

**RELI 102-INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL HERITAGE
SYLLABUS BVU SPRING 2011**

Professor: **Swasti Bhattacharyya**

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Office Hrs.: **T & TH 3:00-5:00pm; Fri 1:00-3:00 & by APPOINTMENT**

Class: Sect #1 T & TH 09:30AM - 10:45AM

Sect #2 T & TH 12:00PM - 01:15PM

Rm#: **SSA 118**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we *begin* an engaged examination of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, collections of literary texts that have profoundly influenced society in the United States. Through an exploration of the historical, political, literary, and contemporary contexts, we uncover what these texts are, what they may have meant to people in antiquity as well as today, and how they deal with ideas regarding the nature of God, the relationship of God to human beings, and the overall human condition.

COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES - Upon *successful* completion of this course, you will:

- Develop the skills of critical thinking as you analyze the historical, literary, political, religious and sociological backgrounds of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament.
- Actively engage the Hebrew Bible and New Testament for yourself. Through your examination of these texts, you will develop a deeper appreciation for, and understanding of, these primary texts.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Harris, Stephen L. *Understanding the Bible* 8th Edition. McGraw Hill

ISBN: 978-0-07-340744-9 (**Harris**)

The Bible, preferably a study version such as the NRSV. Highly recommended: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* or the *HarperCollins Study Bible*

Additional readings and handouts will be placed on Angel (under "Course Reader") (**CR**)

*You will be utilizing the following reference books in BVU's library:

Anchor Bible Dictionary:	BS 440.A54 1992
Encyclopedia of Religion:	BL 31.E46 2005
Greek-English Lexicon:	PA 881 B381
HarberCollins Study Bible:	BS 191.5.AI 1993
Hebrew-English Lexicon	PJ 4833.B682
New Interpreter's Bible (vol 1-12):	BS 491.2 N484
Strong's Exhaustive Concordance:	BS 425.S8 1984
Encyclopedia of Judaism:	BM50.E63 1999
Encyclopedia Judaica	DS102.8 .E496 2007
Encyclopedia of Jewish Concepts:	BM50.B55 1988
Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion:	BM50.O94 1997
Encyclopedia of Christianity:	BR95.E8913 1999
Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church:	BR95.O8 1997

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance/Participation: (15%)** This course thrives on intelligent and informed conversation, so your preparation, presence, AND participation in discussion is vital.
2. **Portfolio: (30%)** Through various weekly assignments, each of you will build a portfolio of materials relating to the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Specifics are posted on Angel; see Syllabus Folder under the Course Content tab. *Take special note of dates/times for portfolio postings and submissions.
3. **Weekly Quizzes & Final Exam: (25%)** Between 10-14 quizzes will be given throughout the semester (usually at the beginning of class). These quizzes draw from the assigned readings, lectures, films, and class discussions. They will take multiple forms: multiple-choice, matching, team/group activities, drawings, etc. (imagination is the only limit). Quizzes **CANNOT** be made-up or started late. So be present and on time!
 - An **exam**, requiring you to demonstrate knowledge of the basics and to synthesize various aspects covered in this course, will be designed for your final. This exam will include multiple-choice, matching, and short answer, type questions. To receive credit for this course, you must take the final exam.
4. **Biblical Exegesis Project: (30%)** Through this multi-dimensional project, you have the opportunity to apply biblical studies theories and tools to your examination of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. It involves word studies, application of biblical criticisms, analysis of a modern interpretation (film, painting, poem, song, photograph, etc), and will culminate in a final presentation to the class. Specifics are posted on Angel; see Syllabus Folder under the Course Content tab.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE: A major focus of this course is on what YOU are learning: on how you are constructing, articulating, and critiquing your own arguments, and on how you critique arguments with which you do not agree. Critical thinking, learning from the perspectives of others, and learning to respectfully disagree, are all of utmost importance. This means there are high expectations that you will carefully & thoughtfully engage the reading material, come to class prepared, and participate in class discussions. This class is about more than simply memorizing and regurgitating material; thus your active participation in class is very important. You need to attend class and you need to come prepared.

- Because of the structure of this course, absence from two (2) or more classes over the semester will result in lowering the Attendance/Participation portion of your grade.
- **If you have six (6) or more absences, you may receive an F in the COURSE.**
- If specific BVU related activities (sports, conference attendance, etc.) conflict with class attendance, it is **your** responsibility to inform me and make arrangements with me **at least one week PRIOR** to the event. Regardless, assignments are expected to be handed in on time.

NOTE CAREFULLY the due dates of the various assignments.

- As mentioned above, quizzes cannot be made up.

- Portfolio “Reading Response” assignments are to be posted on Angel **BEFORE class begins** on the morning of the date for which they are assigned. Late postings will not receive credit.
- Assignments, other than Reading Responses, submitted late will receive a 10% grade reduction per day it is late. Any assignments not submitted within 7 days of the due date may receive “0” (no credit).
- If you are absent on a day that an assignment is due, make sure to post your work on Angel or email it to me **BEFORE** class/due date. This will enable you to avoid late penalties.

