

## **Introduction to Biblical Studies THRS 116 08**

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THRS 16 Introduction to Biblical Studies  
Fall Semester 2009  
Section 008: T/Th 7:00pm to 8:20pm – S212  
Instructor: Kathryn Valdivia

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E-mail: [kathrynv@sandiego.edu](mailto:kathrynv@sandiego.edu)  
Webpage: [www.sandiego.edu/~kathrynv](http://www.sandiego.edu/~kathrynv)  
Phone: 619-260-4056 Office: Maher 296  
Office hours: T/Th: 6:00pm to 6:50pm in M296

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### **WELCOME!**

Welcome to Introduction to Biblical Studies! I look forward to working with you in your pursuit of knowledge relating to the appreciation of, analysis of, and participation in contemporary biblical studies.

### **ABOUT THIS SYLLABUS**

This syllabus contains information that is essential for success in this course. It is the responsibility of every student to read and be familiar with the course requirements and other information presented in this document. Any adjustments, corrections, or clarifications to this syllabus, which may become necessary, will be announced in class.

### **PREREQUISITES**

No previous formal coursework is required to enroll in this class. However, the student must have the ability to enter into reflection, participation, and anticipation of what it means to study and pursue biblical studies. In other words, students are asked to invest in the experience of learning about the literature, history, and contemporary relevance of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian New Testament. This investment, while taking time and energy (approximately 6 to 9 hours per week outside the classroom), should result in a worthwhile and meaningful learning experience that, hopefully, contributes to a comprehensive perspective on both world and western history and humanity's search for meaning within a Judeo-Christian framework.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will survey the historical, geographical, and cultural world of the Ancient Near East, which provides the setting for biblical literature. The instructor and students will examine, in English translation, a diversity of texts representative of diverse traditions in the compendium of the Hebrew Scriptures and Christian New Testament. The course will treat of the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, Intertestamental Literature, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the NT letters, and the book of Revelation. The class will contemplate these texts within the historical world in which the events described occurred as well as the literary world which the text generates. In the process of examining the texts, the student will acquire familiarity with diverse methods of examining biblical literature.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, students should have the ability to:

- Distinguish between various interpretative methods used to study, examine, analyze, research, and comprehend biblical texts
- Understand the interrelationship between the religious texts of ancient Israel and early Christianity and the historical context within which these texts were created
- Appreciate the various literary genres found in the text of the Bible and to understand their function for interpretation
- Be aware of the social issues relevant to the formation of the texts and their ethical implications
- Comprehend the significance, relevance, and on-going influence of biblical texts on contemporary life

### **COURSE METHODOLOGY**

The methodological approach to this class will be lecture, discussion, and small group interaction. Along with lectures to stimulate discussion, we will study biblical texts through a variety of media such as videos, atlases, and slides. It is essential that students come prepared to class by having assigned reading and work completed by the scheduled due dates. There is a heavy reading requirement for this course and it is

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extremely difficult to catch up if one falls behind. Coming prepared to class not only will enhance your own experience of what you are learning but it will stimulate more interesting and probing discussions.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. Bible, NAB translation, Saint Mary's Press College Study Bible, Virginia Halbur, general editor (Saint Mary's Press, 2007). (designated as "CSB" in schedule of readings)

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Regular Attendance
- Weekly Reading Assignments
- Five Exams (weighted at 20% each)

**Regular attendance:** Given the amount of material we plan to cover this semester, it is imperative that students attend each class session, be on time for each class, and remain for the duration for the class. It is disruptive to everyone when people arrive late or leave early (this includes packing up early in a conspicuous manner). Being attentive while present is, of course, essential; however, being attentive to avoiding interruptions such as beepers, cell phones, or any other electronic devices is also much appreciated. Class attendance will be taken periodically and while not a formal component to grade evaluation, lack of attendance usually translates in students' earning lower grades. (e.g. a "C+" to a C-). In other words, statistically, regular attendance ensures a higher grade.

**Completion of weekly reading:** Given the amount of the reading required for this class and the nature of the course material, it is very important that students do their best to keep up with the published reading schedule in this syllabus. Studying the books of the Bible within an historical-critical context entails awareness of the background historical circumstances within which each book is placed as well as the ongoing narrative framework that each book contributes to the whole. Coming to class prepared will enhance each student's comprehension of this multi-layered approach.

