

# RELG 220-001: Reading Biblical Texts

CRN 22486

(Revised 1.1.13)

Spring 2013. 3 credit hours

T/Th 2:00, Kinard 308

- This course is currently on the approved list for the Humanities and Arts category for the Touchstone program.
- This course participates in the Global Learning Initiative. The global learning components of the course are learning about Ancient Israel and the early Christian community and also considering diverse cultures' views on contemporary interpretive matters.
- This course participates in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department's critical thinking initiative especially with the "literary world of the text" and "contemporary world of the text" aspects as reflected in the paper and exam essays.
- This course participates in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department's effective communication initiative especially with the interpretive paper.

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Office Hours: M/W 9:30-11:30 am in Kinard 324; Th 3:30-4:30 in Bancroft G07; and by appointment.

Occasionally an obligation conflicts with office hours, so it's best to call or confirm by e-mail in advance.

As will be explained, students should be aware that studying the Bible in a college classroom may differ from the way that it is studied or used in a religious setting. Students need not worry that their religious backgrounds and convictions (or lack thereof) will affect their chances for success in this class, and no particular faith background is assumed. The influence that this collection of writings has had on Western art, music, law, morality, literature, philosophy, politics, customs, etc. can scarcely be overestimated. For this reason, any educated person can benefit from Biblical Studies.

## Competencies:

- 1) Course: be familiar at an introductory level with the content and themes of the Bible, approaches to Biblical scholarship, and issues involved in interpreting religious texts.
- 2) Departmental/major program: be equipped to ask the most fundamental questions of human existence; be a discerning, analytical reader and insightful interpreter.
- 3) University Level Competencies in the Touchstone program:
  - Think critically and solve problems (ULC #1)
  - Be personally and socially responsible (ULC #2)
  - Understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live. (ULC #3)
  - Communicate effectively. (ULC #4)

**Student Learning Outcomes:** In pursuit of the above competencies, the successful student in RELG 220 will

- 1) Course-specific: acquire introductory knowledge of the major sections and themes of the Bible and familiarity with Biblical Studies methods.
- 2) Departmental/major program: reflect upon the questions posed in the texts of ancient Jews and early Christians; understand the historical context of particular religious texts; interpret a variety of texts using Biblical Studies methods; consider the Bible's relevance to contemporary life.
- 3) Touchstone: assess information from multiple viewpoints and consider the strengths and weaknesses of their positions; perceive moral dimensions and practice ethical reasoning; consider the perspectives of others; comprehend the historical and social contexts of religious texts and issues; recognize how Biblical Studies is interdisciplinary; create texts that convey content effectively.

## Required Texts:

- 1) *An Introduction to the Bible: A Journey into Three Worlds*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, by Christian E. Hauer and William A. Young (Pearson, 2012). Earlier editions may suffice, although students will need to identify pagination and other minor discrepancies.
- 2) A Bible that is a study bible, new revised standard version (NRSV), with Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical material. If you do not already have one, get *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha* published by Abingdon Press.
- 3) Electronic readings available for free online through the Dacus Library website's course reserves.

**Required Technology:**

- 1) Blackboard, a tool for online components of the course. Instructions can be found below.
- 2) Winthrop e-mail. It is important that you use your Winthrop e-mail, and check it regularly.
- 3) Turnitin, a plagiarism detection service. Instructions for Turnitin will be provided with the paper assignment.

**Blackboard (online component) instructions:**

1. Go to <https://bb-winthrop.blackboard.com/>.
2. Log into Blackboard with the same user name and password as you use to log in to Winthrop email. **Need**

**Blackboard Help?**

**Log in issues:** Please contact the help desk at 323-2400 or [helpdesk@winthrop.edu](mailto:helpdesk@winthrop.edu).

**Tutorials:** [http://www2.winthrop.edu/webct/Blackboard\\_Training\\_Tutorials.html](http://www2.winthrop.edu/webct/Blackboard_Training_Tutorials.html).

**Blackboard User's Guide:** Log into Blackboard, and at the very top of the screen, click on the Help link, and then click on User Guide. You can search for a specific topic that you need help with.

**For additional assistance:** Please contact Kimarie Whetstone, Online Learning Coordinator at 323-2551 or [whetstonek@winthrop.edu](mailto:whetstonek@winthrop.edu).

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations from the Office of Disability Services, please inform me as early as possible in the semester. If your accommodations affect every test/assignment, please remind me prior to each test/assignment. Also, the **Office of Victims Assistance** helps students access support services for academic problems resulting from victimization. The OVA is located in 204 Crawford and can be reached at (803) 323-2206.

**Safe Zones statement and student conduct code:** The instructor intends for this classroom to be a Safe Zone. Regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, age, or ability you will be treated and respected as a human being. The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the "Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy" online: <http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>.

