

## Course Outline: Fall 2018

**Introduction to the Bible as Scripture**  
**RS 2330/BS5110a**

**Location:** TBD

**Days & Time:** Tues 11:30-2:20

**Instructor:** Dr. N. Meyer

**Contact info:** [nmeyer5@uwo.ca](mailto:nmeyer5@uwo.ca)

**Office:** A225 ext c/o 289; hours: Fri 10:20-11:20

**Guest instructor:** Colleen Burgess, [caburges@uwo.ca](mailto:caburges@uwo.ca)



**Huron**  
THEOLOGY

An introduction to the reception and interpretation of the biblical writings as Scripture in historical and theological perspective.

### Course Description

What is the Bible? Where did it come from? How have people read it? Indeed, how *should* it be read it, and according to whom? Such are the questions that guide this course. In answering them, we will compare two very different practices of reading the Bible, which will be the preoccupation of the major sections of this course. These reading practices may be called the Confessional and Critical approaches to the Bible. In the first part, we adopt the perspective of modern critical scholarship to survey what the state of knowledge is about the Bible—its origins, its contents, and the cultures which brought it to birth. In the next section, we look back to so-called “pre-critical” (or Confessional) exegesis, seeking to understand its very different presuppositions and lasting contributions. Finally, we take a second look at modern biblical scholarship, focusing on its rise, character, and reception in communities of faith. Along the way, the interpretation of a wide variety of biblical texts shall be introduced, but we will focus on the reception of the creation narratives of Genesis as a case in point to illustrate the changing nature of biblical interpretation.

### Course Objectives

To introduce students to the methods and conclusions of modern biblical scholarship

To introduce students to practices of reading the Bible as scripture throughout history

To invite students to think critically about the presuppositions that underlie all practices of reading the Bible

To invite students to form their own thoughts about how the Bible should be read and where its meaning lies for communities of faith

### Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Three percent will be deducted for each class missed due to all but documented medical absences; if a third is missed, 5 percent will be the *maximum* you may receive for the attendance and participation mark. Readings made available on owl must be printed, marked-up in evidence of your reading, and brought to class to assist in discussion.

Pop Quizzes: 20%

Five pop quizzes, based on the day's readings and worth 4% each will be administered at the beginning of classes. Students must therefore show up on time; undocumented absences will be accommodated only once.

Reading Summaries: 15%

Three summaries of the primary readings marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) and made available on Owl, worth 5 percent each, will be submitted at the beginning of class on the day these readings are due. Students are to write between 300 to 400 words outlining the salient features of a single author's understanding of scripture and how it is to be read. No more than one reading per week may be submitted.

Alternatively, students may earn up to 15% by choosing to write one summary, as described above, and making a presentation to the class in which they summarize the reading through a guided discussion.

Research Paper: 22% Due: December 4th

Through an examination of ancient and modern commentary on a prechosen text of scripture, your research paper should provide a comparison of the ways of reading the Bible which are characteristic of Confessional and Critical methods. (These methods are variously called Confessional, Pre-Critical, Traditional, or simply Ancient, on the one hand, and Critical, Modern, or Contemporary, on the other.) In the first part, you should provide a description of the fundamental characteristics of the Confessional and Critical modes of reading. In the second, you should illustrate these features by comparing and contrasting the commentary of representatives of each method, being cognizant of the variety of perspectives even within these approaches and pointing these out when relevant. You should conclude by reflecting on the results of your investigation: How different did these approaches look in practice? What types of questions and perspectives did you find helpful from each approach? Did either approach open up or close off questions or perspectives which you thought would have been important? And, if relevant to you, assess the value of these approaches for the life of faith and the community of believers.

Length: 10-12 pages double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12pt font

Plus bibliography

No title-page, please

Citations: Chicago Style, Notes/Bibliography Method

<https://www.lib.uwo.ca/files/styleguides/ChicagoNotesBibliography.pdf>

Annotated Bibliography: 8% Due: November 6th

In preparation for your research paper, you will be asked to submit an annotated bibliography. For this, you will need to locate sources under three topics: First, discussions of the difference between Confessional and Critical readings of the Bible. Second, representatives of the Confessional interpretation of your prechosen text of Scripture. Third,

representatives of the Critical interpretation of your prechosen text of Scripture. In preparation for your essay, you will be asked to submit an annotated bibliography of relevant sources for each of these three topics.

The goal of the annotated bibliography assignment is to demonstrate that you've made critical selections, summaries, and evaluations of the sources that you will use in developing your unique contribution to the scholarly conversation on your chosen topic through the research paper assignment.

