Moberly Area Community College
Common Syllabus

PHI155 Introduction to the Bible

Current Term

Instructor:
Office number(s):
Office hours:
Contact information:
Classroom number:
Class days and time:

Catalog Description: PHI155 *Introduction to the Bible (3-0-3)
Critically examines the Bible both as a literary and cultural object and as a sacred text. Explores the
development of the text over time with an emphasis upon the genre, narrative, and theological
synthesis as well as the canonization process. Surveys how the text is used in prior and contemporary
theo-political settings.

Prerequisite/Corequisite: None

Text(s):

For In-seat/Virtual Sections only:
Title: Exploring the Bible
Author: Harris
Edition: 2013
Publisher: McGraw-Hill

For Online Sections only:
Title: Ignatius Holy Bible, Catholic Ed.R.S
Publisher: Ignatius

Other Required Materials: None

Purpose of Course:

Note for instructors: As a public institution, it is vital that this course not be taught from a
confessional standpoint. We do not present any particular theological position (even non-religious
ones) as normative. This class is primarily a historical and literary analysis class and should only
employ the tools of those disciplines. While this isn’t a theology class, it does bump up against
theology constantly. Given this, we want to allow for various engagements of theological readings
(particularly among students) with respect and care without presenting any particular theological
approach as normative.
The Bible has been a tremendously influential sacred and cultural text. Various religious and political traditions use, appropriate, or are otherwise influenced by this collection of works in part or in whole, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, various new religious movements, as well as American political and cultural discourse.

In this course, we will primarily focus upon the genres, composition, and themes of the Bible, bibliographies, letters to fledgling communities, prophetic writings, and psalms, wisdom literature, and apocalyptic texts. Secondary focus will be upon the surveying the connections between the books of the Bible with the religious and political circumstances that Judaism and then Christianity were in conversation with during the composition and canonization of the books in the Bible. Tertiary focus will be upon the process of canonization and interpretation of the Bible throughout the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and the role the text plays within it.

Course Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Recall the basic features and organization of the Bible;
- Classify a given passage with respect to genre;
- Situate, using historical criticism, a given passage or text within a historical and cultural context;
- Differentiate various theo-political conversations and points of view which are in dialogue with one another within the textual tradition of the Bible.
- Appraise the use and appropriation of the Bible in various religious traditions and political and cultural discourse;
- Apply knowledge of the Bible and critical scholarship to analyze deutero-canonical works;
- Create an interpretive awareness guide for personal or institutional use appropriate for people with zero background knowledge of the Bible.

Course Content:
Note for instructors: Feel free to customize the sections highlighted to best match your research interests and teaching expertise. What is paramount, as mentioned above, is to present and discuss the material in a non-confessional manner. Any confessional discussions and perspectives should be labeled as such. We welcome confessional perspectives, so long as they are presented as “a reading of the text” instead of the singular and normative reading.

1. Survey of the Bible
   a. Torah
   b. Nevi’im
   c. Ketuvim
   d. Gospels
   e. Acts
   f. Letters
   g. Apocalypse

2. Introduction to criticism as a lens for study and understanding
3. **Genre and Context analysis**
   a. Apocalypse
   b. Biographies
   c. Hagiography
   d. Law Codes
   e. Letters
   f. Myths
   g. Poetry
   h. Prophecy
   i. Romance Novels

4. **Handling of sacred texts**

5. **The cultural-historical backdrop**
   a. Etiological myths of ANE empires
   b. Impact of Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, empires.
   c. Theme of exile and return
   d. Macedonian and Roman occupation and resistance
   e. The divine council and the development of monotheism

---

**Assessment of Student Learning:**

**Note for instructors:** Please customize the following to best meet your teaching style. Please be mindful of the rigor appropriate for a college intro class. Also, please ensure that the assignments are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth Making Paper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Awareness Guide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deutero-Canonical Passage Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale**

- 100-90% = A
- 89-90% = B
- 79-70% = C
- 69-60% = D
- 59-0% = F

**Expected Study Time Commitments:** Students should expect to spend approximately 2 to 4 hours per week studying, reading, and working on assignments for each registered credit hour. For example, 6 to 12 study hours per week may be expected for a 3-credit hour class.
Description of Major Assignment(s)/Project(s):

**Exams (25%)**
You will have a midterm (Hebrew Bible) and final (New Testament) in this class, each worth 12.5% of your final grade. These exams will consist of objective and short answer questions designed to showcase your awareness and recall of major persons, organization, concepts, et cetera in the course.

**Genre Paper (25%)**
You select a genre for exploration. In your paper you will give an overview and function of the genre, discuss in brief where the genre is deployed in the Bible, a comparison with a contemporary text (e.g. Enuma Elish and Genesis 1 and 2), and discuss how in-context genre analysis illuminates the text.

**Interpretive Awareness Guide (25%)**
As the capstone assignment for this class, you will create a detailed infographic guide with someone who wants to approach and read the Bible accurately, responsibly, and creatively as your hypothetical audience. The infographic will present core principles in a terse, engaging manner with robust, detailed footnotes for each section.