**Requirements and Evaluation:**

Participation (See criteria below.)		50 points
Tests (3) (3 @225 pts.)		675
Paper (in lieu of exam, due at exam time)		225
Quizzes		50
		1000 total

Scale:	867-899	B+	767-799	C+	667-699	D+			
934-1000	A	834-866	B	734-766	C	634-666	D	0-599	F
900-933	A-	800-833	B-	700-733	C-	600-633	D-		

- All grades will be posted privately to Blackboard.
- No extra credit opportunities will be provided. Students need to demonstrate mastery of the material through performance on the items listed above.
- No rewrites on papers. I have found that when students count on the chance to do a rewrite, they often do not put their full effort into the original paper. Also, allowing rewrites is not fair to other students who did well originally. The proper time for revising is with drafts *prior* to the due date.

- No late work will be accepted after class time on the last regular day of this class. Late work will not be accepted on study day or during the exam period, because I would be unable to get grading done in order to meet my own deadlines for submitting grades.

**Attendance and other policies to be read very carefully:**

1.) I expect you to **contact me promptly**, if not in advance (e-mail correspondence preferred), **every time you miss a class if you have a decent reason for missing**, just as you would contact a boss or co-worker if you had to miss work. I make a judgment about undocumented absences at the end of the term in light of your overall behavior and performance. *If you rarely miss class and have been keeping up well, you can be assured that I will excuse absences for good reasons that are communicated to me promptly.*

2.) **Attendance** will be taken regularly and will affect your participation grade. Only unexcused absences hurt your participation grade. Although also adjusted for variations in the *quality* of participation, the following gives you an *approximate* idea of the **correspondence between attendance and your participation grade:**

# of <u>unexcused</u> absences	participation grade of
0-1	A
2	B
3	C
4	C-
5-6	D
≥ 7	F

3.) Unless there has been a prior arrangement, in cases of a **missed test** you are entitled to a make up *only with documentation*. In cases of a **missed quiz**, if the absence was unexcused, you will receive a 0; if the absence is excused, your quiz average at the end of the term will be substituted for your missed quiz so that your quiz average is unaffected by the missed one and so that make-ups do not need to be scheduled.

4.) Turnitin, a **plagiarism** detection service, will be used for the paper. *Students who do not submit their papers to Turnitin will not receive credit for the paper.* It is the students' responsibility to understand what counts as plagiarism and methods for properly crediting sources of information. See the English department's webpage on the correct use of borrowed information: <http://www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm>. Significant plagiarism (whether intentional or not) will result in an F on the paper and a report filed with the Dean of Students. If the case is a second offense (even if an earlier offense was from another class), it may result in an F in the course or other sanctions. Duplicate submissions (turning in the same or a very similar paper for two assignments in two different classes) is permissible only with the approval of both instructors in advance. Otherwise, a duplicate submission will be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.

**Academic Support Services:** Winthrop's **Academic Success Center** is a free resource for all undergraduate students seeking to perform their best academically. The ASC offers a variety of personalized and structured resources that help students achieve academic excellence, such as tutoring, academic skill development (test taking strategies, time management counseling, and study techniques), group and individual study spaces, and academic coaching. The ASC is located on the first floor of Dinkins, Suite 106. Please contact the ASC at 803-323-3929 or [success@winthrop.edu](mailto:success@winthrop.edu). For more information on ASC services, please visit [www.winthrop.edu/success](http://www.winthrop.edu/success). Also, the **Writing Center**, located in 242 Bancroft Hall, provides a free writing, consulting service. The Writing Center's purpose is to help writers at all levels learn more about their writing through tutoring sessions. See <http://www2.winthrop.edu/wcenter/> or call 803-323-2138 for an appointment.

**Tentative Schedule**

Readings are to be completed in preparation for the class for which the assignments are listed. Page numbers refer to Hauer and Young's *Introduction to the Bible: A Journey into Three Worlds*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. If you have an earlier edition, you will need to compare yours to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition, in order to find the equivalents. Equivalents for the 7<sup>th</sup> edition are posted to Blackboard. Within the scholarly notes of the study Bible, MT (Masoretic text) refers to the Hebrew version, as opposed to LXX (the Septuagint), which is the later, expanded Greek edition.

<b>INTRODUCTORY</b>	
Tues., Jan. 8	introduction to the course
Thurs., Jan. 10	David Brian Winter course reserve reading "But This I Can Believe" (Electronic reserve readings are available for free online through Dacus Library's website. From the library's main page, go to "course reserves" and search.) This reading can also be found in the HMXP 102 course textbook, which is on reserve separately.
Tues., Jan. 15	Hauer and Young, Chapter 1, pp. 2-23