Assignment specifics:

- Your annotated bibliography should conform to Chicago style (see the link above),
- It should consist of 6 sources that inform the thesis you will defend in your research paper,
- Each annotation should be approximately 250 words in length on a scholarly source of your choosing,
- Each annotation should discuss the usefulness of the source for your purposes along with a critical evaluation of the source,
- Your bibliography should contain a variety of types of scholarly sources, such as peer reviewed journal articles, monographs, essays in edited volumes, and biblical commentaries
- And the bibliography should be written in accordance with the Guide to Writing a Critical Bibliography guide and the rubric for the assignment.

Please remember to include in your assignment an introduction to the topic you are pursuing in the research paper, the research question you are working toward answering in the paper, and if available, the working thesis you will be defending. The introduction should be no more than 250 words in length.

The annotated bibliographies will be marked by guest instructor, Colleen Burgess.

Final Exam: 20% Due: December 10<sup>th</sup> @ 12 o'clock noon

The Final Exam will be take-home and submitted electronically.

### **Books for Purchase**

Harold Attridge, et al. eds. *The Harper Collins Study Bible*. NRSV translation. Revised ed. (San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 2006).

John Barton, *The Bible – The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2010). ISBN 978-0-415-41136-3 (paperback)

Richard N. Soulen, *Sacred Scripture: A Short History of Interpretation* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009). ISBN 978-0-664-23246-7 (paperback)



Carol Meyers, "Eve", n.p. [cited 24 Aug 2018]. Online:  
<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/main-articles/eve>

Guest: Colleen Burgess

Oct 23

**From Modern to Ancient Readers**

Biblical Interpretation Today, Barton 156-177

How Does Scripture Interpret Itself? Soulen 61-76

Mark 10:1-15/Matt 19:1-15

Rom 5:12-21; 2 Cor 11:1-3

Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:1-12; 15:35-50

1 Tim 2:8-15

Rev 12:1-2

Guest: Colleen Burgess

Oct 30

**Ancient Readers**

What Did the Early Church Leaders Say? Soulen 77-95

Irenaeus\*\* Origen\*\* Augustine\*\*

Guest: Colleen Burgess

Nov 6

**Ancient Readers**

How Many Senses Does Scripture Have? Soulen 97-112

Diodore\*\* Theodoret\*\* Bede\*\* Aquinas\*

*Annotated Bibliography Due*

Nov 13

**Reformation and Scientific Revolution**

What is the Center of Scripture? Soulen 113-129

Luther\*\* Calvin\* Galileo (read lines 210-587)\*

Nov 20

**Historical Criticism**

What Is the Literal Sense of Scripture? Soulen 131-154

What Is Modern Biblical Interpretation? Soulen 155-169

Spinoza\*\* Troeltsch (read pages 1-6)\* Bennett\*\*

Nov 27

**Biblical Interpretation Today**

What Is Contemporary Biblical Interpretation? Soulen 171-190

Bultmann (skim pt. 2)\*\* Barth\*\* Women's Bible Commentary\*\*

Dec 4      **Wrap Up**  
Epilogue, Soulen 191-195

Anderson\*

*Research Paper Due*

## Additional Statements

1. **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices during Tests and Exams:** It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.
  
2. **Statement on Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html>.
  
3. **Plagiarism-detecting Software/Computer Marking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).
  
4. **Support Services:**
  - UWO Registrar's Office: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
  
  - Huron's Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean:  
[http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\\_of\\_theology/info\\_for\\_current\\_students](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_of_theology/info_for_current_students)
  
  - Faculty of Theology office: [srice@uwo.ca](mailto:srice@uwo.ca), 519-438-7224, ext. 289
  
  - Bachelor's Academic Advising at Huron:  
<http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/AcademicAdvisorsandServices>
  
  - Huron's Writing Skills Centre: [http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student\\_life/writing\\_services](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services)
  
  - UWO's Mental Health website: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to this website for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
  
  - UWO Student Support and Development Services:  
[http://communications.uwo.ca/current\\_students/student\\_services.htm](http://communications.uwo.ca/current_students/student_services.htm)
  
  - Services provided by Western University Student Council: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>
  
5. **Accommodation for absences:**

*If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to your Faculty's Dean's office (or academic counselor), and not to the instructor. For the Faculty of Theology, all such documentation must be submitted to room A227. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.*

**a) Non-medical absences:**

Non-medical absences which result in missing a quiz or a chance to turn in a summary will not be accommodated. These absences will also result in a deduction from your participation mark.

**b) Medical absences:** See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

—Undergraduate Students, at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>)

**For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course,** a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean's office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean's office in consultation with the instructor(s.) Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) and Request for Relief are available at the Student Centre website (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>), Huron University College Academic Counselling website ([www.huronuc.on.ca](http://www.huronuc.on.ca)) or from the Dean's Office or Academic Services Centre at Huron.

**For work representing less than 10% of the overall grade for the course:** Students will be accommodated for one missed quiz due to a non-documented medical absence.