



BOSTON COLLEGE  
BIBLICAL HERITAGE II: SYLLABUS  
SPRING 2018 (STOKES N401): TUES/THUR 3:00-4:15 PM  
3 CREDITS



Remains of the Temple of Apollo at Corinth (© Clint Burnett, May 2015)

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## I. Course Description

The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (HB/OT) is fundamental for Judaism and Christianity (and to some extent Islam) and Jews and Christians consider it Scripture. The HB/OT is foundational for Western thought and has influenced modern conceptions of God, nature, human origins, the problem of evil, and the role and function of government. Therefore, the HB/OT has and continues to play a role in all our lives whether we realize it or not. The NT forms the second portion of the Christian Bible and has had a profound impact on our world as well. Christianity has gone from an obscure cult in the Roman province of Judea (30s CE) to the official religion of the Roman Empire (380s CE) and subsequent kingdoms throughout history. The current Queen of England, Elizabeth II, is still called “The Defender of the Faith.” The impact of Christianity can be seen in modern philosophical discourse. When philosophers debate the existence of God,

it is always one God, not the many gods that most peoples throughout history have worshiped. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of the NT (and Christianity) is invaluable for understanding the history of Western culture. This course continues our introduction of select HB/OT books (Part 1) and introduces students to select NT books, their historical and social contexts, and their theological messages (Part 2).

## **II. Course Goals**

By the end of this course, students will be able to answer three questions about the Bible:

**1) *What is the Bible?***

Students will know: the books of the HB/OT and NT, languages in which they were written, their literary genres, historical circumstances surrounding their composition, and differences between the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant Bibles

**2) *Whence the Bible?***

Students will be able to: discuss origins of various texts, their authors, reasons the books were written, and how they were edited

**3) *Whither the Bible?***

Students will be able to: understand how the HB/OT and NT continues to inform modern theology, faith, and culture; discuss various interpretations of books of the HB/OT and NT; and to reflect on contemporary social, cultural, and ethical issues with theological insights from Christianity

## **III. Textbooks**

***Primary Text (Required): The Bible***

M. Coogan et al., eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford, 2010)

***Secondary Texts (Required): Introductions to the HB/OT and the NT***

John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014)

Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament: The Abridged Edition*, AYBRL (Yale Anchor Bible: New Haven, 2016)

***Supplementary Readings:***

Besides the Bible, Collins and Brown, students will read short primary source texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient Greek, Roman, and Jewish authors, and Greco-Roman inscriptions as well as other secondary readings. N.B. These will be posted on Canvas and provide the social context of the Bible. Students will print them out and bring them to the class on the day their reading is assigned.

***Suggested Text (Not Required):***

David Noel Freedman, ed., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000)

## **IV. Core Requirements**

THEO 002: Biblical Heritage II satisfies one of a two-semester core requirement in Theology. To receive credit for this core, students must complete this entire course, including THEO 001: Biblical Heritage I. Therefore, Biblical Heritage II and Introduction to Christian Theology I will not fulfill the core requirement.

## V. Student Responsibilities

- 1) Come to class and participate. Students are required to attend every class they can and attendance will be taken: it is 25% of your grade (v.i.). Students are allowed three unexcused absences and there is no need to inform the instructor of the reasons surrounding these first three absences. Every other unexcused absence will result in the deduction of 2.5 percentage points of student's participation grade. Therefore, if a student has four unexcused absences, then the most he or she can earn for participation will be 90/100 points (i.e., 22.5/25 %). N.B. An excused absence is defined as a documented medical or family emergency, which must be turned into the instructor within one week of the absence in question. Students are required to make up any missed quiz within one week of being absent (v.i.).
- 2) Bring your Bible. The Bible is our primary text and will be read at every meeting.
- 3) Complete your assignments on time, including readings. Penalties will be enforced on late assignments. Five points will be deducted for every day that an assignment is late.
- 4) Laptops and cellphones are not permitted in class. If students have an emergency and need to have cellphones out in class, then let the instructor know before class.
- 5) Have academic integrity. Any dishonest act violates BC's academic integrity so don't cheat or plagiarize. BC defines cheating as the fraudulent or dishonest presentation of work that includes, but is not limited to:
  - use or attempted use of unauthorized aids in examinations or other academic exercises submitted for evaluation;
  - fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data, results, sources for papers or reports, or in clinical practice, as in reporting experiments, measurements, statistical analyses, tests, or other studies never performed; manipulating or altering data or other manifestations of research to achieve a desired result; selective reporting, including the deliberate suppression of conflicting or unwanted data;
  - falsification of papers, official records, or reports;
  - copying from another student's work;
  - actions that destroy or alter the work of another student;
  - unauthorized cooperation in completing assignments or during an examination;
  - the use of purchased essays or term papers, or of purchased preparatory research for such papers;
  - submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from the instructors involved;
  - dishonesty in requests for make-up exams, for extensions of deadlines for submitting papers, and in any other matter relating to a course.