<b>HEBREW BIBLE: THE TORAH</b>	
Thurs., Jan. 17	1) H & Y, first part of Chapter 3 (pp. 49-60, stopping at "Origins of the People of God"); 2) Genesis 1-4; 6-9 (Read chapters 1 through 4 and 6 through 9 of the book of Genesis in your New Revised Standard Version study Bible.)
Tues., Jan. 22	1) H & Y, finish Chapter 3 (p. 60 from "Origins of the People of God" through p. 69, stopping at the end of the chapter summary) 2) Genesis 12; 15; 17-18:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-19. (Smaller numbers after the colons are verse numbers. The larger numbers are chapter numbers. So this means to read chapters 12, 15, 17 of Genesis. Read Ch 18 only up through verse 15. Read only verses 1 through 7 of Ch 21 and only verses 1 through 19 of Ch 22.)
Thurs., Jan. 24	<b>reading quiz #1</b> 1) H & Y, portions of Chapter 4 (pp. 72-73; then skip, if you want, "Geography of the Ancient Near East and Israel" and pick up again at the bottom of p. 80 with "History of Ancient Israel"; read through the end of the chapter summary on p. 94.) 2) Genesis 25:19-34; 27-33; 35:9-15
Tues., Jan. 29	Exodus 1-3; 6:1-13; 12-15:21
Thurs., Jan. 31	Genesis 18:16- 19:29 (Sodom and Gomorrah). Skim through some of the legal material from Chapter 20 of Exodus through the end of Exodus; Leviticus 18-20; Deuteronomy 5:22-33; 6-8; 20 In class: film "For the Bible Tells Me So"
Tues., Feb. 5	Class canceled due to professor's off-campus lecture engagement. Test 1 study guide posted to Blackboard
Thurs., Feb. 7	Finish film, discussion
Mon., Feb. 11	Global cultural event "Education Under Fire" about the Baha'i faith and conditions for Baha'is in Iran; 7 pm in Owens G01 (optional)
<b>Tues., Feb. 12</b>	<b>Test 1</b> covering the Introductory and Torah units.
<b>HEBREW BIBLE: THE PROPHETS</b>	
Thurs., Feb. 14	H & Y, portions of Ch 5, pp. 97-115, stopping at "From Empire to Exile"; chapter summary on p. 122.
Tues., Feb. 19	<b>reading quiz #2</b> Joshua 1-3; 5:13-8:29; Judges 1-2; 2 Samuel 7:1-17; 9; 11-12; 1 Kings 1-2
Thurs., Feb. 21	H & Y, Ch 6 (pp. 124-140). Stop before "Hosea" on p. 140. Class: time permitting, film <i>Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i>
Tues., Feb. 26	Isaiah 1; 6-7; 9; 11; 40:1-11; 52:13 - 53:12; Amos, entire book
Thurs., Feb. 28	Electronic course reserve reading through Dacus Library website: "Religious Experience: What Does it Mean to Encounter the Divine?" from <i>Reason and Religious Belief</i> by Michael Peterson, et al.
<b>HEBREW BIBLE: THE WRITINGS</b>	
Tues., March 5	<b>Reading quiz #3</b> 1) H & Y, part of Ch 7 (pp. 147-158, stopping at "Lamentations") 2) Psalms 1 (instruction), 8 (hymn), 22 (lament), 23; Song of Solomon (also known as Song of Songs), entire
Wed., March 6	<b>course withdrawal deadline</b>
Thurs., March 7	H & Y, Ch 8 (pp. 162-177)
March 11-15	<b>spring break</b>
Tues., March 19	1) Job 1-7, 38-42 2) electronic course reserve reading through Dacus Library website: "Theodicy: Encountering Evil" from <i>Anatomy of the Sacred</i> by James C. Livingston  Test 2 study guide posted to Blackboard.
Thurs., March 21	1) H & Y, Ch 9 (pp. 179-192) 2) Ruth, entire; Daniel 6-8,12
<b>Tues., March 26</b>	<b>Test 2</b> covering the Prophets and Writings units

	<b>THE NEW TESTAMENT</b>
Thurs., March 28	1) H & Y, Ch 11 (pp. 215-237) 2) Mark 1:1-20; Matthew 1-4:17; Luke 1-3; John 1
Tues., April 2	<b>Reading quiz #4</b> 1) H & Y, Ch 12 (pp. 239-262, except you may skip the part about the stages of John on pp. 253-6) 2) Mark 15:33-16:8; Matthew 27:45-28:15; Luke 23:44-24:35; John 19:28-20:29 Class: time permitting, an episode from the PBS Frontline film series "From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians"
Thurs., April 4	Electronic course reserve reading available online through Dacus Library website: excerpt by Marcus Borg from <i>The Meaning of Jesus</i> . <b>Final paper assignment posted to Blackboard.</b>
Tues., April 9	course evaluations and <b>reading quiz # 5</b> 1) H & Y, Chapter 13 (pp. 266-282) 2) Acts 1-2; 9:1-31
Thurs., April 11	1) H & Y, Chapter 14 (pp. 284-303) 2) 1 Thessalonians; Galatians 2:15 -6; Romans 1-12
Tues., April 16	<b>Test 3</b> covering the New Testament unit
Thurs., April 18	paper consulting time
<b>Thursday, April 25 3 pm</b> (3 pm on this day is our scheduled final exam time, but instead you have a final paper due at this time.)	3 pm <b>paper due</b> (Electronic copy submitted to Turnitin.com. Papers must be turned in at or before 3 pm on Thursday, April 25.)