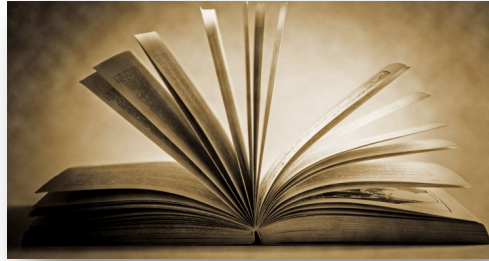


REL 114: THE BIBLE

Fall 2016
M/W: 3:45-5:05
Archbold Gymnasium 203



"Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable." -Mary Oliver

Instructor: Lauren K. McCormick
Email: lamccorm@syr.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 and by appointment

In this course we will contextualize the Bible by studying the ancient worlds and peoples that produced it. We will cover both famous and lesser-known texts, and while one effect of this class will be gaining more intimate familiarity with biblical storylines, our goal here is something more. I will introduce you to the academic study of the Bible, which involves inquiry and scrutiny of both historical and literary kinds. You will be required to engage various approaches toward a biblical text, weigh corresponding evidence, and form conclusions that you can also explain exception to.

You will encounter multiple methodologies of biblical criticism (e.g., feminist, textual, postcolonial) as we cover biblical content in such a way as to spotlight evolving conceptions of: sacrifice, "messiah," covenant, monotheism, Satan, suffering, idolatry, love, law, the Temple, the afterlife, and God. As we trace the rich complexity of thought on these themes, we will foreground questions about historicity and archaeological discovery, women's experiences, sexuality, ritual, and the historical Jesus.

The Bible is ancient but modern, Western but Eastern, and ours but not. This course invites you to see how the familiar might be strange and then again how what seems strange can be familiar after all.

OBJECTIVES

- Gain familiarity with the Bible's contents
- Learn methods of biblical criticism
- Close-read ancient texts
- Reconstruct ancient history and religion
- Cultivate pluralistic modes of thinking

TEXTBOOKS (available in Syracuse University Bookstore)

- *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Fourth Edition
- *Understanding the Bible*, Eighth Edition

EVALUATION

- *20% Participation*: Assignments are to be read *before* the class listed for that date. You will be assigned biblical texts in addition to approximately twenty pages of secondary readings per meeting. I expect you to participate and discuss them either with me or in class. Another part of your participation grade will be **bringing your Bible to every class** unless otherwise notified.
- *30% Three One-Page Papers*: Each worth 10% of your grade. These papers foster pluralistic thinking and close-reading skills, which will serve you for your exams. Late papers will be docked a half-grade per day (not class meeting day). Instructions will be handed out a week before the due dates, and due dates are **highlighted in the course schedule**.
- *20% Midterm Exam*: Short answer and essay format. I will provide a review sheet a week before.
- *30% Final Exam*: Cumulative. Short answer and essay format. Again, I will provide a review sheet a week before.

ADDITIONAL POINTS OF CONCERN

- You are permitted two unexcused absences throughout the semester. Any absence beyond the second will penalize your final course grade one point per absence.
- Electronics are not permitted in class without instructor approval.
- Our final three classes will cover content the class chooses by majority vote.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change as instructor communicates)

Date	Topic	Assignment
Mon 8/29	Introduction to the Bible	
Wed 8/31	Ancient Near Eastern Creation Myths and the Bible	Bible : Gen 1-11:9; Pss 74; 104 Harris : "The Bible" (1-11), "The Bible and the Ancient Near East" (34-38), timeline on 40-42, "Genesis" through "The Flood Story" (80-84) Blackboard : Old Testament Parallels "Enuma Elish Stories" (11-12)
Mon 9/5	OFF: LABOR DAY	
Wed 9/7	Field Trip at Bird Library Special Collections: go to Hillyer Room, sixth floor	Harris : "The Process of Formation" (13-30)
Mon 9/12	Torah and Classic Biblical Criticism	Bible : Gen 11:10-12:20; 32:22-32; 35:9-15; 37; 39-42; 46 Harris : "The Torah" (62-78)

Wed 9/14	Ancestors	Bible: Gen 15-19; 22; 24-32:21; 38; Exod 1-4; 6:1-8 Harris: “Near Eastern Powers and the Land of Israel” through “A Theology of the Land” (51-56), “Stories of Israel’s Ancestors” (84-91)
Mon 9/19	Historicity: The Exodus	Bible: Exod 6:9-14:31; 19-24; 30:22-33; 31:12-34:35 Harris: “Exodus” (93-104)
Wed 9/21 Paper #1	Historicity: Wandering and Settlement, Judges	Bible: Num 23; Deut 20; Judg 1-5; Josh 1; 5-6; 10; 24 Harris: “Joshua” and “Judges” (126-141) BB: Mendenhall (43-54)
Mon 9/26	Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomists	Bible: Deut 1-5; 28-30; 2 Kings 22-23:30 Harris: “Deuteronomy” (112-119), “The Prophets I” (122-125)
Wed 9/28	Ancient Law, Biblical Covenants	Bible: Lev 19; Deut 6-26 Harris: “The law code of Hammurabi” 47-49 BB: Mendenhall (57-70)
Mon 10/3	The United Monarchy	Bible: 1 Sam 4-7:1; 9-11; 13; 15-20; 28:3-25; 29:4; 2 Sam 5-7; 11-12; 1 Kings 1; 6:1-7:9; 8:6-12; 10 Harris: “1 Samuel” through “Dedication of the Temple” (141-152)
Wed 10/5	The Divided Monarchy	Bible: 1 Kings 11:26-12:33; 2 Kings 17; 19-20:11 Harris: “The Role of Assyria” (56), “The Divided Kingdoms” through “Theology and History” (152-162), “Hezekiah’s Alliance with Egypt” and “Assyria’s Assault on Jerusalem” (181-182)
Mon 10/10 Paper #2	Israelite Religion: Purity, Sacrifice, Idolatry, Monotheism?	Bible: Gen 33:20; Exod 25:1-22; recall Exod 32:1-24; Lev 4-6; 12-13; 15-18; Deut 16:21; Jud 6:25-35; 1 Kings 8:6-12; 12:25-33; 14:21-24; 18:19; 2 Kings 13:1-6; 21:1-9; 23:1-7; Job 1-2; Prov 3:9 Harris: “Leviticus” (105-108), “Yahweh’s Heavenly Court” through “The Central Debate” (225-230), “The Bible’s Complex Portrait of God” through “Satan’s Expulsion from the Divine Council” (491-505) Bb: “Pagan Yahwism” (webpage), Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet Ajrud Inscriptions
Wed 10/12	Prophecy	Bible: 1 Kings 17-18; 2 Kings 2; Amos 5; Mic 3:9-12 cf. Jer 26:17-19 cf. Isa 31:5; Jer 20:7-18; Ezek 1:1-3:15; Jonah (a short book) Harris: “Proclaiming the Word of Yahweh” through “Distinguishing True Prophets from False” (165-169), “The Three Great Crises” through “The Late 6 th or 5 th Century: The Postexilic Adjustment” (170-174), “Jonah” (204-205)