**Passage Analysis (25%)**
You will write a passage analysis of a passage from a deutero-canonical work (such as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Thekla, Tobit, Maccabees, et cetera). This analysis will draw upon genre, narrative, and historical critical methods to produce an informed discussion of the passage and its relation to canonical works.

**Schedule of Student Assignments/Activities:** Instructors will identify a Student Assignment/Activities schedule. Instructors have the prerogative to construct the schedule by class periods, weeks, or an overview of topics to be covered.

**Statement to Connect Course with General Education Outcomes:** In compliance with MACC’s General Education Outcomes, the student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- **Higher Order Thinking:** Students will demonstrate the ability to distinguish among opinions, facts, and inferences; to identify underlying or implicit assumptions; to make informed judgments; to solve problems by applying evaluative standards; and to reflect upon and refine those problem-solving skills. This outcome involves creative thinking, critical thinking, and quantitative literacy.
- **Managing Information:** Students will demonstrate the ability to discern when there is a need for information; and to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand.
- **Valuing:** Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the moral and ethical values of a diverse society; and to appreciate the values of diversity, equity, and sustainability.

**College / Instructor Policies:**

**Academic Dishonesty:** MACC board policy is as follows: “Academic dishonesty by students damages institutional credibility and unfairly jeopardizes honest students; therefore, it will not be tolerated in
any form.” Forms of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following: violations of copyright law, plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, collusion, and other academic misconduct. Incidents of dishonesty regarding assignments, examinations, classroom/laboratory activities, and/or the submission of misleading or false information to the College will be treated seriously. The procedure for handling academic dishonesty is outlined in the Student Handbook (Policy Handbook, G.020). In cases of alleged academic dishonesty, the burden of proof is on the student, not on the instructor.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions for which they are enrolled. The College reserves the right to drop or withdraw students from courses due to lack of attendance.

Students need to be aware that dropping/being dropped from a course and their last date of attendance in the course may impact their financial aid.

MACC faculty are required to track attendance and report lack of attendance. An instructor must complete the appropriate steps to drop a student within one week following the student’s violation of the attendance policy. Additionally, a student’s attendance rate will be calculated based upon the first day the academic session begins (not the student’s date of enrollment in the course). If a student does not attend a course as defined below, the student will be dropped as “Never Attended.”

**Term Length Drop Calculations**

**16-week:** Any student who misses two (2) consecutive weeks of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

**8-week:** Any student who misses one (1) consecutive week of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

**4-week:** Any student who misses two (2) consecutive days of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

**Intersession:** Any student who misses one (1) day of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

Acceptable justification may include, but is not limited to, family emergencies, illness or injury, college-approved co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and religious holidays.

**Definition of Course Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Seat Course</th>
<th>Physically attending scheduled, face-to-face, class meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Virtual Course | Being present, via appropriate platform, for scheduled class meetings/activities

Hybrid Course | Physically attending scheduled, face-to-face, class meetings and active participation in the online portion of the course which may include any or all of the following:
- Completion of quizzes or exams during class meetings and online
- Submission of assignments during class meetings and online
- Participation in discussions during class meetings and online

Online Course | Active participation in an online course includes the following:
- Completion of quizzes or exams
- Submission of assignments
- Participation in threaded discussions

Simply logging into the Learning Management System (Canvas) and/or accessing the course and course related material does not constitute active participation for the online component of hybrid courses or for online courses. (Policy Handbook, G.040)

Tardiness: Per instructor’s policy

Make-up and late work: Per instructor’s policy

Extra-credit work: Per instructor’s policy

Student Email: MACC Mail is the official student email system at MACC. Official college communication is sent via this email system. Students are responsible for checking their MACC Mail account regularly. Students may also receive notifications and reminders from MACC through the online learning platform. However, students should remain aware that the online learning platform messaging system and MACC Mail (student email) system are two separate systems.

ADA Statement: Students who have disabilities that qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act may register for assistance through the Office of Access and ADA Services. Students are invited to contact the Access Office to confidentially discuss disability information, academic accommodations, appropriate documentation and procedures. For more information, please call either the Moberly office at (660) 263-4100 x11240 or the Columbia office at (573) 234-1067 x12120, or visit our web page at http://www.macc.edu/index.php/services/access-office.

Title IX Statement: MACC maintains a strict policy prohibiting sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, and sexual violence. All MACC employees, including faculty members, are considered mandated reporters of sexual misconduct and as such are
expected to contact the Title IX Coordinator when they become aware, in conversation or in writing, of an incident of sexual misconduct. For more information on this policy or to learn about support resources, please see http://www.macc.edu/sexual-misconduct-policy (links to an external site) or contact Ms. Cheryl Lybarger, MACC’s Title IX Coordinator, at 660-263-4110, ext. 11369 or CherylLybarger@macc.edu.