BC defines plagiarism as: “the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one’s own.” Student are responsible for learning and using proper methods of paraphrasing and footnoting, quotation, and other forms of citation, to ensure that the original author, speaker, illustrator, or source of the material used is clearly acknowledged. For more information see BC’s policies at:  
<http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html>.

6) BC provides reasonable accommodations and integrated access for students with learning disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . .” If students have learning disabilities, then please inform the instructor by Jan 30 and provide the proper documentation from Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, [dugganka@bc.edu](mailto:dugganka@bc.edu), at the Connors Family Learning Center or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, [paulette.durrett@bc.edu](mailto:paulette.durrett@bc.edu), in the Disability Services Office.

## **VI. Assignments and Grading**

1) Class participation      25% (= 100 points)

Participation is defined as: filling out your introduction (Jan 18), coming to class having read all necessary assignments, contributing to class discussions, answering the instructor’s and other students’ questions, reading the Bible aloud in communal exegesis exercises that will occur at most class meetings, and working together in groups.

2) Quizzes      25% (= 100 points)

Typically, there will be a short quiz every Thursday (5 to 7 minutes) (totaling eleven for the semester) on material from primary sources—the Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Greek, Roman, and Jewish authors, and inscriptions—as well as Collins and Brown and other secondary readings. The quizzes are designed to ensure that students are reading course materials and not to “trip them up.” Students are required to take eight quizzes only (each worth 12.5 points, totaling 100 points). Therefore, students can miss three quizzes with no consequences. If students take all eleven quizzes, then the last three will count as extra credit. N.B. Questions from the final exam will be taken directly from quizzes.

3) Paper      25% (= 100 points)

The paper focuses on a research question about the Bible that students have developed in consultation with the instructor. This can be anything that interests the student such as: why does Paul tell men in the Corinthian Church not to wear a veil? The student’s task is to define a question, read material from the Bible and other primary sources related to it, formulate an answer, and then articulate it in the form of a seven-page paper. This assignment will take place in two iterations. Students will turn in the first iteration on Mar 1 for 10% of their total grade (= 40 points). The instructor will grade these papers and return them promptly. Students will then revise and re-submit a second iteration of their paper on Apr 12 for the other 15% of their grade (= 60 points). N.B. Students will be graded on their progress from the first iteration of the paper to the second. Students will turn in papers through Canvas.

4) Final Exam      25% (= 100 points)

The final exam is closed book and will consist of short answer questions, identification of key biblical passages, and one essay question. N.B. Short answer questions and scripture identification will be taken directly from the weekly quizzes and students' papers will serve as a foundation to answer the essay question.

#### 5) Extra Credit

The instructor will provide the following opportunities for extra credit: attending select public lectures (for 10 points), memorizing selections from the Bible (10 verses for 10 points), and learning the Hebrew and Greek alphabets (for 10 points for each alphabet).

Grading Scale: A: 100-90 (= 400-360 points); B: 89-80 (= 359-320 points); C: 79-70 (= 319-280 points); D: 69-60 (= 279-240); F: 59-0 (= 239-0 points)

*Disclaimer:* This syllabus is like the law of the Medes and the Persians (see Dan 6:12). This means that the syllabus does not change. The instructor interprets it as a binding contract between himself and his students.

