The Bible is arguably the most important text in both the western tradition and all of world history. It has influenced - at least - western literature, art, politics, religion, justice systems, gender relations, family structure, understanding of time, and view of the role and purpose of humanity. In this class we will consider the major characters, events, themes and motifs in both the Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament) and the New Testament and their effects on western culture. We will examine the origin and growth of the biblical themes of creation, kingship, sacrifice, sexuality, suffering, death, and the end of time as we know it.

Goals

By the end of this course, you should:

- have familiarity with the important forms, events and characters of biblical literature
- understand the general history of ancient Israel and the rise of Judaism and Christianity
- understand some of the impact of the Bible on Western culture and thought
- gain competence in the ability to close-read ancient texts
- be able to reflect on the nature of ancient religious writing

Required Texts:

1. The main text for this course is a Bible in modern translation. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New Revised Standard Version) is available for purchase at the Durham Book Exchange. This version provides notes on difficult passages, as well as other secondary information. You are not required to purchase it, but you may find it useful to have. You may also use another modern version (not the King James Version). If you use a Jewish Bible, you will need to find a version of the New Testament. Regardless of which version you use, you must bring a Bible to class.


3. All other readings will be posted on Blackboard or can be found online.


Requirements

1. **Class participation and preparation (3%).** It is imperative that you do the readings ahead of class time and that you attend the lectures. If you do not do the reading before class it will be more difficult to understand the lecture. Quizzes will be largely based on the readings, but tests will be based on the lectures. Therefore, if you miss the lecture, you will be unable to answer the test questions appropriately. Moreover, at most class sessions I will call on students to answer basic questions about the reading, to read aloud, or to give their opinions. A student who does not answer when called on will be marked as absent for the class.

   **DO NOT USE COMPUTERS, IPADS, PHONES OR OTHER TECHNOLOGY DURING CLASS. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE FOR THE REST OF THE SESSION. YOU MUST BRING A BIBLE TO EVERY CLASS.**

2. **11 quizzes on the readings (22%).** These will be given on Mondays on weeks when we do not have a test.

3. **Three tests (25% each).** These will take place on **Monday 2/24, Monday 4/7** and one during the **final exam period.** These tests will not be cumulative; they will cover the material since the previous test.

Plagiarism

The University of New Hampshire defines plagiarism as:

The unattributed use of the ideas, evidence, or words of another person, or the conveying of the false impression that the arguments and writing in a paper are the student's own. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following: 1. The acquisition by purchase or otherwise of a part or the whole of a piece of work which is represented as the student's own; 2. The representation of the ideas, data, or writing of another person as the student's own work, even though some wording, methods of citation, or arrangement of evidence, ideas, or arguments have been altered; 3. Concealment of the true sources of information, ideas, or argument in any piece of work.

Plagiarizing in this class will result in failure and will be reported to the Dean of your home college. You may, and are encouraged to, study with fellow classmates, but all written materials must be your own work. For further information, see the link below and consult with the instructor. [http://www.unh.edu/vpsas/handbook/academic-honesty](http://www.unh.edu/vpsas/handbook/academic-honesty)

Course Schedule (assignments due on the date they appear)

W. 1/21 Introduction to the Course and the Bible: What Is It and Why Should We Read It?

   **Fant:** 21-31, 55-62
F. 1/23  Introduction to the Bible: Where and When Was It Written?

**Fant:** 75-83, chart on 98

**Blackboard:** “The Major Periods of Israelite History”

**Make note of these dates:** 1000 B.C.E., 922 B.C.E., 722/1 B.C.E., 587 B.C.E., 538 B.C.E., 515 B.C.E, 323 B.C.E., 63 B.C.E., 70 C.E.

M. 1/27  Introduction to the Bible: How Will We Read It?; **Quiz #1**

**Bible:** Exodus 4 – focus on 4:24-26

**Fant:** 31-52

W. 1/29  Creation Myths in the Ancient Near East

**Bible:** Genesis 1-11

**Fant:** 152-154

**Blackboard:** “Myths and Legends”

F. 1/31  The Garden of Eden

**Bible:** Re-read Genesis 1-3 extremely carefully. As you do, consider the following questions: How many stories of creation are in Genesis 1-3? Where do they begin? Where do they end? How do these stories portray humanity and the world? How do they portray the relationship between the sexes? How do they portray the creator? What is his name?

