

Course Outline: Rels273 L. Eslinger Rels 273 Fall 2005 course
outline

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Logistics Course Religious Studies 273 Introduction to the Bible

Venue TR 9:30-10:45, Admin 140

Instructor L. Eslinger (email); office hours: 15:30-16:30 T or by
appointment

Office Dept. Religious Studies, Social Sciences 1334

Web www.ucalgary.ca/~eslinger

Texts

- NASB English translation of the Bible
- course notes (online; table of links below)

Content Selected readings and topics from the Bible in English translation. The course introduces the role of the Bible as a mythological foundation for Western religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and culture. Discussion topics include: evolution and creation; values and human existence; cognition and world-view; religious values; functional analysis of belief and ritual behaviour; human destiny, world history, cosmic evolution.

Cognitive Goals to understand how human experience shapes biblical myth to understand how biblical literature works, how rhetoric and structure create meaning

to grasp the mythological shape of the whole Christian Bible (O.T. + N.T.), an interlaced montage of literature and myth

to gain a sense of how the overarching mythos of a Christian Bible establishes a reference point for Western culture

These goals require familiarization with two contexts for the Bible:
historical: students must learn the rudiments of Israel's situation in the context of its ANE (Ancient Near Eastern) neighbours. This historical context persists for about 3000 years (3000 BCE - 100 CE). It is preceded by another, more significant context.

pre-historical: familiarity with the historical period and cultural context scratches the surface of human learning encoded in the Bible. The course attends to the vast pre-historical depths that have shaped human life. As one of the more profound elements of culture, religion (and the Bible) is deeply shaped by life's archaic pre-history.

Skills

Development close reading skills: the information age encourage shallow, hasty reading. The Bible, like most ancient literary products, requires a more attentive reading capability. Weekly exegetical exercises provide opportunity to develop reading skills that will serve them in any activity that requires meticulous analysis of informational structures. critical thinking skills: students must engage in critical reflection on the biblical beginnings of Western worldviews and thus also on modern derivatives. The course provides regular opportunity for critical engagement with human value systems and worldviews, ancient and modern.

Learning

Responsibilities Students are responsible for independent learning from the assigned readings (examinations cover all assigned readings, whether discussed in class or not). It is expected that students will have studied the weekly section from the Bible, with particular attention to the

pericope designated in the schedule.

Pragmatically, independent study prepares students for work on the credit text analyses; theoretically, it is the most important determinant of successful learning.

Class

Schedule Exegesis Overview Thematic lecture

Class discussion of a text that exemplifies the week's theme
One of the primary divisions in biblical literature
Themes in biblical mythology; their historical development in the Bible

Learning

Assessment Credit Work

1. Exegetical work (5%/day late penalty)

a. 1Sam 1-12 (due 05 Oct) 15

b. John 1-12 (due 30 Nov) 15

2. Mid-term exam (1 hr., 19 Oct;

must be written as scheduled; mark your calendar now) 35

3. Final exam (1 hr. registrar scheduled) 35

Total: (N.B. no additional credit work will be offered.) 100

Grading Scale

A 100-90 B- 74-70 D+ 54-50

A- 89-85 C+ 69-65 D 49-45

B+ 84-80 C 64-60 F 44-0

B 79-75 C- 59-55

A numerical grade is assigned for each course requirement.

Finally, a letter grade is assigned using the departmentally approved table of equivalencies.

Academic

Honesty Students should be familiar with University regulations regarding academic integrity (University Calendar, index item, "Misconduct, academic").

Reserve List reserve services are not used for Rels 273

Ref. pgs.

in the

H.-C. Bible The following pages in the HarperCollins Study Bible provide reference and background material that students ought to become familiar with early in the course:

vii listing of the books of the O.T.

viii, 1435 listing of the books of the Apocrypha (so-called "deutero-canonical books")

viii listing of the books of the N.T.

xviii on the anthological nature of the collected books of the Bible

xix the major narrative complexes of the O.T. (Torah, Dtr, Chron-Ezra-Neh)

xx introduction to historical criticism and the Bible's literary history

xxi-xxii the synoptic problem in the N.T. (historical criticism of the N.T.)

xxiii-xxiv,

xxxvii-xl varying biblical canons defined by differing confessional communities

xxxix listing of common abbreviations for biblical book names

xli-xlii time lines of history in "the biblical period"

1841-55 gospel parallels
2113 chronology of Paul's letters (N.T.)
2339-46 O.T. quotations in the N.T.

Study Aids Literary

- Varying canonical sequences for biblical books
- Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha
- Dating biblical literature
- Ancient Israel's history according to the Bible

Cultural

- Biblical weights and measures
- Divination and Biblemancy

Historical

- Carbon-14 dating technique
- A handful of key dates in biblical history
- Palestinian archaeology - periods
- Ancient near eastern empires
- Chronology of the Hebrew monarchies
- Chronology of biblical prophets
- Chronology of the post-exilic period

Exams

- midterm study advice

Continuing

Courses Rels 301: Studies in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament -- a natural progression from Rels 273. Compared to 273 it narrows focus, from the Christian Bible to the Old Testament (otherwise known as the Hebrew Bible). 301 also broadens coverage of ancient Israelite religion (cult and ritual) in addition to studying the religious literature and mythology of the Bible.

Rels 477: Further Studies in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

Notices & Schedule

Notices 01 Sept Looking for an online, searchable Bible (NASB)?

01 Sept Credit work submissions: assignments must be submitted with a coversheet indicating the date of submission (if submitting in the Rels office be sure to get your work date stamped), course number, assignment identification, student name and identification number.

Class Schedule

Week Begin Assigned Reading Exegesis Overview Theme

0106 Sept Genesis 1-11 Genesis 3 Primeval History Cosmological Background

0213 Sept Exodus 1-15 Pentateuch Biblical Myth

0320 Sept Genesis 12-50 Genesis 28 Patriarchal Cycles Life's Myths

0427 Sept 1 Samuel 1-12 Deuteronomist Patriarchalism to Covenantalism

0504 Oct Pss 1; 8; 18; 23; 30; 40-41; 78 Psalm 89 Psalms Covenantalism to Futurism

0611 Oct Isaiah 1-12; 40-55 Isaiah 1 Major Prophets Ethical Covenantalism

0718 Oct Amos mid-term exam (no lecture this week; exam on Tues, 19 Oct; overview and exegesis [Amos 7-9] on Thurs) Minor Prophets--

0825 Oct Proverbs | Job Proverbs | Job Wisdom: Pragmatic | Skeptical Futurism, Pragmatism, Skepticism

0901 Nov Haggai; Zechariah Haggai Pragmatic Literature Pragmatism after The Punishment

1008 Nov MarkMark (reading day; no class)NTDouble Mirror - OT in NT
1115 Nov John
1222 Nov John 1-12GospelsDouble Prism - Jesus
1329 Nov HebrewsHebrews 5-11NT LettersThe Mean Time
14 06 Dec RevelationRevelationApocalypticApocalypse - When?