RELIGIOUS STUDIES 100  EXPLORING THE BIBLE  FALL 2016
Instructor: Dr. Kirkegaard
Section 1, Schedule Number 22956  8:00-8:50
Section 2, Schedule Number 22957  9:00-9:50
Arts and Letters 101 and West Commons 201

Monday and Wednesday

Course Webpage: blackboard.sdsu.edu (then enter SDSU Red ID and your password
select Exploring the Bible from "My Courses")
email : bkirkega@mail.sdsu.edu
Office Hours:  Arts and Letters 664; Mondays 11:00-2:00
(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 Outcomes:
Students demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of essential Biblical content and context including major figures, events, and complex themes through quizzes, midterm and final examinations.

Students discover, analyze and interpret Biblical texts with a diversity of critical approaches through journal writing and class discussion.

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:
Quizzes 20%
Midterm 20%
Final 25%
Journal 20%
Participation 15%
(in class and on-line)

The quizzes (20%) will test your comprehension of material from the on-line mini-lectures, your knowledge gained from class and Harris, and your understanding of your Biblical readings. Only the best 8 out of 12 on-line quizzes will count towards your grade. Because the lowest 4 quizzes will be dropped, you may only take each quiz once and no allowances will be made for technical difficulties (I expect at least 1-2 of the drops will be because of technical problems). The Midterm (20%) and Final (25%) will be comprised of objective questions. These examinations 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 before the exams. 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. The Journals will be exchanged for peer-review twice during the semester. The peer-review is part of your grade for the journal and is required. The journal will be collected at the end of the semester to be graded. For more detail on what is expected in the Journal please see the Journal Guide on blackboard. Participation (15%) 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 Class Summary during the semester and to post this summary to blackboard. Instruction for writing the summary is available on blackboard. The class summary comprises part of your total participation grade. On-line participation is also essential for this class. You are expected to view all of the mini-lectures and to make use of additional on-line resources.

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 will be 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.

Required Readings:
1. Bible – Preferred translation is the New Oxford Annotated Bible (NOAB) with the Apocrypha. Other major translations are also acceptable. A range of excellent free translations are also available at BibleGateway. (RSV is my personal favorite, but NIV, NRSV, NKJ are all excellent choices).
2. Stephen L. Harris, Understanding the Bible, 8th edition (7th edition is also acceptable)
3. Electronic Readings (links on blackboard) (these texts function for the class the same as Bible readings on the weeks they are assigned).

Electronic Readings: To cut down on your costs, a number of your required readings that are not in the Bible will be from free web-sites. These readings ARE REQUIRED and must appear in your Journals and will be tested on the quizzes, midterm and final exams. You can access these readings by following the links on the Blackboard site. These readings are marked ER in the calendar below.

Students with Disabilities:
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your
accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Success in a Hybrid Class:** A Hybrid class includes both traditional classroom meetings and structure and required on-line components. For the on-line elements you will need the following:

- A computer - PC or Macintosh- with a stable Internet connection. Higher speed Internet connections (cable modem, DSL) are strongly recommended.
- Basic computer skills
- A reliable email address that will not change from the beginning until the end of the semester.
- A "technology back-up" plan. Students should plan out an alternative location to do assignments and quizzes in the event their computer or Internet connection is not working!

Students are also required to:

- Make use of the online course materials available via Blackboard.
- Participate in asynchronous online activities – for this class these include mini lectures and short quizzes.
- Complete readings and assignments by the dates indicated on the syllabus.
- Check email on a regular basis.

**Academic Honesty:** The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by Student Affairs.

Examples of Plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

If you have questions on what is plagiarism, please consult the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html) and this helpful guide from the Library: (http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/exploratorium/Standard_5/plagiarism.pdf)

**Contacting me:**

I will try to respond within 24-48 hours to emails. For quick questions, the turnaround time may be much shorter. If I do not, for any reason, respond within 48 hours please feel free to email a second time (It is rare, but occasionally I can miss an email if I get a lot all at once). For more complex questions you may wish to come to office hours where we can discuss topics at greater length. I am also typically available a few minutes before and after class to answer quick questions.

I always love teaching this class and not least for what each of you bring to the study of the material. I look forward to getting to know you over the semester and being a part of your exploration of the Bible!!!

**Calendar of Readings and Assignments**

Unless otherwise noted, make sure that you complete the readings from Harris by MONDAY of each week and the readings from the Bible by WEDNESDAY. You will be expected to have read the Bible readings for Wednesdays each week in preparation for classroom discussion and will get much more out of lecture if you keep up with the Harris readings. The on-line quizzes test knowledge of the material covered during the previous week including Harris, Bible readings and class lecture as well as the assigned mini-lectures that prepare you for the next week's material.
Week One (Aug. 29 and 31)  Introduction and Orientation to the Bible
For Wed. Read Genesis 1-4 for class discussion
Start viewing On-line mini-lectures 1 and 2 on orientation to the Bible and Biblical Criticisms
Read Harris, Chapter 1

Week Two (Sept. 5 and 7)  Biblical Formation and Canonization
September 5 – Labor Day – NO CLASS
For Wed. Read Harris, Chapter 2 and Genesis 6-9
Start reading Genesis readings for next week (write your journal on Genesis 6-9)
On-line mini-lectures 3 and 4 on the Biblical World
On-line Quiz 1 (Quizzes will be available each week from Friday afternoon through Sunday night)

