I. Course Description

The Bible is considered by many Jews and Christians to be a sacred text. People read it devotionally, from a historical perspective, and even theologically, but it may also be read as a literary text, or rather as a collection of literary texts. This course will focus on a variety of literary approaches to the text of the Bible, informed by an understanding of the historical development, selection, and transmission of the text. The instructor does not assume any previous knowledge of the Bible or any particular faith commitment on the part of the student. The course will be taught from an academic, nonsectarian perspective.

II. Course Aims and Objectives

Aims

In this course students will learn to read the Bible as literature, using techniques often (but not always!) developed in other fields of study.

Specific Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to recognize and describe several different approaches to reading the Bible as literature.
- Students will be able to apply several of these approaches to reading the Bible as literature to selected biblical passages.
- Students will have a general understanding of the development, selection, and transmission of the biblical text.
- Students will learn to listen critically and respond in a scholarly yet respectful manner to the ideas of others.
• Students will critically analyze books and articles related to the subject matter.

III. Format and Procedures

The instructor will meet with the students for fifteen weeks on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays, with class sessions of fifty minutes apiece. The instructor will use a modified lecture approach for most class sessions, but students are expected to have read assigned materials beforehand and to participate in class discussion. Class announcements, assignments, and supplementary material will be available on Blackboard.

Assignments are due either in class on the due date, or they may be submitted to Blackboard no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date. Assignments are due on the assigned date regardless of whether the student attends class on that date. Late work will be penalized one letter grade per week (or portion of week), with a minimum penalty of half a letter grade (e.g., for work submitted after the assigned time on the due date).

IV. Course Requirements

1. Class Attendance, Participation, and Assignments

Students will endeavor to attend every class, turn in every assignment on time, and participate in all class discussions. Students with more than six unexcused absences will be penalized one point on their final grade per additional class missed (as part of their Class Participation grade). Excused absences are illness, death in the family, and officially sponsored UTSA activities. The student will be expected to provide documentation for all excused absences. Students who are absent, whether the absence is excused or unexcused, are expected to complete assignments on time (see previous section). Students who know in advance they will be absent may make arrangements to turn in assignments or take tests early.

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments should be printed in Times or Times New Roman font, 12 point type, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all four sides, and follow MLA specifications. Papers with a minimum page count specified will be considered short of the required minimum if they employ excessive margins. For example, a two-page paper must extend to the bottom of the second page, or it will be considered a one-page paper. Charts, illustrations, and other non-textual material may be included in a paper when appropriate—in fact, they may well improve a paper in some instances—but the non-textual material will not be counted toward the total page count, so students should adjust the length of their papers accordingly.

2. Course Readings

Class texts are:


Other readings will be assigned.

3. Reaction Papers/Literary Analyses

Students will submit brief papers (1-2 pages, double-spaced) expressing their reaction to an assigned reading (either a biblical passage or a supplemental reading). These papers are due on Fridays of most weeks, except those with exams or other major assignments.

4. Book Review

Students will write a review of a book selected from a list provided by the instructor, or approved in advance. This paper will be between 6 and 8 pages, double-spaced. This paper is due on Friday, Nov 16. It must be submitted in class on the due date, or submitted electronically via Blackboard by 2:00 p.m.

5. Literary Analysis Paper

Students will choose one literary technique discussed in class and apply it to one biblical passage. This paper will be between 12 and 15 pages in length, double-spaced. Students should feel free to be creative with this paper. This paper is due on Friday, Dec 7. It must be submitted in class on the due date, or submitted electronically via Blackboard by 2:00 p.m.

6. Exams

Students will have two regular exams (Friday, Sep 28, and Friday, Nov 2). They will also have a final exam, which is scheduled on Thursday, Dec 13, from 1:30 to 4:00 (note that the day and time are different from regular class meetings!).

V. Grading

The student's grade will be determined as follows:

a. Reaction Papers/Literary Analyses: 10%
b. Book Review: 10%
c. Literary Analysis Paper: 15%
d. Exam 1: 15%
e. Exam 2: 15%
f. Final Exam: 25%
g. Class Participation: 10%
Letter grades will be assigned according to the following table:

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VI. Standard of Conduct

Academic Honor Code

**Preamble:** The University of Texas at San Antonio community of past, present and future students, faculty, staff, and administrators share a commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge. We honor the traditions of our university by conducting ourselves with a steadfast duty to honor, courage, and virtue in all matters both public and private. By choosing integrity and responsibility we promote personal growth, success, and lifelong learning for the advancement of ourselves, our university, and our community.

**Honor Pledge:** In support of the ideals of integrity, the students of The University of Texas at San Antonio pledge: “As a UTSA Roadrunner, I live with honor and integrity.”

**Shared Responsibility:** The University of Texas at San Antonio community shares a commitment to integrity, the ethical pursuit of knowledge, and adheres to the UTSA Honor Code.

Scholastic Dishonesty

Students should be familiar with UTSA requirements concerning scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism (described in http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html#sd), and commit instead to engage in scholastic integrity.

The Roadrunner Creed

The University of Texas at San Antonio is a community of scholars, where integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, and innovation are fostered.

As a Roadrunner,

I will:

- Uphold the highest standards of academic and personal integrity by practicing and expecting fair and ethical conduct;
• Respect and accept individual differences, recognizing the inherent dignity of each person;
• Contribute to campus life and the larger community through my active engagement; and
• Support the fearless exploration of dreams and ideas in the advancement of ingenuity, creativity, and discovery.

Guided by these principles now and forever, I am a Roadrunner!

**VII. Student Support Services**

**Disability Services**

Support services, including registration assistance and equipment, are available to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Disability Services (DSS), MS 2.03.18. Students can contact that office at 210-458-4157 to make arrangements. Please note that University policy (http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.html) forbids instructors from undertaking any form of accommodation for students’ disability without documentation from the Office of Disability Services. Please contact the Office of Disability Services if you have any questions.

**Tomás Rivera Center**

The Tomás Rivera Center (TRC) offers academic support services to assist students with building study skills, and it provides tutoring and supplemental instruction in course content. These services are available at no additional cost to the student. The TRC has several locations at the Main Campus and is also located at the Downtown Campus. For more information, visit the website at http://www.utsa.edu/tress or call 210-458-4694 on the Main Campus and 210-458-2838 on the Downtown Campus.

**The Writing Center**

The Writing Center helps students improve their writing skills. Their website is http://www.utsa.edu/twc/, and they are located at JPL 2.01.12D (main campus) and FS 4.432 (downtown campus).

**VIII. Subject to Change**

Assignments, grades, schedules, and other items detailed in this syllabus are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. The instructor will give students reasonable notice of any changes that are made.