ENGL 3325
Advanced Readings in World Literature:
The Bible as Literature

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Office Hours: MWF 9:00-12:00, or by appointment.

Required Texts:

Useful Links:
- For an interesting site on which you can compare 48 different translations of the Bible, click here: https://www.biblegateway.com/keyword/
- This site contains a mini-course on the “Bible as Literature,” with some helpful lessons: http://bibleasliterature.wordpress.com/
- For links to various apocryphal and non-canonical texts in English, click here: http://www.pseudepigrapha.com/
- For an online English version of the Babylonian Talmud click here: http://halakhah.com/
- For an English version of the Septuagint, click here: http://www.ecmarsh.com/lxx/
- Click here for the Latin text of Saint Jerome’s Vulgate version (with parallel King James and Douay-Rheims translation): http://www.latinvulgate.com/
- For a site on the Dead Sea Scrolls, click here: http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/deadsea.scrolls.exhibit/intro.html
Course Description:

This course will examine various books of the “Old” and “New” Testaments, and some of the “Apocrypha,” as works in particular literary genres (myth, history, poetry, short story, wisdom literature, gospel, epistle, apocalypse). Students should be cautioned that this is NOT a “Bible Study” in the conventional sense familiar in a church context, and that unless you can comfortably talk about the Bible as a collection of literary genres, written by a variety of (human) authors, for specific purposes and for particular (historical) audiences, you will not enjoy this course and could be made extremely uncomfortable. If, whenever you refer to anything in the Bible, you precede it with “God says...,” you would probably be happier if you drop the class now.

The undergraduate bulletin for 2014-15 describes ENGL 3325: Advanced Readings in World Literature as follows: “For English majors and minors to satisfy upper-division elective requirement. Selected topics to include specific writers, periods, literary/social movements, or cultural expressions in any era of world literature from classical to postmodern. Lecture, discussion, writing. Prerequisite: ENGL 2305 or 2306. On demand.” When specifically designated as “the Bible as Literature,” the course also satisfies an elective requirement in the Religious Studies minor.

Course Objectives:

- Students will recognize literary and artistic forms/styles, and techniques used in the Bible.
- Students will understand the cultural/historical contexts in which biblical literature developed.
- Students will recognize the various genres collected in the Bible (origin stories, narrative, history, poetry, prophecy, wisdom literature, apocalypse, gospel, epistle, etc.) and recognize that understanding the text depends in large part on understanding the genre to which it belongs.
- Students will practice writing for a scholarly audience.
- Students will understand the history of canon formation, textual scholarship, translation in English, and interpretation as it relates to the Bible.
- Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the academic study of the Bible, including some of the literary methods (e.g. structural criticism, archetypal criticism, ne historical criticism, psychological criticism, and textural criticism) that literary scholars use when interpreting the Bible.

Weekly Timetable (tentative, subject to change)

TANAK (“Old” Testament)

Week 1
• Thursday, 8/21: Introduction to literary study of the Bible. Consult Gabel chapters 16 and 17 if desired for detailed background for today's class.

Week 2
• Tuesday, 8/26: Creation myths (Read Genesis 1-3; Psalms 74 and 89; Isaiah 51; plus Enuma Elish (online)—Babylonian creation myth. Read Gabel chapter 1 and chapter 3.
• Thursday, 8/28: Mythological cycle (Cain and Abel, Noah, Tower of Babel). (Read Genesis 4-11). Read Gabel chapters 6 and chapter 7.

Week 3
• Tuesday, 9/2: Abraham (Genesis 12-24).
• Thursday, 9/4: Jacob (Genesis 25-35, 48-49)

Week 4
• Tuesday, 9/9: Moses (Exodus 1-19, 25, 32-34; Numbers 11-14, Deuteronomy 31-34).

Week 5
• Tuesday, 9/16: Folklore heroes: Read Gideon, Deborah, Jephthah and Samson (Judges 2-8 and 11-16)
• Thursday, 9/18: History: Saul (a tragic hero?) (I Samuel 8-31). Read Gabel chapter 4.

Week 6
• Tuesday, 9/23: History: David (an epic hero?). Read II Samuel-I Kings 1-12.

Week 7
• Tuesday, 9/30: Writing Prophets: Read Amos and Hosea. Read Gabel chapter 8.
• Thursday, 10/2: Major writing prophets. Read Jeremiah 1; 18:1-12; 22-23:8; 28-29; and 31. Also read Ezekiel 1-5; 12; 23-24

Week 8
• Tuesday, 10/7: Major prophet (or 3 major prophets): Read all of Isaiah. Short paper on Psalms assigned.
• Thursday, 10/9: Poetry: Read Psalms 3, 8, 22, 23, 24, 26, 29, 39, 72, 79, 90, 96, 100. Read Gabel chapter 2.

