THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE
Eng 275
4 credits
No prerequisites

Rationale for conversion: the conversion will give students greater opportunity to practice critical thinking and writing and to develop research skills by increasing the length and complexity of analytical writing assignments. A 5-7 page critical essay will be added requiring students to consult at least one outside source as research for the essay. Instruction includes introduction to print and non-print resources, such as digital collections, MLA (Modern Language Association) online data bases, web resources, and citations appropriate to topic.

This course continues to meet all outcomes for Literature and the Arts.

The 4 credit version will:
• Add research skills (digital and print resources)
• Add 5-7 page critical paper.
The core syllabus is the 3 credit version last taught.

Course Description:
Biblical structure, literary types, ideas, influences.

Student Learning Outcomes:
• Identify key authors and texts of the Old and New Testament
• Analyze and identify central literary genres, conventions during the Old and New Testament periods
• Account for and explain historical trends and issues that affected the development of Biblical literature and culture during these eras
• Demonstrate general skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, literary analysis, and academic writing in the humanities

This course meets the requirements for bacc core courses in Literature and the Arts.

Learning Outcomes for Literature and the Arts:
1. Define, quote, or label significant works of Biblical literature.
2. Summarize, interpret or describe, from an historical perspective, the role of literature in society.
3. Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas.
4. Recognize methods by which pattern and meaning are found.
5. Integrate and engage, through literature and the arts, one’s own and other cultures.
6. Develop expertise and sophistication in the conventions and techniques of literature, and also in critiquing those methods.
7. Demonstrate critical thinking about literary traditions and Biblical contexts.
**Evaluation of student performance:**
Two hour-long exams during the term (25% each), daily in-class informal writing and participation (10%), one 5-7 page critical essay incorporating research from at least one secondary source (20%), and a final examination (20%). Each of the exams will include an out-of-class, 500 word essay assignment. Topics will develop from the daily in-class informal writing.

Text:  *The Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version*

**Statement Regarding Disability Access Services:**
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

**Link to Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct:**
[http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm)

**Syllabus:**

*Week 1*

_Perspective I: Faith is Expressed through the Language and Assumptions of Particular Cultures_

_three examples:_
- Genesis 19:1-11: part of the Sodom and Gomorrah story
- Psalm 137: “by the rivers of Babylon we wept”

_a broad outline of the history of the events narrated in the Old Testament_
- Exodus 3:1-20: the story of the Burning Bush as a summary of the story of the Passover
- Exodus 12:1-28: the Passover meal
- Exodus 15:21: the Song of Miriam
- 1 Samuel 16:11-13: the anointing of David
- 2 Samuel 12:1-5: the prophet Nathan rebukes King David
- Psalm 137: the Exile revisited
- Isaiah 9:2-7 and 11:1-9: the hope for a new “Messiah”

_a broad outline of the history of the events narrated in the New Testament_
- Luke 1:67-79: the “Benedictus” as a summary of the history leading to Jesus
- Mark 8:27-30, 9:2-4: Jesus is the Messiah, is seen with Moses on the mountain
- Mark 14:12-25: the Last Supper as a revised Passover meal

*Week 2*

_Perspective II: Faith is Expressed through Literary Genre and Form_

_in-class exercise: genre in selected Old Testament readings (bring your Bible)_
- Genesis chapters 1-3: the creation story as “myth”
Genesis 29:1-12: Jacob at the well as “legend”
Job chapters 1-2: an example of “folktale”
an outline of the books of the Old and New Testament:
a map, in light of genre and history--where everything is and how to find it

Week 3

*Perspective III: Faith is Expressed through the Process of Redaction and Canonization*

Genesis chapters 1 and 2 revisited
Genesis chapters 6 through 8: Noah and the Flood
Luke 1:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-8: what has been “handed down”
a history of the canonization of the Old and New Testaments

Week 4

*Perspective IV: Faith is Expressed through Concrete Details and Patterns of Imagery*
concreteness and pattern in Genesis:
Genesis chapter 22: the story of the Sacrifice of Isaac
skim the 5 genealogies in Genesis:
Genesis 25:21-33:20: the Jacob stories