Mon 10/17	MIDTERM	
Wed 10/19	Exile and Loss of the Temple	Bible: 2 Kings 23:36-25:26; Jer 27; 29-30; Isa 52-53; Ezek 33:21-34:31 Harris: "The Last Days of Judah" and "A National Crisis" (162-163), "The Fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Exile" (56-57), "2 Kings" (157-163), "Jeremiah" through "The Servant Songs" (186-198)
Mon 10/24	Return to the Land, Second Temple Period	Bible: Isa 45; Haggai (a short book); Zech 6; Mal 3; Ezra 1-3; 7-8; Neh 2; 8; 13; Esther (a short book) Harris: "The Rise of Persia and the Exiles' return from Babylon" (57), "Haggai" through "The Coming Messenger" (198-203), "Esther" (241-243), "Ezra" through "Nehemiah" (245-249)
Wed 10/26	Writings, Wisdom, Apocalypticism	Bible: Job 38-42; Dan 1-2; 6; Pss 10; 16; 44; Prov 8; Ecc 3; 9; Song 1-4 Harris: "Shifts in Prophetic Focus and Influence" and "From Traditional Prophecy to Apocalyptic Predictions" (169-170), "The Writings" through "An Innocent Victim" (208-225), "Ecclesiastes" (232-235), "Apocalyptic Literature and the Book of Daniel" through "Daniel's Visions of End Time" (249-256) Online: http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/war
Mon 10/31	The Apocrypha	Bible: 1 Maccabees (online); Enoch 6-7 Harris: "Alexander's Conquests and the Hellenistic Era" (57-58), "The Books of the Second Canon" (262-281)
Wed 11/2	Multiple Judaisms in the Greco-Roman World	Harris: "Between the Two Testaments" through "Awaiting the Parousia" (282-312)
Mon 11/7	The Canonical Gospels	Bible: Read and note parallels of Mt 1-4; Mk 1-4; Lk 1-4; Jn 1-4 from website: http://sites.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis/meta-5g.htm Harris: "The Roman Occupation of Judea" (58-59), "The New Testament" (320-332), "The Synoptic Problem" (347-350), "John's Gospel" through "Differences in Chronology and Order of Events" (380-385)
Wed 11/9 Paper #3	Multiple Conceptions of Jesus: the Non-Canonical Gospels	Bb: "Christians 'In the Know': The Worlds of Early Christian Gnosticism" (113-134)
Mon 11/14	Historical Jesus and Early Christian Thinking	Bible: Mt 5-7; 26-28; Mk 8: 27-33; 13-16; Lk 13:10-17; 22-24; Jn 6:1-15; 10:1-42; 11-21; Heb 9-10; 1 Pet 2:19-32; Acts 1-3; 5:12-6:7; 1 Cor 3:16;

		13; 2 Cor 5; Col 3:1-6 Harris: "The Continuing Quest for the Historical Jesus" (396-412)
Wed 11/16	Paul and the Early Church	Bible: 1 Cor 7; 11:17-22; 14:1-40; 2 Cor 10-13; Gal 1-3; Rom 4-7 Harris: "The Divine Plan of Humanity's Salvation" through "Paul's Journey to Rome and his Preaching to Roman Jews" (416-429), "Paul's Characteristic Theology" through "Order of Paul's Letters" (436-438)
Mon 11/21	OFF: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Wed 11/23	OFF: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Mon 11/28	Apocalypse	Bible: The Book of Revelation Harris: "A Vision of End Time" (482-489)
Wed 11/30	Class to select which topic we explore	
Mon 12/5	Class to select which topic we explore	
Wed 12/7	Class to select which topic we explore	

Final Exam in our regular room, Archbold Gymnasium 203, from 10:15AM - 12:15PM on Friday, 12/16/16

Academic Integrity Policy

Syracuse University's academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/>.

Disability-Related Accommodations

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498, TDD: (315) 443-1371 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. My goal is to create learning environments that are useable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, I invite any student to meet with me to discuss additional strategies beyond accommodations that may be helpful to your success.

Religious Observances Notification and Policy

SU religious observances notification and policy, found at <http://hendricks.syr.edu/spiritual-life/index.html>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibly formatted classes.