Week 9
• Tuesday, 10/14: More poetry: Read Psalms 104, 110, 113, 121, 122, 130, 137. Also read Song of Songs.
• Thursday, 10/16: NO CLASS—FALL BREAK

Week 10
• Thursday, 10/23: NO CLASS—I AM AT CONFERENCE

Week 11
• Thursday, 10/30: Short stories: Read Jonah and Ruth.

Week 12

“New” Testament

• Thursday, 11/6: Gospel: Read Mark. Read Gabel chapter 14.

Week 13
• Tuesday, 11/11: Gospel: Read Matthew; also read apocryphal “Gospel of Thomas” and sections of “Gospel of Nicodemus” (online). Take home exam on Old Testament due.

Week 14
• Tuesday, 11/18: Gospel and New Testament History: Read Luke and Acts
• Thursday, 11/20: Epistle: Read Romans. Read Gabel chapter 15.
• Tuesday, 11/25: Epistle: Read I Corinthians
• Thursday, 11/27: Epistles: Read I Thessalonians, Galatians, and Philippians.

Week 16
• Tuesday, 12/2: Apocalypse: Read Daniel. Also skim II Esdras (in Apocrypha). Read Gabel chapter 10.
• Thursday, 12/4: Apocalypse: Read Revelation
• Friday, 12/5: Final paper due by 4:30.

FINAL EXAM: Scheduled for TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, from 8:00-10:00.

Course Requirements:

• This is a literature course. Its success depends in large part on your willingness to discuss the assignments as literature. Thus class participation is vital. You are expected to be in class each day, and to have read the assignment.
• Once a week, beginning with week #2, you are required to hand in five “Talking Points for the assigned reading for the day. Thus by the end of the semester you should have handed in 15 sets of talking points. The talking points may apply to the biblical text and/or the Gabel textbook. “Talking Points” may be either questions that occur to you that require more than simply a basic understanding of the text to answer, or they may be thoughts or arguments that occur to you about the text that you would like to bring up in class. In either case, the purpose is to get you thinking critically about the material and to spark or contribute to class discussion. If you have trouble, you might consider answering one or more of the “Review Questions” at the end of the chapters in Gabel’s book. The talking points should be typed and handed in at the end of class each period.
• There will be a take-home exam on the Old Testament assigned on November 4 and due on November 11. You will be asked to spend only 90 minutes outside of class writing the test.
• A short paper (3 pages) discussing the poetic forms used in one of the Psalms that we do not discuss in class will be assigned on October 7 and due on October 21.
• You should write a paper of 2500-3000 words (roughly 8-10 pages) on one of the texts we read for class (or a comparison of two such texts, or of individual periscopes, or a comparison of chapters or segments of books in different biblical translations), or on another biblical, apocryphal, or pseudopigraphic text that represents one of the genres we have been discussing. It should use a minimum of two outside scholarly sources and should be handed in by 4:30 on “dead day” (Friday, December 5). The detailed assignment will be handed out on October 28.
• There will be a final examination focusing chiefly on the New Testament, on Tuesday, December 9. The test will be open book.

Grades and Other Policies:
1. **Final grades** in the course will be based on a point system, with a 1000 total possible points. A running total of points will be available on the Blackboard site for the course online. The following list equates total points with letter grades:
   
   - 900-1000 pts. = A  
   - 800-899 pts. = B  
   - 700-799 pts. = C  
   - 600-699 pts. = D  
   - 0-599 pts. = F  

   Relative value of assignments:
   
   - Class discussion: 100 points  
   - Talking Points: 150 points  
   - Paper on Psalms: 100 points  
   - Mid-Term Exam: 200 points  
   - Final Exam: 200 points.  
   - Paper: 250 points.  

   Late papers, tests, and talking-points will be docked one letter grade.

2. **Attendance Policy**: Attendance is necessary. Your grade in class participation will be seriously damaged by non-attendance, since you cannot participate if you are not there. Your paper and test grades will also suffer, since you will have missed a good deal of information and discussion of the literature. Any more than 6 absences will result in my dropping you with an F grade.

3. **Academic Integrity**: The student handbook contains the following statement:
   
   - The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

   In accordance with this policy, PLAGIARISM or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the assignment involved and/or an F in the course. (Plagiarism is representing the work of another as your own. This would include taking the words or ideas of a published source without giving that source proper credit; giving credit to a published source but representing the source's words as your own (i.e., not putting the author's ideas into your own words, or not using quotation marks around quotations); or using the work of other students and passing it off as your own.

4. **Americans with Disabilities Act**: The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450-3613.

5. **Building Emergency**: An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at [http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/](http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/).
Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

6. **Title IX disclosure:** If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to "student-on-student" or "employee-on-student"), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: [https://uca.edu/titleix](https://uca.edu/titleix). *Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

7. **Class Evaluations:** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction [insert date] through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

8. **Other Policies:** Important academic policies and the campus Sexual Harassment policy are detailed in your *Student Handbook*. Consult the handbook for specifics.