


SAMPLE SYLLABUS: CURRENT USERS
Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: Second Edition
 John J. Collins

INSTRUCTOR	Meghan Henning 
INSTITUTION	University of Dayton
COURSE TITLE	REL 500 B: Foundations of Biblical Study
SEMESTER	Fall 2014

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Biblical Studies is fundamentally an historical discipline. Historians study the Bible by asking questions that pertain to the historical contexts in which the texts were written, the persons who wrote them, the audience for which they were originally written, and the various audiences who have read and interpreted these texts in the millennia since they were written. Our brief foray into the historical world of the Bible and Biblical interpretation will not only familiarize students with the texts, but challenge them to ask their own questions about the “unfamiliar” elements in these historically bound texts. Our hope as Biblical scholars is that our study of the text allows new questions to emerge organically, so that we are always allowing the texts and their ancient environs to challenge us today.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Over the course of the semester students will:

- Learn *why* and *how* historical context is employed in the academic study of the Bible
- Develop familiarity with the basic content of the Bible
- Develop an appreciation for the distinctive features of each of the different genres of literature contained in the Bible (e.g. Prophecy vs. Wisdom literature)
- Consider a few of the major themes that are repeated across the diverse texts that make up the Bible
- Think critically about the ways in which the Biblical documents are interpreted in our contemporary world
- Learn to apply the tools of Biblical Studies scholarship to the Biblical interpretation projects you will conduct in your own vocation

REQUIRED TEXTS

- The Bible (*New Revised Standard Version [NRSV], with Apocrypha*). I recommend the Harper-Collins Study Bible, but any edition of the NRSV is fine.
- Collins, John J. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Second Edition. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. (Abbreviated as Collins)
- Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. (Abbreviated as: Ehrman)

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Class Description	Reading Assignments
Wednesday, August, 27	<i>Introduction</i> What do you want to know about the Bible that you don't already know? How will you use the Bible in your vocation? What is the Scholarly Study of the Bible?	<i>Read Collins, 1-23</i> <i>Read Michael Joseph Brown What They Don't Tell You: A Survivor's Guide to Biblical Studies 1-40. (On Isidore)</i>
Wednesday, September 3	<i>Pentateuch: Beginnings</i>	<i>Skim Brown, 41-108 (On Isidore) and come to class prepared to discuss in detail at least three "rules of thumb" that you found changed the way you think about studying the Bible.</i> <i>Collins, 27-107</i>
Wednesday, September 10	<i>Pentateuch: Covenant and Law</i>	<i>Collins, 109-182</i>
Wednesday, September 17	<i>Becoming a Nation: Monarchy and Divided Kingdom</i> <i>In Class Interpretation Workshop: Choosing a Project/Topic for Biblical Interpretation Project</i>	<i>Collins, 185-296</i>
Wednesday, September 24	<i>Prophets: Impact of the Exile</i>	<i>Collins, 349-394</i> <i>Interpretation Project Topics Due</i>
Wednesday, October 1	<i>Return from the Exile</i> <i>In Class Interpretation Workshop: Using Lexical Aids and Commentaries</i>	<i>Collins, 395-416; 449-465</i>

Wednesday, October 8	<i>Writings: Responses to Outside Pressure</i>	Collins, 547-592
Wednesday, October 15	MIDTERM EXAM, <i>Introduction to the New Testament</i>	Ehrman, 29-80
Wednesday, October 22	<i>Synoptic Gospels: Mark</i> <i>In Class Interpretation Workshop: Developing a Bibliography in Biblical Studies Research</i>	Ehrman, 82-112; 275-293
Wednesday, October 29	<i>Synoptic Gospels: Matthew and Luke-Acts</i>	Ehrman, 114-174; 253-258 Bibliography Due for Biblical Interpretation Project
Wednesday, November 5	<i>The Gospel of John and the Historical Jesus</i> <i>In Class Interpretation Workshop: Using Secondary Sources for Biblical Studies Research</i>	Ehrman, 176-197; 237-251
Wednesday, November 12	<i>Paul: Theologian and Community Organizer</i>	Ehrman, 306-384
Wednesday, November 19	<i>Deutero-Pauline Epistles and Women in Early Christianity</i>	Ehrman, 397-433
Wednesday, November 26	NO CLASS (Dr. Henning at SBL Conference)	
Wednesday, December 3	<i>Hebrews, 1Peter and James</i>	Ehrman, 435-488 Biblical Interpretation Projects Due (Submit on Isidore)
Wednesday, December 10	<i>Revelation</i>	Ehrman, 490-506 (Confirmation Page of Course Evaluation for 1 pt. Bonus)
Wednesday, December 17	Final Exam, 4:30-6:20PM	