**Exams:** The exams will include a selection of objective questions (Multiple choice, T/F, fill-in-the-blank, and matching) as well as essay questions. All questions for the exam will be taken from lectures and from required biblical text reading assignments most recently covered since the previous exam. The essay questions for each exam will be given in advance in class approximately one week before the scheduled objective exam. Students are to prepare responses to the essay questions appealing to both resources provided in class as well as outside research. Essays should be approximately 500 to 700 words in length (1-2 pages double-spaced) and include bibliographic references to outside research. Typically, students should appeal to at least 2 but no more than 4 outside sources for each essay. You may view an example of an essay on my website: [www.sandiego.edu/~kathrynv](http://www.sandiego.edu/~kathrynv)

**Policy on Make-up Exams:** Make-up exams will not be allowed as a rule but may be considered under the most unusual of circumstances. If it is impossible for a student to meet an exam date and it is necessary to schedule a make-up exam, coordinating a time to make up an exam BEFORE the scheduled due date is the student's obligation. "Unusual circumstances" would normally entail a doctor's note or official notice of some sort indicating that you are unable to be present for the scheduled exam. If it is necessary to miss an exam, consult the instructor and a special research essay exam will be constructed. The date for the final exam (our 5<sup>th</sup> exam) is established by the university and is non-negotiable. Also, students are required to take their own section's exam. There will be no opportunity to make up the final exam.

### **GRADING / EVALUATION**

- Exams 1 – 5 are each worth 20%

I am very willing to help you understand your grade throughout the semester. If at any time, you are concerned about your grade, please see me. We may be able to assess problems with study habits, time

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management, or difficulties with concepts. Do not wait until the end of the semester. Do not ask for extra credit opportunities when they have not been offered to everyone. This is not fair to you or your peers. Please note that if you are required to earn a certain Grade Point Average (GPA) in order to qualify for special programs, the responsibility rests on you. It is simply too late if students come to the instructor at the end of the semester to find out of a grade may be changed. Other than a computational error, grades are earned by each student; they are not given out.

### Final Grades

	87 – 89.99	B+	77 – 79.99	C+	67 – 69.99	D+	
94 – 100	A	84 – 86.99	B	74 – 76.99	C	64 – 66.99	D
90 – 93.99	A-	80 – 83.99	B-	70 – 73.99	C-	60 – 63.99	D-
Below 60% = F							

**N.B.: Do your best to stay up with the readings. It is important to be familiar with the primary material for our class discussions. Bring your Bibles to each class.**

Schedule, Fall 2009			
	Class Date	Reading for Class	Topic
Week 1	Th 9/3/09	Book Review: The Gifts of the Jews <a href="http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9811/reviews/prager.html">http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9811/reviews/prager.html</a> CSB: "Canons of Scripture," p C4-5	Introductions; Bible Overview
Week 2	Tues 9/8/09	CSB, p xiv-xl (Finish reading these articles by Thursday CSB: "Historical Critical Method of Scripture Analysis," p C6	Review of Cahill's book; Modern Scholarship of the Bible
	Th 9/10/09	Review site on Gilgamesh: <a href="http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dec/MESO/GILG.HTM">http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dec/MESO/GILG.HTM</a> Gen 1-11: Prehistory	Israel & Mesopotamia, Egypt, & Canaan
Week 3	Tues 9/15/09	CSB: "Names of God in the OT," p C1 CSB: "Patriarchs and Matriarchs," p C2-C3 CSB: "Deities of the Ancient Middle East," p C9	Portraits of God of Israel; Characteristics of Biblical God
	Th 9/17/09	<b>Exam #1</b>	<b>Exam #1</b>
Week 4	Tues 9/22/09	CSB: "Blessed be the Immigrant," p 33 CSB: "Family Healing: Joseph's Amazing Love,," p 71 Gen 12-50; Ex 1-18 (Finish reading text by next Tuesday)	Documentary Hypothesis; Major Themes in Genesis
	Th 9/24/09	Continue with Gen 12-50; Ex 1-18 CSB: Intro to Book of Exodus, p 78-84 CSB: "Civil Disobedience," p 86	Literary Forms Ancestral Stories; Exodus
Week 5	Tues 9/29/09	CSB: "God Listens and Hears our Cries," p 89 CSB: "What Every Student Should..." 107; Ex 19-40	Tabernacle, Deuteronomy
	Th 10/1/09	CSB: "Introduction to the Historical Books" and Intro to the Book of Joshua, p 269-277 CSB: Intro to the Book of Judges, 305-308 Josh 2, 3, 6, 8, 10; Jdgs 3-16	Deuteronomistic History; Joshua; Judges
Week 6	Tues 10/6/09	CSB: Intro to the Books of Samuel, p 346-350 CSB: "Our Capacity for Sin," p 395 1 Sam 1-4, 8-18; 2 Sam 1-4, 9, 11-18, 21, 25-26, 28, 31	Saul and David; 1 & 2 Samuel, Solomon
	Th 10/8/09	CSB: Intro to the Books of Kings, p 414-418 CSB: "Workers' Rights in the Global Economy," p 426 1 Kgs 1-5, 8-19, 21 2 Kgs 1-2, 4-11, 13, 17-20	1 Kings, 2 Kings; Last days of Judah
Week 7	Tues 10/13/09	<b>Exam #2</b>	<b>Exam #2</b>
	Th 10/15/09	CSB: "Prophets and the Kings," p C18-C19 CSB: "Introduction to the Prophets," p 1021-1026 CSB: Intro to Book of Isaiah, p 1027-1032	Background to Prophets
Week 8	Tues 10/20/09	Amos, Hosea, Is 1-39, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum	Amos, Hosea Isaiah of Jerusalem; Micah; Zephaniah; Nahum

