

Fall 2004 ♦ ENGL 304-003 (17206)

TTh 2:00-3:15 ♦ SR 101

Dr. Obermeier ❖ The Bible as Literature

Office Hours: TTh 1:00-2:00, and by Appointment in HUM 321

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Mailbox on office door or in English Department Office via receptionist

Required Texts

Harris, Stephen. *Understanding the Bible*. Mayfield, 2003.

The New Jerusalem Bible. Doubleday, 1985/1990. No Exceptions.

Obermeier, Anita and Gregory Castle. *Guide to Style*, 2004. (Order from me).

Course Requirements

8-10-page term paper	worth 25 %	10 1-page Written Responses	worth 15 %
In-class midterm	worth 20 %	Class Participation	worth 15 %
In-class final	worth 25 %	Grading will be done on a 0-100 scale.	

See website for grading rubrics: <http://www.unm.edu/~aobermei/gradingrubric.html>

Tentative Syllabus

(Materials have to be read by the date indicated. The Biblical numbers refer to chapters, the parentheses to the pages in the *NJB*.
You are also invited to read the introductions to the books in the *NJB*.)

T 8.24	Introduction to the Course.
Th 8.26	Video Presentation on Mesopotamia in the Iron and Bronze Age. Harris 43-75.
T 8.31	Textual Transmission, Translations, History of the English Bible. Harris 1-39.
Th 9.2	<u>The Old Testament</u> : Genesis 1-20 (18-40); Harris 94-122.
T 9.7	Genesis 21-37.1 (40-61); Harris 76-93, 122-6. Response 1 due.
Th 9.9	Genesis 37.2-50 (62-80); Harris 126-9.
T 9.14	Exodus 1-18 (81-104); Harris 129-44. Response 2 due.
Th 9.16	Exodus 19-34 (104-26); Deut. 34 (269); Harris 144-58.
F 9.17	Last day to change grading options.
T 9.21	Joshua 1-11 (284-99); Judges 1-8:3 (317-29); Harris 159-76.
Th 9.23	Judges 8:4-21 (330-50); Ruth (350-55); Harris 175-9, 287-90. Optional Response.
T 9.28	1 Samuel (356-95); Harris 179-85.
Th 9.30	2 Samuel (396-430); Harris 185-90. Response 3 due.
F 10.1	Last day to drop a course without a grade.
T 10.5	1 Kings (431-68); Harris 191-7. Response 4 due.
Th 10.7	2 Kings 1-5, 17, 21-25 (468-74, 490-2, 498-505); Isaiah 1-12 (1190-1209) Harris 197-218.
T 10.12	Isaiah 40-44, 49-50, 54-55 (1247-58, 1266-68, 1274-76); Daniel (1468-96); Harris 223-9; 242-6, 320-6. Response 5 due.
Th 10.14	Fall Break.
T 10.19	Judith (641-58); Esther (659-72); Job 1-6, 18, 23-31, 38-42 (757-63, 776-7, 783-93, 801-08) Harris 272-82, 292-4, 335-7.
Th 10.21	Ecclesiastes (1014-26); Song of Songs (1030-41); Harris 283-7, 290-1. Response 6 due. Midterm Exam Review.
T 10.26	Midterm Exam. Blue books are optional, but some form of paper is required.
Th 10.28	Introduction to and Video Presentation on the New Testament. Harris 348-83.
T 11.2	<u>The New Testament</u> : Mark (1660-85); Harris 387-421.
Th 11.4	Matthew 1-13.52 (1609-32); Harris 421-35. Response 7 due.

T 11.9	Matthew 13.53-28 (1632-59); Harris 435-41.
Th 11.11	Luke 1-9.50 (1686-1705); Harris 441-51. Response 8 due.
F 11.12	Last day to drop a course without approval of college dean.
T 11.16	Luke 9.51-24 (1705-32); Harris 451-7.
Th 11.18	John 1-9 (1744-66); Harris 457-63.
T 11.23	John 10-18 (1767-84); Harris 463-70. Response 9 due.
11.28-29	Thanksgiving Break.
T 11.30	John 19-21 (1784-90); Acts 1-12 (1798-1818); Harris 470-5, 511-18 (recommended: 476-510).
Th 12.2	Acts 13-28 (1819-46); Harris 519-31. Term Paper due.
T 12.7	Galatians (1924-31); James (1996-2000); 2 Peter (2007-10); 1 and 2 John (2011-20); Jude (2022-23); Revelation 1-3 (2030-34); Harris 531-38, 575-92, (recommended 538-53). Optional Response.
Th 12.9	Revelation 4-21 (2034-52); Harris 592-604 (recommended 605-15). Response 10 due. Final Exam Review.
T 12.14	Final Exam 12:30-2:30 in regular classroom. Blue books are optional, but some form of paper is required.

Course Objective

The Bible is the text with the most significant influence on western literature. This non-doctrinal examination of the Bible is an invaluable tool for students of literature and will increase their cultural literacy. This course is designed to read the Bible like a literary anthology, aiming to familiarize the students with the major parts of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and to become conversant in the most influential myths and images from the Judeo-Christian tradition. We will study the Biblical texts as we would study other literature, emphasizing authorship, character, plot, setting, theme, literary modes and genres—including allegories, apocalyptic literature, beatitudes, blessings, etiologies, folktales, genealogies, historical narratives, laments, laws, legal commentary, letters, parables, prayers, prophetic poetry, proverbial wisdom, royal decrees, sayings, stories of healing, and theophanies—as well as use literary analysis, methods of inquiry, and terminology, such as allegory, irony, metaphor, parallelism, personification, puns, simile, symbolism. Our discussions will concentrate not only on the structure and meaning of individual works but also on the ways in which these works reflect the historical people and times that produced them.

While the Biblical Scriptures hold great religious significance for many people, these texts are not discussed in a devotional or moral capacity here. If you unable to examine these texts from a literary perspective, this may not be the course for you.

Course Policies

1. Tests and Papers: Separate instructions will be handed out for each test and paper. Tests are closed book.

2. Written Responses: You are expected to write a 1-page response for each session indicated, discussing the readings for that day or since the last response. These responses should be informal, journal-like, **typed** pieces, expressing your thoughts and reactions to the text. Do not be afraid to express puzzlement and unfamiliarity or even delight and interest. I am interested in your untutored, uncritical reactions to the texts. We will leave more structured and analytical writing for the formal paper. Each fully fledged response will receive 10 points of credit. Optional responses can substitute for missed ones.

3. Attendance is mandatory. Since your progress in the course will depend a great deal on what we discuss in class, I expect class attendance and participation (actual contributions to the class discussion). I will pass out attendance sheets, and it is your responsibility to sign the sheets. So if the sheet passed you by, come up to the desk and sign at the end of class. Your participation grade will be affected after **4** unexcused absences (from a B+ to a B for one additional absence, etc.). An excused absence is a doctor's note, letter from an employer, etc. If you have an emergency situation, you can leave a message on my voice mail or email. **Note:** While you are welcome to check with me on what you have missed, I do not "reteach" class periods you missed during my office hours or over email. Please consult with your fellow students for notes.

4. Assignments: Students must attempt **all** assignments to pass the course. This means that you cannot simply skip an assignment because you are happy with your grade at the time; hence you cannot, for instance, skip the final.

5. Pertinent Websites: I am currently updating my. Generally, all handouts will also be posted to the website. I will keep you apprised as to the availability of other materials and links.

6. Plagiarism. Don't do it! For clarification, see **#102-107** in *Guide to Style*.

7. Cell Phones: Please turn them off or put them on vibrate while in class.