RELIGIOUS STUDIES 100 EXPLORING THE BIBLE Fall 2009
Instructor: Dr. Brad Kirkegaard
Section 1, Schedule Number 22989
Section 2, Schedule Number 22990
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:00-8:50, Hepner Hall 221
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00-9:50, Hepner Hall 221

Course Webpage: blackboard.sdsu.edu (then enter SDSU Red ID and your password select Exploring the Bible from "My Courses")
e-mail: bkirkegaard@mail.sdsu.edu
Office Hours: Monday 10:00-1:00 (also by appointment)

Course Description: This course offers an introduction to the Bible within an academic setting. The Bible is arguably the single most influential text on the development of Western culture. Until recent times, the Bible formed the common cultural background that was drawn upon in literature, art and philosophy. Study of the Bible provides an essential background for all liberal arts studies, opening a rich world of stories and allusions within other works. The Bible is also the defining sacred scripture of two of the world's major religious traditions and important to several more. As sacred scripture, the Bible continues to shape the lives of much of the world's population. Basic knowledge of the Bible helps to make sense of the complex world in which we live. Within academic study, the Bible has also been at the center of the development of critical approaches to the analyses of texts and traditions. Study of the Bible presents an excellent opportunity for learning and applying a range of critical approaches that are essential to many of the other academic disciplines.

General Education:
This course fulfills one of nine courses that you will take in General Education Foundations. Foundations courses cultivate skills in reading, writing, research, communication, computation, information literacy, and use of technology. They furthermore introduce you to basic concepts, theories and approaches in a variety of disciplines in order to provide the intellectual breadth necessary to help you integrate the more specialized knowledge gathered in your major area of study into a broader world picture.

This course is one of four Foundations courses that you will take in the area of Humanities and Fine Arts. Upon completion of this area of Foundations, you will be able to: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts 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.

Learning Objectives: There are two principal learning objectives for this class. First, students will demonstrate mastery of essential Biblical content and context including major figures, events, and complex themes through quizzes, midterm and final examinations. Second, students will engage texts closely and analyze the Bible from a diversity of critical approaches through active participation in class discussions and weekly writing in their journals.

An Important Caution: This class is NOT a religiously oriented "Bible Study." It is, however, an academic study of two of the major world scriptures that are deeply important to many people of faith – including fellow students. Please treat the texts with respect even as you question and explore them within an academic environment. For some students this will raise a range of questions of faith. Some of these questions will be of general interest to the class, but given the diversity of perspectives many will not. Please feel free to raise questions throughout the course of the semester, but do not be surprised if I suggest that it is a topic better discussed after class or during office hours, or within your own faith setting.

Grading:
Midterm 20%
Final 30%
Pop Quizzes (best 4 of 6) 20%
Journal 20%
Participation 10%

The Midterm (20%) and Final (30%) will test your mastery of essential information and your ability to explore complex themes within the Bible. Additional details for the Midterm and Final will be discussed in class and study guides will be provided several weeks before the exams. The Pop Quizzes (20%) will occur randomly scattered throughout the semester to make sure that you are keeping up with reading and are prepared for class. There are no make-up quizzes. If you are not present on the day of a quiz you will receive a zero for that quiz. This is part of why only the best 4 of 6 quizzes will be used in determining your grade. The Journal (20%) will chronicle your observations as you read the Bible throughout the semester. The Journal will be your opportunity to express your thoughts and detail your own Biblical exploration. The Journal is also an opportunity to engage in close textual analysis, as informed by your reading of Harris and by class lectures, and to apply specific types of Biblical Criticism. For more detail on what is expected in the Journal please see the Journal Guide on blackboard. The Journal will be exchanged in the middle of the semester for peer review and collected at the end of the semester to be graded. The peer review is required and will be a part of your final grade. For additional details on the peer review and journal grading see the description on BlackBoard. Participation (10%) is an important component of this class. Participation will be measured on the basis of the value of the contributions you make to the class and especially to discussions. You can, of course, only contribute meaningfully to in-class discussion if you attend class regularly and prepare for class discussion. Attendance at class meetings and preparation of the reading assignments, therefore, ARE REQUIRED. Arrive to class on-time and remain the length of the class or you will not receive credit for attending that day. You will also be required to write one 400 word Class Summary as part of your Participation grade during the semester and to post the summary to blackboard (failure to write the summary will significantly affect your participation grade).

