RS 100 EXPLORING THE BIBLE

Dr. Yehuda Shabatay

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is one of four Foundations courses that you will take in the area of Humanities and Fine Arts. Upon completing this area of Foundations, you will be able to: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in Religious Studies with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

Some of the basic terms you will get acquainted with will be in several languages: Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and occasionally Aramaic. Diverse theories will refer to both ancient and modern commentaries. As far as the social context is concerned, you will deal with historical and geographical data, as well as with the structure of the society that developed the biblical literature. And as you discuss the Bible’s influence on our civilization, you will relate it to all monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), as well as to specific concerns in our society.

While it is impossible to read and discuss the entire Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament), the New Testament, and some of the writings that were composed in the so-called Inter-Testamental period in one semester, we can gain a basic understanding of the themes, central ideas, and the structure of various sections and of specific books. Please note that our aim will be to approach the material from an academic, rather than from a theological point of view.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. **Bible**, Preferred translation: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NOAB) with the Apocrypha*, College edition. (Used copies may be available at the University Bookstore.) You are expected to bring your Bible to *every class*. Please note: (a) if you use this edition, you don’t need the *Penguin Historical Atlas of the Bible Lands* (listed below) because it includes fourteen maps; (b) if you use another edition, make sure that it contains the *Apocrypha*.
2. Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 8th edition, Referred to as “H” in the syllabus. Please note: this is a new edition of the textbook we used earlier in this course. Find out if copies of it, or of the 7th edition, are available for rent in the bookstore.

All the above books are available in the University bookstore.

Tu 4/1 and Th 4/3  SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES


Th 4/10  The Life and Death of Jesus Matt. chs 26-28; Mark chs 12-16. H ch. 12.

Tu 4/15  FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER – NO CLASS


FINAL EXAMINATION. Date will be announced.