ACADEMIC HONESTY is of utmost importance. **Plagiarism** is ***not*** tolerated. According to the ***Oxford Dictionary***, to Plagiarize is to “1. take and use (the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc., of another person) as one’s own. 2. pass off the thoughts, etc., of (another person) as one’s own.” This is illegal and not acceptable. The work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Statements and ideas of other persons ***must*** be appropriately documented.

- BVU’s full policy regarding Academic Policy may be found at: http://bvu.edu/learning_at_bvu/academic_policies.dot#honesty. Read this carefully and make sure you understand it. If you have questions, please contact me.
- **Plagiarism**, and other **actions that violate academic integrity** (see list on website), will result in a **“0” (no credit)** for the assignment **and/or an “F” for the course**. This applies to **all** assignments and work you submit on-line or in hardcopy.
- **All violations of BVU’s Academic Honesty policy will be reported to the student’s advisor, and to the office of VPAA/Dean of Faculty.**

Accommodations: Buena Vista University provides reasonable accommodations through an organized process. Students desiring accommodations must follow the University's process. Forms are available at:

http://www.bvu.edu/learning_at_bvu/academic_affairs/cae/. Please contact Donna Musel, Director of the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) to begin this process.

TECHNOLOGY, while a valuable tool-one that will be utilized often in this course, its usage can also be very distracting. Therefore, you may use your laptops in class for ***course-related activities only***.

- **BEFORE** the beginning of class: turn your IM settings OFF and close all email/groupwise accounts. (Also turn OFF all cell phones).
- The **FIRST** time it is evident that you are using your computer for non-class related activities, the **you will lose their privilege of using the computer in the classroom for the rest of the semester**. (the consequences for this can be high, so you are forewarned!!)
- You are to save **all** of your work (emails, portfolio assignments, papers, notes, etc.) for this course, at least until your **final course grade** is posted by the Registrar.
- **Be prepared** by completing readings and written assignments on time. Make sure to bring a Bible to class every day.
- **My office hours** are for YOU, please make good use of them! If my posted hours do not fit into your schedule, I will be more than happy to meet at other times. So make an

appointment, or simply come by Wood's House Lounge in the SSA, my office door is almost always open.

GRADING SCALE

91 – 100	A
81 – 90	B
70 – 80	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

*NOTE for PASS/NC: **Passing = 75% or higher. NC = 74% and below.**

RELI 102 INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL HERITAGE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS SNG2011

Below is a **general outline** of how the course will progress throughout the semester. Students will be notified of changes via Angel. **For actual daily assignments consult the posted Weekly Assignments.** Reading assignments are to be **completed BEFORE** the beginning of class on the date indicated.

Th 27 Jan. (Wk 1) Introduction

T 1 Feb. (Wk 2) Overview, Geography & the process of the formation of the Bible

Read: Harris ch 1 & 2 (p. 1-35)

PORTFOLIO:

Reading Response: After reading ch 1 & 2 of Harris, look over the “**Questions for Review**” on page 11 and 29-30. Select one set of questions **from each chapter** and answer them using the information you gained from reading the chapters. (So on pg 11 address 1 of the 5 sets of questions; AND on pg 29-30 answer 1 of the 3 sets of questions)

Remember your Reading Response answers need to be posted on Angel in the appropriate discussion forum before class begins on Tues 1 Feb.

Hebrew Bible: Torah

Th 3 Feb Torah I: Creation & Historical Environment of Hebrew Bible

Read: *Genesis* ch 1- 2; Harris ch 4 (p 62-64; 67-top 71; 80-top 84); CR: *Enuma Elish*

PORTFOLIO:

Reading Response: 1) First, quickly skim Gen ch 1 and 2. Second, using excel or whatever program you choose, create a grid that is similar to the one below. Now go back, and according to the reading assignment indicated below (Gen 1-2:4a; Gen 2:4b-25), carefully reread the biblical text. As you do so, fill in the chart. (So, carefully read Gen 1-2:4a, write out the order of creation, details of how man & women were created, etc). Do this for both sections of the reading. Upload your filled out grid onto Angel in the appropriate Discussion forum before class begins)

Element on which to focus:	Gen 1-2:4a	Gen 2:4b-25	What questions/comments do you have? What do you notice?
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Order of Creation			
Creation of Man and woman (notice the details of how, when each are created)			
Description of God (How is the text describing God? What are the implications of this?)			
Other elements you notice			

Having read the two sections of Genesis, and having written out what you found in each section regarding the order of creation, creation of man and woman, etc. answer the following questions: -- **Why do you think the reading in Genesis is divided up as it is? What are the implications of this? What questions/ideas do you have?**

- 2) Now read the selected sections from *Enuma Elish* (posted on Angel, under Course Reading/Reading for Thurs 3 Feb). Address the following questions: How does this ancient creation narrative relate to what you read in Genesis? What are the similarities and differences between how humans are created, how god/s is/are depicted? etc.
- 3) After reading the assigned sections in Harris: what insights did you gain into your reading of Genesis? From *Enuma Elish*? What is the Documentary Hypothesis? (Briefly describe what it is) How does it relate to your readings of Gen ch 1 & 2?