Instructions for writing the Class Summary are available on blackboard.

A number of extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester. Each opportunity will be worth up to ½ of a point on your final grade with a maximum of 2 points earned in extra credit for the semester. To earn the extra credit you must attend one of the approved opportunities and write a short 250-300 word essay. A list of extra credit opportunities is posted on blackboard and I will inform you as additional opportunities arise.

In your written work and in your classroom involvement (both in person and on-line) you will be expected to adhere to "acceptable standards of conduct" as discussed on the web page for the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/). Turn OFF cell phones and pagers while in class. As a general rule, extensions on journal due dates will not be granted. PLAN AHEAD.

Clickers:
A classroom response system (aka clickers) will be used in our course. Clickers are small handheld devices used to foster interaction, active learning, and quick feedback for faculty and students. You are required to obtain a clicker as a learning resource (just like any required text). We will be using clickers in this class regularly. You are required to bring them to every class. All pop quizzes and exams will require clickers. Clickers will also be used for attendance and periodically to assess your retention of essential class content. You must purchase and register your clicker prior to the 2nd week of class meetings, and bring your clicker to each class each day thereafter prepared to participate. For our class, you will register your clicker via (Blackboard/CPSOnline). (If CPSOnline: The class key for registration is _______) More information on the registration process for your clicker can be found by going to http://clicker.sdsu.edu. Students may not use other students' clickers; doing so is a violation of academic integrity.

(I am hopeful that this will not apply to anyone, but just to be clear: Each clicker is connected to you individually. Using another person's clicker to falsify attendance will result in an automatic failing grade for the semester for attendance. Misuse of clickers for exams or quizzes will result in failing grades on those tests for all involved parties.)

Furlough Days:
You will note throughout the semester that there are a number of "Furlough" days. As faculty, we are required not to work on a set number of days throughout the semester as part of the negotiated furlough. Please watch the schedule carefully throughout the semester for these days as we will not have class. I will also not be able to hold office hours or answer emails on these days as we are prohibited from working in any way on furlough days.
Required Readings:
1. Bible – Preferred translation is the New Oxford Annotated Bible (NOAB) with the Apocrypha. Please bring your Bible to class as we will be referring to it frequently. It is especially important that you have your Bible with you on Fridays for class discussion.
2. Stephen L. Harris, Understanding the Bible, 7th edition
3. Clickers
4. ECR Readings (Electronic Course Reserve)

ECR readings: To cut down on your costs, I have made required reading selections available for you on Electronic Course Reserve (marked ECR on the syllabus). These readings ARE REQUIRED and must appear in your Journals and will be tested on the Midterm and Final Exams. You can access these readings by going to http://ecr.sdsu.edu/ersg/, selecting “Electronic Reserves and Reserve Pages,” navigate to our course (either by “course number” RELS 100, “course name” Exploring the Bible, or “Instructor” Kirkegaard), use the password <xx> and then scroll down the readings to find the short title you need.

Calendar of Readings and Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, make sure that you complete the readings from Harris by WEDNESDAY of each week and the readings from the Bible by FRIDAY. You will be expected to have read the Bible (and ECR) readings for Fridays each week for classroom discussion and will get much more out of lecture if you keep up with the Harris readings. You will also be expected to bring your Bibles and any relevant copies of ECR readings to class on Friday for discussion.

Week One (August 31, Sept. 2, 4) Introduction and Orientation to the Bible
Read Harris, Chapters 1 and 2 (for Sept. 2nd); Read Genesis 1-4 (for Sept. 4th)

Week Two (Sept. 7, 9, 11) The Biblical Environment
Monday, Sept. 7 – Labor Day NO CLASS (Campus Closed)
Read Harris, Chapters 3 and 4 (for Sept. 9); Read Genesis 6-9, 12, 19, 22, and 37-40, 42, 45-47, 50 (for Sept. 11)

Week Three (Sept. 14, 16, 18) Torah
Read Harris, Chapter 5 (for Sept. 16); Exodus 1-10, 12-15, 18-24, 31-32; Leviticus 18-21; Deuteronomy 5-7 (for Sept. 18)

Week Four (Sept. 21, 23, 25) Prophets (Part 1) (Nevil’im)
Wednesday, Sept. 23rd Furlough Day NO CLASS
Read Harris, Chapter 6; Joshua 1-8; Judges 13-16; 1 Samuel 16-17; 2 Samuel 5-7 and 11-12; 1 Kings 16-19

