

COURSE OUTLINE

English 128 The Bible as Literature

I. Catalog Statement

English 128 is a general introduction to the Bible: its characters, recurrent themes, images and symbols. The course presents information regarding the literary divisions, the language, and text of each book as well as its composition, authorship, date, and contents. Attention is given to literary, historical, geographical, archaeological, and theological matters, including the formation of the canon, modern approaches to biblical study, and principal English versions of the Scriptures.

Units – 3.0

Lecture Hours – 3.0

Prerequisite: Recommended preparation: Eligibility for English 101

II. Course Entry Expectations

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 6; Writing 6; Listening/Speaking 6; Math 1

Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:

1. organize and write thesis-based essays
2. use detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, and other appropriate support for thesis statements
3. critically analyze selected prose works dealing with important contemporary issues
4. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions
5. gather and organize information through library research
demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work as specified by the English 120 rubric.

III. Course Exit Standards

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. explain the formation of the biblical canon and distinguish between the various textual traditions, authors, and dates of composition
2. evaluate the various English language editions of Scripture according to form, style, and level of diction
3. compare and contrast the literal, the allegorical, the rational, or the historical approaches to the text

4. explain the major genres and representative forms of Biblical writings and their recurrent themes, images, and symbols
5. develop the ability to think critically and articulate biblical topics of literary interest, and to evaluate the influence of Hebrew Biblical literature on English literature

IV. Course Content

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| A. Introduction to the course | 3 hours |
| 1. Course requirements | |
| 2. Differences between myth, saga, and history | |
| 3. Approaches to the study of the Bible | |
| B. Transmission of the Bible | 3 hours |
| 1. Greek manuscripts | |
| 2. Early versions | |
| 3. English translations | |
| C. The creation of the canon | 3 hours |
| 1. Nature of Old Testament Literature | |
| 2. Canonization of the Old and New Testaments | |
| 3. Extracanonical Literature of the Old Testament | |
| D. Survey of critical interpretation | 3 hours |
| 1. Exegesis in the early Church | |
| 2. Rise of higher criticism | |
| 3. Old Testament studies | |
| E. Etiological narratives (Gen. 1-24) | 6 hours |
| 1. Ancient Near Eastern parallels | |
| 2. The documentary hypothesis | |
| 3. Mythological motifs | |
| F. Epic narratives and sagas (Gen. 25-50) | 6 hours |
| 1. Chronological events in the genesis stories | |
| 2. Interpretations of the stories | |
| 3. The patriarchs and the idea of the covenant | |
| G. Moses and the Exodus | 1 hour |
| 1. The role of Moses | |
| 2. The disclosure of God's name | |
| 3. Contest with pharaoh | |
| H. Covenant in the wilderness | 3 hours |
| 1. Covenant at Sinai | |
| 2. Covenant and law | |
| 3. Breaking of the Covenant and Mosaic Faith | |

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| I. Struggles of faith and culture | 2 hours |
| 1. Temptations of Canaanite culture | |
| 2. Decline of the Confederacy | |
| 3. Last Judge of Israel | |
| J. The Throne of David | 2 hours |
| 1. A time of international favor | |
| 2. David as architect of the Israelite state | |
| 3. Solomon in all his glory | |
| K. Prophetic troublers of Israel | 1 hour |
| 1. Background of Prophecy | |
| 2. A historians view of the Times | |
| 3. The Divided Kingdom | |
| L. Fallen is the Virgin Israel | 2 hours |
| 1. Revolution of Jehu | |
| 2. Prophecy of Hosea | |
| 3. Fall of Samaria | |
| M. Judah's Covenanat | 1 hour |
| 1. Book of Isaiah | |
| 2. Micah, a rural prophet | |
| N. Rediscovery of the Mosaic Torah | 2 hours |
| 1. Differing views on the covenant | |
| 2. New Outbursts of Prophecy | |
| 3. The Book of Deuteronomy | |
| 4. Faith and Nationalism | |
| O. The doom of the nation | 2 hours |
| 1. The suffering Prophet | |
| 2. The Book of Jeremiah | |
| 3. Beyond the Day of Doom – eschatology | |
| P. By the Waters of Babylon | 3 hours |
| 1. The Jewish dispersion | |
| 2. Life under captivity | |
| 3. The Priestly point of view | |
| Q. Dawn of a New Age | 2 hours |
| 1. Second Isaiah | |
| 2. The suffering servant | |
| 3. A light to the nations | |

- R. A Kingdom of Priests 3 hours
 - 1. The work of the Chronicler
 - 2. Ezra/Nehemiah
 - 3. Reconstruction and Reform

- S. The beginning of wisdom 4 hours
 - 1. Israel's wisdom literature
 - 2. Ecclesiastes and Job
 - 3. From despair to faith

- T. The unfulfilled drama 2 hours
 - 1. Tensions within Judaism in the Hellenistic era
 - 2. Beyond the Old Testament
 - 3. The importance of intertestamental writings

V. Methods of Presentation

The following instructional methodologies may be used in the course:

- 1. lectures, directed class discussions, small-group discussions, peer group writing workshops, individual conferences, small-group conferences, and student presentations
- 2. writing, both in and out of class, will be an integral part of the course
- 3. collaborative learning
- 4. educational technologies including word processing, Internet, and electronic presentation.

VI. Assignments and Methods of Evaluation

- 1. a minimum of four minor examinations will be given.
- 2. the student will also write one 2-1/2 hour essay final examination

VII. Textbook

Boadt, Reading Old Testament, 0809126311, Paulist Press, 1984

VIII. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:

- 1. understand the elements of Biblical literature as well as the literary, historical, geographical, archaeological, and theological significance of the text.
- 2. read critically in order to analyze literary works for themes and other literary, historical, and theological elements.
- 3. write thesis-centered essays which analyze and interpret literary, cultural, social, and historical elements of Biblical literature.