Reflection: What do you come away with after having carefully read Gen 1-2 and *Enuma Elish*? What did you learn regarding the similarities and differences of these 3 creation narratives? What questions/concerns, if any, do you have?

Though you will not be handing this Reflection assignment in today, come prepared to discuss your insights. You will post your Reflection write ups in the appropriate Discussion Forum on Angel later in the semester.

Vocab: As you read, you will undoubtedly come across words that are unfamiliar to you. Look up these words. Once a week you are to post the definition of a word. Under the Angel discussion forum "Wk 2 Vocab," type your term in the subject line. **In your own words explain** the meaning of your term and discuss how it is applicable to this course. Simply cutting and pasting a dictionary definition is not acceptable.

Remember this is a WEEKLY assignment. So make sure to post your vocab explanation before the end of the week (by 11:59pm Fri. 4 Feb). Vocab is on a first come, first choice basis-so DO NOT write-up a word that is already explained.

T 8 Feb (Wk 3) Torah II: flood & Patriarchs/Matriarchs

Read: Genesis ch 6-8 (see Harris p. 65-66); Gen 22; Harris ch 4 (p. 84 “The Flood Story” -87, box 4.5 on pg 88-89)

Th 10 Feb Torah III: Egypt & Moses

Read: Ex 2 & 3; Harris ch 4 (p. 93-104)

Due: BEP: Word Study

T 15 Feb (Wk 4) Torah IV Exodus & Ten Commandments

Read: Ex 20; Deut. 5:1-22, 6:1-9; Harris ch 4 (p. 112-121)

Due: Portfolio Submission #1

Hebrew Bible: *Nevi'im*

Th 17 Feb Prophets I: Deuteronomistic History

Read: Joshua 6-8 & Judges 1& 2; Harris ch 5 (p. 122-138)

T 22 Feb (Wk 5) Prophets II: Deuteronomistic History cont.

Read: II Sam 11 & 12; Harris ch 5 (p. 141-148; 152-163)

Due: Reflection Submission #1

Th 24 Feb **No Class: attending conference**

T 1 March (Wk 6) Prophets III: Latter Prophets

Read: Amos, Hosea; Harris ch 6 (p 165-172; 174-177)

Hebrew Bible: *Ketuvim*

Th 3 March Writings I: Poetry & Wisdom lit

Read: selections from Psalms, Job & Proverbs; Harris ch 7 (p. 208-232)

T 8 March (Wk 7) Writings II “Histories”

Read: Ezra & Nehemiah; Harris ch 7 (p. 244-249)

Due: BEP: Biblical Criticism report

Th 10 March Writings III Stories

Read: Ruth, Esther; Harris ch 7 (p 236-239; 241-243)

T 15 March (Wk 8) Apocrypha

Read: selections from I Macc ; Harris ch 8 (p 262-271)

Th 17 March Between the Testaments & Intro to NT & Gospels

Read: Harris ch 9 & 10 (all of both chapters)

Due: Reflection Submission #2

21-25 March No Class SPRING BREAK!!!

New Testament: *Gospels*

T 29 March (Wk 9) Mark & synoptic issues

Read: Mark; Harris ch 11 (p. 333-346; 347-350)

Th 31 March Matthew

Read: Matt; Harris ch 11 (p. 350-365)

T 5 April (Wk 10) Luke

Read: Luke; Harris ch 11 (p.366-380)

Th 7 April John

Read: John; Harris ch 11 (p.380-397)

T 12 April (Wk 11) Gospel of Thomas

Read: Gospel of Thomas

Th 14 April Student Biblical Exegesis Poster Presentations (3)

T 19 April (Wk 12) Student Biblical Exegesis Poster Presentations (3)

Th 21 April Student Biblical Exegesis Poster Presentations (3)

T 26 April (Wk 13) Student Biblical Exegesis Poster Presentations (3)

Due: Biblical Exegesis Project part 4

Th 28 April No Class Buenafication Day

New Testament: *Pauline Epistles*

T 3 May (Wk 14) Undisputed Paul

Read: Pauline passages; Harris ch 13 (p. 448-473, 482-490)

Th 5 May Disputed Paul

Read: Possible Pauline passages; Harris ch 13 (p. 495-500)

T 10 May (Wk 15) Pastoral Letters

Read: Timothy, Titus; Harris ch 13 (p. 500-504)

Due: Portfolio Submission #3

Th 12 May Summary and review

Final Exam Schedule:

Sect #1 (T & TH 09:30AM) – Tues 17 May 8:00am
Sect #2 (T & TH 12:00PM) – Wed 18 May 10:15am