAM for the 12:00 PM section 5:30 PM-8:00 PM Clough 302	12	13 Exam Period Ends	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29