

The Christian Scriptures
REL 1310
Baylor University Fall 2017

Course Syllabus

Tuesday/Thursday
12:30 AM-1:45 PM
Tidwell 201
Office Hours: Afternoons or by
Appointment

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Required Textbooks

1. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. Fully Revised Fourth Edition. Edited by Michael D. Coogan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. **Abbreviated NOAB in syllabus.**
2. John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009.
3. Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Lost Letters of Pergamum: A Story from the New Testament World*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the Old and New Testaments (their contents, historical backgrounds, and major themes) and to their role within the canon of the Christian Scriptures and the Christian Faith.

Course Policy

This Christian Scriptures course is being taught in a liberal arts context and is an integral part of the university curriculum at Baylor. You do not have to share a particular faith commitment to do well in this class. The purpose is education, not indoctrination. Thus, various responsible viewpoints on critical issues will be presented. You are not expected to agree with any one particular view; rather, you should demonstrate that you understand the issues involved and the various options discussed in class. While facts about Bible knowledge and historical data are important in this class, more important is the task of becoming an interested and informed reader of the Bible.

Course Goal

To enable students to become more interested, informed, and responsible readers of the Christian Scriptures.

Course Objectives

After taking this course, students will:

1. Be able to explain the narrative framework of Scripture and how the parts relate to the whole.
2. Be able to demonstrate basic knowledge of the content and sequence of the Bible.
3. Be able to demonstrate basic knowledge of what the Bible is and how it came about.
4. Understand how historical context, genre, and translation influence biblical interpretation.
5. Be exposed to an array of contemporary hermeneutical and exegetical issues.

Course Overview

1. **Canon:** We will begin our course with a discussion of the biblical canon. Understanding issues like canonization, textual criticism, and theories of translation are foundational to our task.
2. **Narrative:** Understanding the message and significance of the Christian Scriptures has been greatly aided by an emphasis on reading the Bible as a story with a discernible plot. The narrative framework of our course is fourfold: Creation, Corruption, Correction (Covenant/Christ), Completion.
3. **History:** Knowledge of the past, specifically regarding the Jewish people and the early Christians, is essential for proper understanding of the biblical message in the present.
4. **Interpretation:** Interpretation of a written text never takes place in a vacuum. The act of reading and interpreting is conditioned by many factors. Throughout the semester, we will explore methods of interpretation that shape our understanding of the Christian Scriptures, thereby providing meaning and significance to the biblical message.

Classroom Decorum

1. All participants in the class (including the instructor) are expected to relate to one another with respect. This includes (but is not limited to) giving full attention to whomever is speaking to the class in the form of a lecture or class discussion and showing proper consideration for the viewpoints of others (especially if you disagree with them).
2. Laptops/iPads/etc. are permitted in class for the sole purpose of taking notes on the class lecture. If the use of these devices is abused, the instructor reserves the right to ban the use of these devices in class.
3. Please do not use cell phones during class time.

Course Requirements

Reading Quizzes (25%)

Quizzes will be given intermittently throughout the semester. Students who arrive late will **not** have the opportunity to take the quiz at the end of class. Make-up quizzes will only be offered for those with university related or documented medical absences.

Tests (25%)

Two tests (100 pts each) will be given according to the course schedule below. Each test will cover material from class lectures and assigned readings. Further information will be given in class regarding their content. Makeup tests will only be given in the case of documented medical emergencies.

Book Discussion Questions (25%)

For each book discussion students should bring to class two copies of one-page (minimum) answers to the following questions.

For *The Lost World of Genesis 1*:

1. Who is the author?
2. What is the author doing?
 - a. What is the author's topic? (What question is being addressed?)
 - b. What is the thesis? (The answer to the question.)
3. How does the author do it?
 - a. What is the structure of the argument?
 - b. What evidence is offered?
 - c. What are the most important examples and how do they relate to the thesis?
4. What can we take away from the essay?
 - a. What are the conclusions?
 - b. What are the strongest and weakest points?
 - c. What other topics might this essay relate to?

For *Lost Letters of Pergamum*:

1. What is this story about?
2. What is the narrative arc?
3. What are the turning points in the story?
4. What led to Antipas' conversion?
5. How does this story help our understanding of the Gospel of Luke?
6. How does this story help out understanding of 1st century Christianity?

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will be cumulative, will cover the material from class lectures and assigned readings, and may take the entire 2 hours. Students must take the exam on the date scheduled. There will be no early or late exams given except for a documented emergency or conflict with another exam.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	92.5 to 100
A-	89.5 to 92.4
B+	86.5- 89.4
B	82.5 - 86.4
B-	79.5 – 82.4
C+	76.5 – 79.4
C	72.5 – 76.4
C-	69.5 – 72.4
D+	66.5 – 69.4
D	62.5 – 66.4
D-	59.5 – 62.4
F	0 – 59.4

Attendance

The College of Arts and Sciences attendance policy will be enforced.

To earn course credit in the College of Arts and Sciences, a student must attend at least 75% of all scheduled class meetings. Any student who does not meet this minimal standard will automatically receive a grade of "F" in the course. Any University-related activity necessitating an absence from class shall count as an absence when determining whether a student has attended the required 75% of class meetings.

TITLE IX OFFICE –If you or someone you know would like help related to an experience of sexual violence including sexual assault, harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or other type of non-consensual sexual conduct, please contact Kristan Tucker, the Title IX Coordinator at Baylor University, by email Kristan.Tucker@baylor.edu or phone (254-710-8454).

Anonymous reporting for students or third parties is also available on the Title IX website www.Baylor.edu/TitleIX.

The Title IX office understands the sensitive nature of these situations and can provide information about available on- and off-campus resources, such as counseling and psychological services, medical treatment, academic support, university housing and other forms of assistance. Staff members at the office will also explain your rights and the judicial process options, if you choose to file a complaint with the University. You will not be required to share your experience, and the Title IX Office will keep any information private. The Title IX Office exists to support and empower students, while allowing them to remain in control. **If you or someone you know feels unsafe or may be in imminent danger, please call the Baylor Police Department (254-710-2222) or Waco Police Department (9-1-1) immediately.**

Class Schedule

(This schedule may be altered to suit the needs of the class)