

THE BIBLE & ITS INTERPRETERS (R S 315 1 and CTI 304 1)
SCHOFFER, JONATHAN (jonschofer@austin.utexas.edu; Burdine 524)
Meets TTH 930am-1100am in Parlin Hall 301
Office Hours: TTH 2:30-3:30pm and by appointment in Burdine 524
May be counted toward the writing flag requirement.
May be counted toward the global cultures flag requirement.

Course Description:

THE BIBLE AND ITS INTERPRETERS examines the *Hebrew Bible* or *Old Testament*, the *New Testament*, and their significance over time. This particular course will focus on the emergence of three longstanding religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) through the interpretation of sacred and foundational writings. We will begin by examining the transmission and development of scriptural themes within Ancient Israel, identifying within the *Hebrew Bible* or *Old Testament* variations or re-tellings of common scenes, prophetic visions, and religious practices. We will then examine the *New Testament* as interpreting and transforming the *Old Testament* to provide foundations for Christianity, with emphasis on Paul's letters as well as elements of the Gospels. The later part of the course will highlight three later texts that emphasize three trajectories of interpretation and innovation: the church Father Augustine's *Confessions* for Christianity, the rabbinic anthology *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* for Judaism, and the *Koran* for Islam. In each case we will emphasize the expansion and transformation of biblical sources in setting the course for each religion.

Grading:

- 1) Attendance, careful preparation of assigned readings, and participation in class discussions are considered to be basic requirements the course. **Please bring relevant books to course each session, as class lectures and discussions will regularly make reference to specific passages and pages in the assigned readings.**
- 2) First paper, 4 pages: 25% of course grade (assigned Feb. 10, 2015; due Feb. 19, 2015)
- 3) Second paper, 4 pages: 25% of course grade (assigned March 24, 2015; due April 2, 2015)
- 4) Rewrite of First or Second Paper: 25% of course grade (due May 7, 2015)
- 5) Third Paper, 4 pages: 25% of course grade (assigned April 23, 2015; due May 7, 2015)

Required Books:

(available at the University Co-Op Bookstore)

***The Oxford Study Bible: Revised English Bible with Apocrypha* (Oxford University Press)**

***Saint Augustine, The Confessions* (Penguin Classics)**

***The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (Yale Judaica Series)**

***The Koran* (Penguin Classics)**

Class Schedule:

(the schedule may be adjusted to fit the needs of the course, but readings will not be added)

Jan. 20: Introduction

Jan. 22: Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: Creation
Genesis 1-3, Psalm 74, Psalm 104, Ezekiel 28:11-19

Jan. 27: Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: Revelation
Exodus 19-20, Deuteronomy 5-11

Jan. 29: Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: Prophetic Visions of God
1 Kings 22, Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7

Feb. 3: Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: Isaiah and Hezekiah (Prophet and King)
2 Kings 18-20, Isaiah 36-39

Feb. 5: Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: Sacred Festivals
Exodus 23:14-17; Exodus 34:18-25; Leviticus 23; Numbers 28-29; Deuteronomy 16

Feb. 10: Schofer, "Exegesis," in *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion* (on CANVAS)
FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED

Feb. 12: The New Testament: The Sermon on the Mount
The Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5 and 6
Review readings from Hebrew Bible / Old Testament on "Revelation";
Read with Exodus 21:22-25; Leviticus 24:10-23; Deuteronomy 19:16-21

Feb. 17: The New Testament: Paul's letter to the Romans, chapters 1-10;
Read with Genesis 15-26

Feb. 19: The New Testament: Paul's letter to the Romans, chapters 11-end
Read with 1 Kings 16:29 to the end of 1 Kings 22; Isaiah 29; Psalm 69
FIRST PAPER DUE

Feb. 24: The New Testament: The Revelation of John
Review readings from the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament on "Revelation" and "Prophetic Visions of God"

Feb. 26: Rabbinic Judaism: Rabbinic Judaism: The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan: chapter 1, pages 3 until the top of page 5; Read with The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 1; Exodus 24; Review earlier readings from the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament on "Revelation"; The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan: chapter 1, pages 5-7; Read with Numbers 15:37-40; Proverbs 7, Song of Songs ("Canticles") 7, Ecclesiastes 11

