Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
English 3320-001: The Bible as Literature

2:00-3:15 pm MW
IH 164
Office Hours: MW 3:30-5:30 pm, TR 10-11 am
& by appointment

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Fall Semester 2011

Course Description
A consideration of the Bible in terms of its authors, subjects, literary forms, source language texts and their translations, and its development over time as an anthology of texts, including its influence on the literature of the Anglo-American tradition.

Prerequisites
The course is designed as an elective course for the upper-division student, including both the English and non-English major, who has successfully completed English 1302, Composition II (or its equivalent), and English 2332 or English 2333, Literature of the Western World I or II.

Course Objectives
The course has four major objectives:
- to understand the cultural and historical contexts of Biblical literature
- to survey the variety of literary forms & techniques found in the Bible
- to understand the transmission & translation history of the Bible, focusing especially on the English Bible
- to examine the uses of Biblical literature, especially its influences on the literature of the Anglo-American Tradition.

Student Learning Outcomes
- to demonstrate analytical skills in reading and writing through completion of the personal academic notebook’s explications and test essay options.
- to evaluate the role of genre in shaping one’s reading of Biblical literature through completion of the personal academic notebook’s explications and test essay options.
- to record and evaluate previous and emerging insights through the personal academic notebook’s written responses.
- to apply research skills and to integrate personal writing into one’s academic writing through completion of the test essay options.
- to create and integrate personal interpretive links between course materials, research topics, and one’s previous academic and life experiences via a reflective essay/letter.
Required Texts
You will be required to read from these texts:
  *The Holy Bible: New International Version*

Course Requirements
Personal Academic Notebook
You will be required to keep a personal notebook. This is a personal learning tool, but you should use the following general guidelines. Since different students have different learning preferences, I want to offer you a *minimum* amount and type of activity to complete in your notebook. In order to sharpen your skills as a reader and writer, I’d like you to do a *minimum* of a dozen exercises in your notebook of two basic types:

**Reader’s Responses.** A reader’s response is pretty much what it’s name suggests: you (the reader) *respond in writing* to a selected reading out of your own experience and knowledge (and course materials). As you examine the syllabus of readings, you’ll see that we will be reading something for practically every class. Of all those assignments, I’d like you to pick six of the readings of your own choosing and write an *informal* response to each. Although I won’t count words, a response should be substantial enough to actually convey something of your reaction to the reading, or portion of the reading, you selected. I will suggest due dates for this activity on the syllabus. Most successful responses are at least 3-4 pages typewritten (roughly 750-1000 words).

**Explications.** The Ryken book will be very helpful to you in creating your explications. An explication is the product of a *close reading* of a literary text in which you explain how it works to achieve that meaning or effect by its use of literary techniques. When considering a narrative work, for instance, you might explain how the plot, characters, setting, etc. work to create an effect that you discovered in reading the piece closely. Again, as in your reader’s responses, I don’t want to make a hard and fast rule about length. I’ll expect *six* explications to be in your journal/notebook. I will suggest due dates for this activity on the syllabus. Most successful explications are at least 3-4 pages typewritten (roughly 750-1000 words).

I encourage you to see this feature of the class as a place for you to work out your ideas informally, free from the constraints of a finish-quality, graded paper. If you approach this in this fashion, you can use your journal/notebook as a place to mine ideas to develop for your three take-home tests and your mini-portfolio, not to mention your final reflection.
**Additional (Some Optional) Features (i.e. "extra credit")**

You are also free to record personal responses and insights, concepts and essences gleaned from class readings, lectures, and discussions. These entries can be in handwritten or electronic form and should linked to the topics covered in the course syllabus.

Be sure to bring your notebook to every class so that we can use them in class sessions (and so I can collect entries to read). If you are keeping electronic entries, you'll need to figure out how to meet these requirements and also suit yourself.

Each entry must be dated, and you must find a way to distinguish between notes taken in class and your own musings, rantings and ravings (or whatever strategies you choose to employ), and the required explications and reader's responses.

I will evaluate your notebook at mid-term and at semester’s end—not on grammar, spelling, neatness, orthodoxy (or lack thereof), etc., etc.—but on the demonstration of a consistent commitment to the guidelines above. In short, I'll look at the consistency, personal engagement, and the depth to which you've tried to dig. I will also check to make sure that you have completed the required items.