## VII. Schedule and Readings

Date	Topic	Primary Reading	Secondary Reading	Assignment/Quiz due
Jan 16	<i>Part 1: The HB/OT</i> Introduction to Class and Restoration of Judea 1			Show Up
Jan 18	Restoration of Judea 2	Malachi; Haggai	Collins 253-62, 273-83	<b>Introduction:</b> due before class begins; <b>Quiz:</b> Restoration of Judea
Jan 23	Daniel and Apocalypticism	Daniel; 1 Enoch 1-36	Collins 339-48; Brown 18-20, 26-29	
Jan 25	A Jewish Kingdom and Birth of Sectarianism	1 Macc 1-4; Rule of the Community; Pesher to Habakkuk; 4QMMT; Handout on Sects and Parties	Collins 348-54; <a href="#">Lim, "Dead Sea Scrolls at Seventy"</a>	<b>Quiz:</b> Daniel, Apocalypticism, and Sectarianism
Jan 30	<i>Part 2: The NT</i> The NT, its Criticism, and the Greco-		Brown xv-25, 29-32; Levine, "Common Errors Made about	

	Roman world		Early Judaism”; Levine “The Synagogue”	
Feb 1	Jesus and the Gospel	1 Cor 15:1-8; Acts 2:14-39	Brown 33-36, 299-304; Dunn, “The Gospels: Fact, Fiction, or What?”	<b>Quiz:</b> NT, Jesus, the Gospel, and Greco-Roman world (students will be asked to label Asia Minor, Greece, Judea, and Italy on a map)
Feb 6	Mark 1	Mark 1-8; 1 Enoch 37-71	Brown 44-50; Levenson “Messianic Movements”	
Feb 8	Mark 2 and Q 1	Mark 9-16	Brown 50-57, 36-43	<b>Quiz:</b> Mark
Feb 13	Q 1 and Matthew 1	Matt 1-16; Damascus Document	Brown 36-43, 58-65	
Feb 15	Matthew 2	Matt 17-28; 1 Enoch 37-71	Brown 66-74	<b>Quiz:</b> Q and Matthew
Feb 20	Luke 1	Luke 1-9	Brown 75-82; Jervell, <i>Luke and the People of God</i>	
Feb 22	Luke 2	Luke 10-24	Brown 82-97	<b>Quiz:</b> Luke
Feb 27	John 1	John 1-12	Brown 116-24	
Mar 1	John 2	John 13-21	Brown 125-32	<b>Paper:</b> submit on Canvas by 11:59 PM
Mar 6				<b>Spring Break: No Class</b>
Mar 8				<b>Spring Break: No Class</b>
Mar 13	Acts 1	Acts 1-12	Brown 98-108	
Mar 15	Acts 2	Acts 13-28; Handout on God-fearers	Brown 108-15	<b>Quiz:</b> John and Acts
Mar 20	NT Letters and Paul 1	Gal 1:11-17; Phil 3:4-11; Acts 9:1-30, 22:3-29; 26:2-23	Brown 144-62; <a href="#">Greco-Roman Letters Video</a>	
Mar 22	Paul 2 and 1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	Brown 163-67	<b>Quiz:</b> Paul and 1 Thessalonians

Mar 27	Galatians	Galatians	Brown 168-73; Sanders, <i>Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People</i> , 1-10, 17-27, 45-48, 65-70, 93-114	
Mar 29				<b>Holy Week: No Class</b>
Apr 3	Philippians and Philemon	Philippians; Philemon	Brown 174-84; Perkins, "Philippians"	
Apr 5	1 Corinthians 1	1 Cor 1-10	Brown 185-93	<b>Quiz:</b> Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, and 1 Corinthians
Apr 10	1 Corinthians 2	1 Cor 11-16	Brown 194-200	
Apr 12	Romans 1	Rom 1-8	Brown 201-09; Dunn, <i>Theology of Paul the Apostle</i> , 334-58	<b>Revised Paper:</b> Submit on Canvas by 11:59 PM
Apr 17	Romans 2	Rom 9-16	Brown 201-09, 252-59; Dunn, <i>Theology of Paul the Apostle</i> , 359-89	
Apr 19	Contested Pauline Letters	2 Thess; Col	Brown 210-23; Schnelle, "Deutero-Pauline Letters"	<b>Quiz:</b> Romans and Contested Pauline Letters
Apr 24	Pastoral Letters	1-2 Tim; Tit	Brown 231-51	
Apr 26	1 Peter	1 Pet	Brown 260-66	<b>Quiz:</b> Pastoral Letters and 1 Peter
May 1	Revelation	Rev 1-14, 20-22	Brown 284-98	
May 3	Review Day			Bring questions and past quizzes; Refreshments will be served
May 8-15	Final Exam			Bring a writing utensil, a laptop (if you wish), and your Bible