Week 5

concreteness and pattern in Mark
Mark 4:35-41: calming the storm
Mark 1:40-45: the healing of the leper and the “Messianic Secret”
an outline of the underlying structure of Mark (and so of the basic structure of Matthew and Luke, as well):
1:9-11: the Baptism
8:22-26: Blind Man of Bethsaida
8:27-38: Pre-Transfiguration Discourse
9:2-8: the Transfiguration
9:33-37: an Argument
10:46-52: Blind Bartimaeus
15:33-41: The Crucifixion

First Exam

Week 6

Mark 16:1-8: the Resurrection account
v. Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*
(see also, quickly, John 20:1-18)
the “Synoptic” question: what Matthew and Luke add to Mark’s outline:
Week 7

Perspective V: Faith is Expressed through Multiple Narratives and from Multiple Points of View

Luke 1:1-4: the definition of the genre of “Gospel” revisited
John 20:30-31: selectivity and purpose

Second Exam

Week 8

Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20: the Beatitudes revisited
the special case of John: Mark and John and the Passion Narrative:
Mark 8:34-38, 14:32-42, 15:21, 15:33, and 15:34
Gibson’s Garden: another scene from The Passion of Christ

return to the Old Testament in this light:
Leviticus chapter 26; Jeremiah 3:12-14; 15:6; 15:19;
Job chapters 38-40; Psalms 22 and 23

Week 9

Perspective VI: Faith is Expressed through Discrete Pieces of Theological Reflection and Moral Teaching in the Old Testament

Psalm 36:8-10: hesed, or steadfast love
Deuteronomy 6:4-5: the shema
Exodus 20:1-17: the 10 Commandments
Exodus chapter 21 (skim): a sample of the Covenant Code
Leviticus chapters 18-19 (skim): a sample of the Holiness Code

in the New Testament

Luke 15:11-32: Parable of the Prodigal Son
Matthew chapter 13: 7 parables
Matthew chapters 5-7: the Sermon on the Mount
esp. the Beatitudes: 5:1-13
on divorce: 5:31-32
the Lilies of the Field: 6:24-34
The Greatest Commandment: Matthew 22:34-40
(and see Deut 6:4-5 and Lev 19:18)
Dying-to-Self: Mark 8:34-36
The Kenosis Hymn: Philippians 2:5-11
Week 10

the issue of the resurrection
Psalm 30 and Ezekiel 37:1-14: the afterlife in the Old Testament
John 11:25-26: I am the Resurrection and the Life
1 Corinthians 15:1-22: Paul interpreting the resurrection
Galatians 2:20: Christ is in me
John 21:1-14: the complexity of this embodied in the narrative

the issue of the identity of Jesus
Psalm 8:4, Ezekiel 2:1: Son of Man in the Old Testament
Hosea 11:1: Israel as the Son of God
Luke 3:38: Adam as the Son of God
John 3:16 and Mark 1:1: Jesus as the Son of God
Mark 15:39n: Jesus as a Son of God
Mark 8:27-33: Who do you say I am? (messiah)
John 1:1-5, or John 14:8-11: I am in the Father and the Father in me
Philippians 2:6-7: though he was in the form of God
Colossians 1:11-20: first born of all creation
Mark 15:22-39: these multiple points of view embodied in the narrative

Final Exam
Critical Essays Due—[This writing assignment is an addition to the current syllabus to justify the 4th credit hour]

Assignment: write a 5-7 page critical essay on one more of the readings we’ve covered this term. The essay should incorporate outside research: please consult at least one secondary source relating to your topic. This may be another work contemporary with your text or a current critical appraisal of your chosen text. Please consult the general guide for evaluating essays as given below:

General criteria for evaluating essays: 1) Ideas: the strength and thoughtfulness of the essay’s concerns. 2) Focus: the care and reasonableness with which the essay selects, adheres to, and supports its thesis. 3) Organization: the coherence and logic with which the essay presents its ideas. 4) Style: the essay’s readability. 5) Mechanics: adherence to conventions of standard written English.