**Tests**

During the semester, you will have three opportunities to synthesize your responses, explications, course materials and readings, and personal research through the completion of three take-home tests. These tests will center upon the three major genres we will investigate: narrative, aphoristic, and apocalyptic literature.

**Reflective Essay**

You will write a reflective essay of three-five pages with the goal of pulling together all four course goals into one coherent perspective that will also, hopefully, give you the opportunity to form a personal critical perspective of the Bible as literature. This essay will be due at the scheduled final examination time with your mini-portfolio.

**Grading Policy**

Your course grade will be determined by the following proportions:

- Personal Academic Notebook (45%)
  (must include six explications & six reader’s responses)
- Test 1 (15%)
- Test 2 (15%)
- Test 3 (15%)
- Reflective Essay/Letter (10%)

**Grading Scale**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>89-80%</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>79-70%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>69-60%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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Attendance
You will be permitted to miss the equivalent of one week of class (two classes) without penalty. Each unexcused class absence thereafter will result in a two-point attendance penalty that will be subtracted from the total points earned at semester’s end. I will free to cross your name off the class attendance sheet if you waltz out early.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is academic theft—the unlawful stealing of another’s ideas—and is a serious academic crime. The highest standards of academic honesty are expected of students (and faculty). All forms of academic dishonesty and incivility are taboo in this course: including, but not limited to, plagiarism, signing attendance sheets for others, cheating on tests, handing in others’ work as your own. I will adhere to the University policy regarding academic honesty published in the University Catalog. Plagiarism or misrepresentation of references will result in failure of the work in question without opportunity to redo the work.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Students with Disabilities
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
Syllabus of Readings

Note: I reserve the right to make adjustments to this syllabus.

Class #/Date  Assignment

Week 1
1—24 August/W  Course Introductions and Discussion

Transmission & Uses—The History of the English Bible

Week 2
2—29 August/M  Kerr, Part 1, pp. 1-42
3—31 August/W  Kerr, Part 2, pp. 43-108.

Considering the Bible as Literature

Week 3
4—05 September/M  Labor Day—No Classes
5—07 September/W  Kerr, pp. 109-136

A Survey of Selected Genres

Week 4
6—12 September/M  Kerr, pp. 137-201
Is the Bible Literature? (Ryken 1)
The Literary Unity of the Bible (Ryken 12)  R1 Due

Narratives (stories)

7—14 September/W  The Stories of the Bible (Ryken 2)
Types of Biblical Stories (Ryken 3)
Satire (Ryken 10)

Week 5
8—19 September/M  Jonah  E1 Due

Narratives about Samuel, David & Solomon

9—21 September/W  1 Samuel

Week 6
10—26 September/M  2 Samuel—> 1 Kings 1-11  R2 Due
11—28 September/W  1 Chronicles—2 Chronicles 1-9  E2 Due

Week 7
12—03 October/M  Narratives about Jesus of Nazareth
The Gospels (Ryken 7)
Parables (Ryken 8)

13—05 October/W  The Gospel of Matthew 1-14
### Week 8
14—10 October/M  The Gospel of Matthew 15-28  

### Week 9
16—17 October/M  The Gospel of Luke 14-24  
Midterm Reflection/Journal Check  
17—19 October/W  The Book of Acts 1-28  
E3 Due

### Week 10
18—24 October/M  The Gospel of John 1-12:11  
19—26 October/W  The Gospel of John 12:12-21:25

### Aphoristic Literature
### Week 11
20—31 October/M  The Proverb as a Literary Form (Ryken 6)  
21—02 November/W  Proverbs 1-20  
          Ecclesiastes 1-12  
04 November/F  Last Day to Drop a Class)

### Week 12
22—07 November/M  Job 1-14  
23—09 November/W  Job 15-31

### Week 13
24—14 November/M  Job 32-42  
R5 Due

### Visionary or Apocalyptic Literature
### Week 14
26—21 November/M  Daniel 1-12  
27—23 November/W  TBA

### Week 15
28—28 November/M  Revelation 1-11  
29—30 November/W  Revelation 12-22  
R6 Due  
E6 Due

### Week 16
30—05 December/M  Reflections  
Test 3 & reflective essay will be due it FC257 (my office)  
at the scheduled exam time for the class.