M. 2/3  Noah and the Flood; The Documentary Hypothesis; **Quiz #2**

**Bible:** Re-read Genesis 6-11

**Fant:** 42-43, 150 -154

**Blackboard:** The Flood Story

W. 2/5  Abraham
Bible: Genesis 12-25  Fant: 97-103, 106-109

F. 2/7  Abraham and the Sacrifice of Isaac
       Bible: Re-read Genesis 22  Blackboard: Abraham in the Quran

M. 2/10  Jacob; Quiz #3
         Bible: Genesis 26-35

W. 2/12  NO CLASS -- INSTRUCTOR OUT OF TOWN

F. 2/14  Joseph
         Bible: Genesis 36-50

M. 2/17  Women in the Hebrew Bible; Quiz #4
         Bible: Numbers 36: 33; 27:1-11; 36:1-7; Judges 4-5; Ruth (all -- it’s short); I Samuel 1-2; Proverbs 31:10-31

W. 2/19  The Exodus
         Bible: Exodus 1-15

F.2/21  Sinai and the 10 Commandments
        Bible: Exodus 19-24; 31:18-34

M. 2/24  Test #1

W. 2/26  Sacrifice and Purity
         Bible: Leviticus 1-3 (skim), 11, 12, 15, 16, 19-21; Numbers 6, 19
Fant: skim p. 149

Blackboard: “Purity, Ritual”

F. 2/28  Homosexuality and the Bible

Bible: Re-read Genesis 18. Read Leviticus 18 and 20; Ezekiel 16:49-50. Read also the New Testament passages I Corinthians 6:9; 2 Peter 2:4-10; and Romans 1:18-32.

M. 3/3  Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Thought; Quiz #5

Bible: II Kings 22:1-23:25; Deuteronomy 6-7, 11-12, 28, 34

Fant: 171-173; 216-217

W. 3/5  Israelite Religion

Online: Watch on YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyfFd4iBI-Q&list=PLI1m4mzLPO80AGL5iB_Xqx5JMyfmH7l5X

F. 3/7  Joshua, Conquest and the Settlement of Canaan

Bible: Deuteronomy 12:29-32; 20; Joshua 4, 6; Judges 1:1-2:5

Fant: 121-134

Blackboard: Robert Allen Warrior, “Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians”
(Optional: Online: http://www.doctrineofdiscovery.org/index.htm)

M. 3/10  NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

W. 3/12  NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

F. 3/14  NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

M. 3/17  The Judges; Quiz #6

Bible: Judges 2:6 – 2:23; 4-5; 11:1 – 12:7; 13-16; 19-21
W. 3/19  David and Kingship

**Bible:** Deuteronomy 17:14-20; I Samuel 1-3; 8-10, 16-18; II Samuel 5:1-10; 7; 11-13

**Fant:** 135-150

F. 3/21  Solomon, the Temple and the Fall of the North

**Bible:** I Kings 1, 3, 10-12; II Kings 17-20

**Fant:** 146-149, 155-174

M. 3/24  Prophecy: What Is a Prophet?; Quiz #7

**Bible:** Jonah, Isaiah 1-2, 5:1-17, 6-7, 11; Deuteronomy 18:15-22

**Fant:** 175-184, 192-197

W. 3/26  Elijah

**Bible:** I Kings 17:1-II Kings 2

F. 3/28  Prophecy: Prophetic Critique

**Bible:** Amos

**Fant:** 185-189

M. 3/31  Exile and Prophecy; Quiz #8

**Bible:** II Kings 24-25; Psalm 137; Ezekiel 1-5, 16, 18, 37; Isaiah 40, 42; 44:24-45:17; 53; Ezra 1; Nehemiah 8

**Fant:** 205-216, 221-225, 230-232

W. 4/2  Job

**Bible:** Job (especially 1-10 and 38-42)
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<td>Fant: 319-322, 326-336</td>
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<td>M. 4/14</td>
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<td>W. 4/16</td>
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W. 4/23 The Historical Jesus

**Fant**: 295-309 and “Josephus” on page 268

**Online**: OPTIONAL “What Can We Really Know About Jesus?” at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/reallyknow.html

F. 4/25 Acts


**Fant**: 359-377, 437-441

M. 4/28 Paul’s Theology; **Quiz #11**

**Bible**: Galatians; Romans 9-11

**Fant**: 386-398, 400-402

W. 4/30 Paul and the Early Church

**Bible**: 1 Corinthians **Fant**: 402-406

F. 5/2 New Testament Apocalyptic: Revelation

**Bible**: Revelation **Fant**: 441—455

M. 5/5 Review

**Fant**: 62-68

**FINAL TEST DURING EXAM PERIOD**

**BRING A BIBLE TO EVERY CLASS**