

Canadian Nazarene College

BL 240a (UoC, RELS 301) Introduction to the Bible

SYLLABUS, Fall Term 1999

Professor: Dr. David Neale - 571-2550, ext 32; email, Dave.Neale@cnaz.ab.ca

I. Course Objectives

This course is an introduction to the literature of the Bible, beginning with the Old Testament this autumn and the New Testament in the winter. Our goal is to become conscious of the major issues that are encountered in studying and interpreting the biblical text itself. In the course of the year we will discuss a wide variety of matters as they relate to the biblical story: theology, hermeneutics, history, language, literary art, faith; all in the context of the biblical literature. The overall objective is to improve your ability to read and understand the Bible in a way that does justice to the literature.

II. Course Outline

The class sessions will be a combination of lecture and discussion. The schedule of discussion topics is as follows. Reading assignments are in bold and are to be done **prior to the class session where they are listed.**

Sept

7 Introductory session; Why Study the Bible?

9 The Story

Oxford Study Bible, pp. 410-416 (NT)

14 The Geography, Power and Politics of Eretz Israel

Oxford Study Bible, pp. 407-410 (NT)

16 Hebrew Lesson

21 The Three Worlds of the Bible

H&Y 1-32, discussion and quiz

23 Slides

Oxford Study Bible, pp. 388-392 (NT)

28 Methods of Biblical Study

H&Y 34-57, discussion and quiz

30 Genesis 1

Genesis 1; H&Y 60-69

Oct 5 Genesis 2-3

Genesis 2-3;

7 The Abraham Cycle

Genesis 12-18, H&Y 69-81

12 Exodus

Ex 1-12; H&Y 82-96

14 Mid-Term Exam

19 Jerusalem Video - From David to the Babylonian Destruction

H&Y 99-125

21 Prophets and Seers

26 Prophets and Seers, contd.

H&Y 128-153, discussion and quiz

28 Jonah

Jonah

- Nov** 2 Psalms and Songs in the OT
H&Y 156-171
4 TBA
9 Jerusalem Video - Babylonian Destruction to Jesus -
11 No class – Mid-Term Break
16 Postcards from the edge: Job
Job 1-10, 38-42; H&Y 173-190, discussion and quiz
18 **Study Paper due, Class discussion**
23 Apocalyptic Literature
Daniel; H&Y 193-207, discussion and quiz
25 Between the Testaments: Cyrus to Caesar (Bring your Teddy)
30 Between the Testaments, contd.
H&Y 210-234, discussion and quiz
- Dec** 3 Dead Sea Scrolls Video, Literature of the DDS

III. Course Requirements

Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%
Study Paper	20%
H&Y Quizzes	30%

See attached sheet for **Study Paper Assignment**.

N.B. Absence Policy: After three (3) unexcused absences per term, the professor reserves the right to require a student to withdraw from the class. A late arrival equals .5 absence.

IV. Required Texts

C.E. Hauer and W.A. Young, *An Introduction to the Bible: A Journey into Three Worlds*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994 or 1998.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible. Oxford University Press: New York, 1991.

V. On Reserve

James E. Fird, *The Old Testament Writings: History, Literature and Interpretation*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.

Video: *Israel 5000 Years Plus 40*. Doko Video Limited, Jerusalem.

Examples of typed class notes

**BL 240a (UoC, RELS 301) Introduction to the Bible
Study Paper Assignment
Fall Term, 1999**

The purpose of this paper is to get you to read a biblical narrative carefully and observantly (NRSV is the required text). Choose an individual from the list provided and conduct a character study of that individual in the OT. Your sole source of information will be the biblical narratives about that person. Make a photocopy of the relevant text(s) and then read and reread them until you know the story intimately. Your writing assignment is to analyze the story for plot, character development, conflict and theology. Thus, your paper should have four headings:

Plot: Describe the plot briefly, i.e. distill the story line down to its most basic elements. Then ask: How does it work? What are the main turning points? What are the features that make it dramatically appealing? Why was this story good enough to be preserved for thousands of years?

Characters: Do a character sketch of each of the individuals in the story. Describe what you know about this individual and how you know it, from the text. Include a character sketch of God and treat him as any other character you do not know.

Overriding emotions: Analyze the text specifically for its emotional impact on the reader. Look for tension, conflict, anger, pain, victory, joy etc. and describe how these are developed and presented by the author.

Theology: What is this story designed to teach about God and what moral, ethical or spiritual lesson is the reader intended to take from it?

The paper must be typed and double-spaced and should be 6-10 pages in length. If you read your text carefully and get into the story you will probably feel that this is not enough space. Pay careful attention to spelling, grammar and the visual appeal of your paper. Your choices for topic are:

Abraham Gen 12-25.11
Joseph Gen 37-50
Moses Ex 2-20 (from his birth to the giving of the 10 Commandments)
Saul 1 Sam 9-31
Ruth
Job
Other with permission

Due Date: November 18, at beginning of class. Late papers will be docked one full letter grade for each class session late. I.e., if not in at beginning of class, one full letter grade will be penalized, up until the start of the next class session.