

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

04/08/27

Fall 2004  
RELS 273 L95 Introduction to the Bible

Instructor: Mr. Eli Reich  
Location: Calgary Jewish Centre  
Time: Tuesdays 18:30-21:20  
Office & Office Hours: SS 1322 TBA  
Phone: 220-3285  
e-mail: [reiche@shaw.ca](mailto:reiche@shaw.ca)

**Textbook:**

*Harper Collins Study Bible*. New Revised Standard Version, HarperCollins Publishers, 1993.  
For additional required readings, see "Contextualizing the Reading" below.

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce you to the Bible and the academic modes of reading this classical text. By the term "Bible" we mean the two major parts found in the English edition: the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Since the Hebrew Bible is an anthology of ancient Hebrew religious literature, we will only discuss selected chapters in depth. The selections are grouped according to themes. In the New Testament we will focus on major books. The interplay found in the Bible of religious ideas, literary imagination, and historical reality presents us with a challenging case study in cultural interpretation.

**Core Competencies:**

Class participants can expect to gain a general understanding of the literary forms, themes, and posited historical backgrounds of the various books of the Bible. Students will begin to understand the complex cultural processes that eventually produced the Bible, and receive a hands-on experience of the challenges and discoveries that await the patient, critical and open-minded interpreter. A variety of perspectives will be utilized, ranging from the disciplines of Religious Studies and Biblical Criticism, to Contemporary Literary Theory and Cultural Studies. Students interested in understanding the foundations of Judaism and Christianity, as well as those with a desire to deepen their insight in the creative collective human imagination, can benefit from the course.

**Course Requirements:**

The course will be a combination of lectures and class discussion. The discussions in class will rest on the assumption that students have prepared the selected readings.

There will be an **in-class mid-term exam** on meeting 8, **November 2**, which will count as **30%** of your grade.

Each student will also select a paper topic in consultation with the instructor no later than the eleventh meeting (November 23) and submit a five page paper, due on the last meeting, **December 7**, that will count as **30%** of your grade.

There will be a **Registrar scheduled final examination**, worth **40%**.

**Grading:**

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	100 - 96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70
C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

Recording of lectures:

Recording any part of any lectures in any form must first approved be by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only. See current Calendar, Tape recording of Lectures.

Academic Honesty:

Students should be familiar with University regulations regarding academic integrity; see relevant pages in the current University Calendar.

Academic Accommodation:

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor two weeks before the scheduled date.

Withdrawing from courses:

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.

Gnosis:

*Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.*

## SCHEDULE

**September 14:** What is the Bible? (List of Books in the Bible: HarperCollins, pp. vii-viii). Contextualizing the Reading: The Jewish Study Bible, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004: “Historical and Geographical Background to the Bible”, pp. 2048- 2062.

**September 21:** Beginnings: A: Genesis 1-2:4a; Genesis 2:4b-24; 4:8-16; 4:20-22, 26; Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 7, 10, 12, 17-20, 22-23; 8:6, 8-12, 20-22; Genesis 11; B: Psalms 104; C: Exodus 1-2:25; 7: 1-7; 12:21-37; Judges 17-21. Contextualizing the Reading: The Jewish Study Bible, “The Modern Study of the Bible”, pp. 2084-2096.

**September 28:** Temple & Sacrifice & Priesthood: A: Genesis 4:2-5; B: Genesis 8:15-22; C: Genesis 28:10-22; D: Exodus 25-27:19; 29:42b-46; 40:33-38; Leviticus 9:23-24; E: I Kings 8; F: Psalms 15; 23; 24; 93; G: Ezekiel 8-11, 43:1-7; H: Ezra 1, 3. Contextualizing the Reading: The Jewish Study Bible: “Religion of the Bible” pp. 2021-2040.

**October 5:** The Prophet: A: Jeremiah 1; 7, 26; B: Exodus 3:1-8, 16-17; 4:1-4; 6-7, 10-12; C: Isaiah 6; D: Amos.

**October 12:** Narrative Ideology: Genesis 34; Contextualizing the Reading: Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of Their Stories, New York: Schocken Books, 2002, pp. 179-198; Genesis 37, 39-47:12; Book of Ruth; Contextualizing the Reading: Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of Their Stories, pp. 238-256.

**October 19:** From Covenant to Torah: A: Gen 2:15-17; Genesis 9:8; B: Exodus 19:2b-9; 19; 20: 1-20; 21:1; 24: 3-8, 12, 15a, 18b; 31:18; 32:1-24; 32:30-35; 34:1, 4, 28; C: Psalm 1, 19; D: II Kings 22; E: Nehemiah 8-9.

**October 26:** The Human Condition: Psalm 8; Job 28; Isaiah 11: 1-9; Song of Solomon; Ecclesiastes 1-6; 12. Contextualizing the Reading: The Jewish Study Bible: “The Canonization of the Bible”, pp. 2072-2077.

**November 2:** Faith: Genesis 12, 22; Deuteronomy 4-6; 26:1-11; 1 Sam 8; Deut 17:14-20.

**November 9:** Introduction to New Testament and the Gospel of Mark: The Secret Messiah. Contextualizing the Reading: E. P. Sanders, The Historical Figure of Jesus, Harmondsworth: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1993, “An Outline of Jesus’ Life”, pp. 10-14.

**November 16:** Gospel of Matthew: Christ of the Scriptures. Contextualizing the Reading: E. P. Sanders, The Historical Figure of Jesus, “Political Setting”, pp. 15-32.

**November 23:** Gospel of Luke: Messiah of the Gentiles. Contextualizing the Reading: E. P. Sanders, The Historical Figure of Jesus, “The Problems of the Primary Sources”, pp. 57-77.

**November 30:** Gospel of John: The Eternal Word.

**December 7:** Paul: Spiritualizing the Messiah.

**TBA: Registrar Scheduled Final Exam. 40 %**