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	Th 10/22/09	CSB: Intro to Book of Jeremiah, p 1107-1110 Jer 1-3, 5-7, 24, 30-32 CSB: Intro to Book of Ezekiel, p 1204-1207 Ez 1-5, 8, 10, 16, 18, 33-34, 40-43	Habakkuk; Jeremiah; Obadiah Ezekiel
Week 9	Tues 10/27/09	Is 40-55; Hag; Zech; Joel; Mal; Jon; & Is 56-66 CSB: "Introduction to the Wisdom and Poetry Books," p 706-711 & Intro to Book of Job p 712-715 Job; Ecclesiastes	2 <sup>nd</sup> Isaiah; Haggai; Zechariah; 3 <sup>rd</sup> Isaiah; Joel; Malachi; Jonah Poetry; Wisdom Literature
	Th 10/29/09	CSB: Intro to Book of Ezra, p 554-557 CSB: Intro to Book of Ruth, p 335-338 CSB: Intro to Book of Esther, p 624-628 CSB: "Sacred Time Festivals..." p C12 Ruth; Esther; Ezra	Festival Scrolls (Megillot) Theological histories
	Tues 11/3/09	<b>Exam 3</b>	<b>Exam 3</b>
Week 10	Th 11/5/09	CSB: Intro to First Book of Maccabees, p 641-645 1 Maccabees 1-3, 6, 8-9, 13-14 CSB: Intro to the Book of Daniel, 1259-1262 Daniel CSB: Intro to Second Book of Maccabees, p 678-681 2 Macc 2-3, 6-7 Posted lecture notes	Deuterocanonical Works Apocalyptic Literature Hellenistic Culture; Pseudepigrapha
	Tues 11/10/09	CSB: "Introduction to the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles," p 1405-1411 CSB: Intro to Mark, p 1483-1488 Mark	Mystery Religions; 1 <sup>st</sup> c Judaism Synoptic Problem Mark
Week 11	Th 11/12/09	CSB: Intro to Matthew, p 1412-1419 Matthew CSB: Intro to Luke, p 1519-1523 Luke	Matthew Luke
	Tues 11/17/09	CSB: Intro to John, 1577-1583 John CSB: "Gospel Comparisons," p C26	John
	Th 11/19/09	<b>Exam #4</b>	<b>Exam #4</b>
Week 13	Tues 11/24/09	CSB: "Titles of Jesus of Nazareth," p C27 CSB: "Essential Teachings..." p C34-35	Scholarly Portraits of Jesus
	Th 11/26/09	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
Week 14	Tues 12/1/09	CSB: Intro to Acts, p 1624-1628 CSB: "Discipleship versus Citizenship," p 1638 Acts of the Apostles	Life of Paul
	Th 12/3/09	CSB: Intro to 1 Cor, p 1712-1718; Intro to 2 Cor, p 1742-1748 1 Thess; 1 and 2 Cor; Gal CSB: Intro to Romans, p 1681-1687 Romans; Philippians; Philemon	Paul's Letters
Week 15	Tues 12/8/09	2 Thess; Col; Eph; 1 and 2 Tim; Titus CSB: Intro to Letter to the Hebrews, p 1864-1868 Hebrews; James; 1 and 2 Peter; Jude 1 Jn; 2 Jn, 3 Jn;	Disputed Letters; Pastorals; General Epistles
	Th 12/10/09	CSB: Intro to Revelation to John, p 1944-1949 Revelation	Revelation; Review for Final Exam

**Final Exam: This date is set by the University and is non-negotiable; students are to take their own section's exam**

Finals Week	Bring your Bibles		
	Sec 008	<b>Exam #5 - Final</b>	<b>Thursday, Dec 17, 2009, 8:00pm to 10:00pm</b>