Week Three (Sept. 12 and 14)  The Biblical Environment
Read Harris, Chapter 3 (for Monday)
Genesis 12, 19, 22, and 37-40, 42, 45-47, 50 (for class discussion on Wednesday)
On-line mini-lectures 5 and 6 on Torah
On-line Quiz 2

Week Four (Sept. 19 and 21)  Torah
Read Harris, Chapter 4 (for Monday)
Exodus 1-10, 12-15, 18-24, 31-32; Leviticus 18-21; Deuteronomy 5-7 (for discussion on Wednesday)
On-line mini-lectures 7 and 8 on the Prophets
On-line Quiz 3

Week Five (Sept. 26 and 28)  Prophets (Part 1) (Nevi‘im)
Read Harris, Chapter 5
Joshua 1-8; Judges 13-16; 1 Samuel 16-17; 2 Samuel 5-7 and 11-12; 1 Kings 16-19
On-line mini-lectures 9 and 10 on the Prophets Part 2
On-line Quiz 4

Week Six (Oct. 3 and 5)  Prophets (Part 2) (Nevi‘im)
Read Harris, Chapter 6
Isaiah 6-7, 9:1-7 and 42-45; Jeremiah 1, 20, 31; Ezekiel 1-3, 37; Jonah
Oct. 5 – 1st PEER REVIEW IN CLASS
On-line mini-lectures 11 and 12 on the Writings
On-line Quiz 5

Week Seven (Oct. 10 and 12)  Writings (Kethuvim)
Read Harris, Chapter 7
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 (also referred to as the Song of Solomon); Daniel 1-3, 7, 12
On-line mini-lectures 13 and 14 on non-Canonical Jewish writings
On-line Quiz 6

Week Eight (Oct. 17 and 19)  Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
Read Harris, Chapter 8
For Oct. 17th: readings from the Apocrypha (also available on ER and at BibleGateway.com) 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
For Oct. 19th: ER reading from the Pseudepigrapha – Life of Adam and Eve (link on blackboard)
No mini-lectures – study for Midterm!!!

Week Nine (Oct. 24 and 26)  Midterm Exam and Varieties of Judaism
Oct. 24: MIDTERM EXAM
Oct. 26: Varieties of Judaism Lecture– ER readings from Josephus (Jewish Sects and Herod); Philo (Therapeutae); 1 Maccabees (skim) (links to all on blackboard)
On-line mini lectures 15 and 16 on Varieties of Judaism and Greco-Roman culture
On-line Quiz 7

Week Ten (Oct. 31 and Nov. 2) Varieties of Judaism and Greco-Roman Culture
Oct. 31: Varieties of Judaism-in-class session
Nov. 2: Greco-Roman Culture – Read Harris, Chapter 9
Read Harris, Chapter 10
Start reading Gospel of Mark
On-line mini-lectures 17 and 18 Introducing the New Testament and the Gospels
On-line Quiz 8

Week Eleven (Nov. 7 and 9) Gospels (Part 1)
Read Harris, Chapter 11; finish reading Gospel of Mark
Read Gospel of Matthew 1-7, 13, 26-28; Gospel of Luke 1-6, 15-16 and 21-24
On-line mini-lectures 19 and 20 on the Gospels
On-line Quiz 9

Week Twelve (Nov. 14 and 16) Gospels (Part 2)
Read Harris, Chapter 12
Gospel of John 1-5, 10-11, 15-21 and Acts 1-10
Nov. 16 – 2nd PEER REVIEW IN CLASS
On-line mini-lectures 21 and 22 on Acts and Paul
On-line Quiz 10

November 21 and 23 Thanksgiving Week NO CLASS

Week Thirteen (Nov. 28 and 30) Acts and Paul: the Earliest Christian Communities; Paul's Theology
Read Harris, Chapter 13; Acts 1-10; 1 Thessalonians; Philemon; Galatians; Romans 1-5; (ER reading) the Didache (link on blackboard)
On-line mini-lectures 23 and 24 on New Testament Writings
On-line Quiz 11

Week Fourteen (Dec. 5 and 7) Epistles, End-Times, and Women and Early Christianity
Read Harris, Chapter 14
Hebrews 8-13; 1 Peter; 1 John; Revelation 1-6 and 17-22; (ER reading) Acts of Paul and Thecla (link on blackboard);
1 Timothy
On-line mini-lectures 25 and 26 on Non-Canonical Christian Writings
On-line Quiz 12

Dec. 7: No class – work on finalizing your journals!!!

Week Fifteen (Dec. 12 and 14) Non Canonical Christian Writings
For Monday: ER readings of Gospel of Thomas; Gospel of Mary; Infancy Gospel of Thomas; Protoevangelion of James (links on blackboard)
Dec. 12th: Non Canonical Christian Writings and Review
Dec. 12th: COLLECT JOURNALS in class for final evaluation

Dec. 14th: NO CLASS – study for exams

FINAL EXAM:
Friday, Dec 16th 8:00-10:00 am (8am class)
Monday, Dec 19th 8:00-10:00 am (9am class)