March 3: Rabbinic Judaism: The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan: chapter 31 (read endnote 2 and review Hebrew Bible / Old Testament readings on "Creation"); The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan, chapter 32 and read with Genesis 5-7

March 5: Rabbinic Judaism: The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan: chapter 4
Read with Hosea 4-9; Zechariah 9-11; Review readings from Hebrew Bible / Old Testament on
“Creation” and “Revelation”

March 10: Rabbinic Judaism: The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan: chapter 9
Read with Numbers 9:15 to 20:13; 2 Kings 1-9; 2 Chronicles 10-28

March 12: Rabbinic Judaism: The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan: chapters 10-11;
Read with Deuteronomy 1-4, Proverbs 25-31:9; Review readings from Hebrew Bible / Old
Testament on “Revelation” and “Creation”

March 16-21 Spring Break

March 24: Rabbinic Judaism: The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan: chapters 18-19, 38
Read with Deuteronomy 31:9-13; Ecclesiastes 12:9-14; Leviticus 26
SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED

March 26: Augustine, Confessions, Book Eleven (“Father”), pages 255-282
Review readings from Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: “Creation”

March 31: Augustine, Confessions, Book Twelve (“Son”), pages 283-310

April 2: Augustine, Confessions, Book Thirteen (“Spirit (Love)”), pages 311-353
SECOND PAPER DUE

April 7: Augustine, Confessions, Book Six, Chapter Two (“Ambrose”) and Book Eight
 (“Vocation”), pages 111-116, 159-182

April 9: Augustine, Confessions, Book Nine (“Baptism”), pages 183-207

April 14: Augustine, Confessions, Book Ten (“Memory”), pages 209-254

April 16: The Koran, Chapters 1 and 2, pages 7-42

April 21: The Koran, Chapters 3 and 4, pages 42-79

April 23: The Koran, Chapters 5 and 6, pages 79-108
THIRD PAPER ASSIGNED

April 28: The Koran, Chapters 7, 8, and 9, pages 108-147

April 30: The Koran, Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13, pages 147-179

May 5: The Koran, Chapters, 14 through 21, pages 179-234

May 7: Conclusion
THIRD PAPER DUE AND REWRITE OF FIRST OR SECOND PAPER DUE

Basic Policies Regarding Attendance and Participation:

Regular attendance, careful preparation of assigned readings, and participation in class discussions are considered to be basic requirements the course.

If you are sick or have a family emergency, please notify me and take care of yourself.

If you have a health or family emergency that means you have to miss more than two classes in the semester, I need a note from a doctor or other authority explaining your situation.

If you are not sick, and if you have no family emergency, I expect you to be in class and to have prepared the readings as well as papers.

In grading papers and tests, I will be particularly concerned that you are learning the material and concepts that are taught in class sessions. Prior learning of the sources is not a substitute for doing the work required by this course.

Basic Policies Regarding Papers:

No email submissions will be accepted.

This is the policy regarding late papers if you do not have an illness or family emergency. The policy aims to address both the needs of any given individual student who may have to submit a paper late, and the need to be fair to all students including those who can hand in work on time. If you hand in a paper up to one class session late, the grade will be reduced a full letter (A to B, A- to B-, etc.).

After that, and until the final exam, you can hand in late papers, but the grade will be reduced two full letters (A to C, B to D, and lower grades will be an F; note, though, that I weigh an F as stronger for your overall grade than a “0” as a paper not submitted at all). The policy emphasizes that you benefit strongly from writing the paper rather than handing in nothing at all.

Documented Disability Statement

- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd> .

Notice regarding academic dishonesty: I REFER CASES OF PLAGIARISM TO STUDENT JUDICIAL SERVICES AT THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

- Honor Code or statement of ethics.
University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
- Web site for more information:
- <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism>

Religious Holy Days

- The class will not meet on September 25, 2014, for Rosh HaShanah. For other religious holy days, by UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

- If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

Classroom Policies

- Civility statement and code of conduct (see **Syllabus Template** document on CTL Web site at <http://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching-resources/design-your-course/create-your-syllabus/>)

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin

- The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.
 - Sanger Learning and Career Center: <http://lifelearning.utexas.edu/>
 - Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>
 - Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>
 - Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>
 - Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

Emergency Evacuation Policy

- Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Q drop Policy

- Texas law limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six. Senate Bill 1231 says:
“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”