Week Five (Sept. 28, 30, Oct. 2) Prophets (Part 2) (Nevil’im)
Wednesday, Sept. 30th Furlough Day NO CLASS
Read Harris, Chapter 7; Isaiah 6-7, 9:1-7 and 42-45; Jeremiah 1, 20, 31; Ezekiel 1-3, 37; Jonah

Week Six (Oct. 5, 7, 9) Writings (Kethuvim)
Read Harris, Chapter 8; Nehemiah 8-9; Psalms 8, 23, 111, 137; Proverbs 1-3, 7-8, 26, 31; Ecclesiastes 1-4, 12; Job 1-2, 38 and 42; Song of Songs; Daniel 1-3, 7, 12

Week Seven (Oct. 12, 14, 16) Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls
Oct. 12: Read Harris, Chapter 9; readings from the Apocrypha (also available on ECR) 1 Esdras 3-4; 2 Esdras 2-6:6, 8-9:13; Judith 8:10 and 13; Sirach 15:11-20; 18, 21:1-14, 29, 39:1-11
Oct. 14: ECR readings from the Pseudepigrapha – Life of Adam and Eve, Testament of Solomon, skin 1 Enoch
Oct. 16: ECR readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls – Damascus Document and the War Scroll

Week Eight (Oct. 19, 21, 23) Journal Peer Review, MIDTERM EXAM, Varieties of Judaism
Oct. 19: Peer Review of JOURNALS in class; review for Midterm

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Oct. 21:  **MIDTERM EXAM**
Oct. 23:  Varieties of Judaism – ECR readings from Josephus (Jewish Sects and Herod); Philo (Therapeutae); 1 Maccabees (skim)

**Week Nine (Oct. 26, 28, 30)**  
New Testament Background:  
*Greco-Roman Culture and Varieties of Judaism (cont.)*
Oct. 26:  Varieties of Judaism-in-class session
Oct. 28:  Greco-Roman Culture – Read Harris, Chapter 10
Oct. 30:  Roman Palestine; start reading Gospel of Mark

**Week Ten (Nov. 2, 4, 6)**  
Gospels (Part 1)
Read Harris, Chapter 11; finish reading Mark
Read Harris, Chapter 12; Matthew 1-7, 13, 26-28

**Week Eleven (Nov. 9, 11, 13)**  
Gospels (Part 2)
**Wednesday, Nov. 11th – Veteran's Day**  
NO CLASS (Campus Closed)
Read Harris, Chapter 13; Luke 1-6, 15-16 and 21-24; John 1-5, 10-11, 15-21

**Week Twelve (Nov. 16, 18, 20)**  
Acts and Paul: the Earliest Christian Communities; Paul’s Theology
Read Harris, Chapter 14; Acts 1-10; 1 Thessalonians; Philo; (ECR reading) the Didache; Galatians; Romans 1-5

**Week Thirteen (Nov. 23, 25, 27)**  
NO CLASS ALL WEEK
Nov. 23rd  Furlough Day – NO CLASS
Nov. 25th  Furlough Day – NO CLASS
Nov. 27th  Thanksgiving – Campus Closed

**Week Fourteen (Nov. 30, Dec. 2, 4)**  
Epistles, End-Times, and Non-Canonical Christian Writings
Read Harris, Chapter 15; Hebrews 8-13; 1 Peter; 1 John; Revelation 1-6 and 17-22; (ECR reading) Acts of Paul and Thecla; 1 Timothy

**Week Fifteen (Dec. 7, 9, 11)**  
Dec. 7th  Conclude Non-Canonical Christian Writings and Final Lecture
ECR readings of Gospel of Thomas; Gospel of Mary; Infancy Gospel of Thomas; Protoevangelion of James
Dec. 9th  Review Session for the final exam
Dec. 11th  COLLECT JOURNALS in class for evaluation
Dec. 11th (Friday)  Furlough Day – NO CLASS

**Final exams begin Dec. 12**

**Week Sixteen (Dec. 14, 16, 18)**
Final exams end Dec. 19th

**FINAL EXAM:**

0800 MWF Monday, Dec. 14 0800-1000
0900 MWF Wednesday, Dec. 16 0800-1000