

## Master Syllabus

### 1. Course Information

**College:** College of Liberal Arts  
**Department:** Religion  
**Course Title:** Great Books  
**Course Designation and Number:** REL 204  
**GE Area(s):** IV: Human Expression  
VI: College Component

**Writing Intensive:**  Yes  No

**For WI Courses:**  All sections  Selected Sections are WI.

**Method(s) of Instruction:**  Lecture  
 Discussion  
 Web-enhanced  
 Web-only  
 Other: Small group activities

**Includes Lab:**  Yes  No

**Prerequisites:** None

### 2. Objectives

#### **GE General Program Objectives:**

...to sharpen critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills.

#### **GE Area Four Objectives:**

- a. Recognize and critically discuss significant religious works.
- b. Understand the complex blend of personal vision, social-cultural background, ethical values and aesthetic judgement in such works.
- c. Discuss the diverse means of communication in such works.

#### **GE Area Six Objectives:**

- a. Communicate with individuals who are in the student's major, in allied fields, and non-specialists.
- b. Understand important relationships and interdependencies between the student's major and other academic disciplines, world events and life endeavors.
- c. Meet objective (b) of GE Area One: develop logical and fair arguments, and observe appropriate writing conventions.

#### **Course Objectives and GE Learning Outcomes:**

Great Books: Religion The goal of this course is to attain a basic grasp of the overall structure and content of the Bible and to appreciate something of its contributions to Western culture. This will be a challenging project for one term, for the Bible is not one book; it is many. Written over a period of a thousand years, it portrays a broad sweep of life --from the Israelite tribal village to the Hellenistic metropolitan center. It has also exerted more influence on Western culture than any other set of writings: Art, Civil Rights, Economics, Literature, Music, Politics, Religion, Revolution. It has inspired those who fought for equal rights in America and those who slaughtered innocent Jews on the Crusades; it influences those who work for aid to the poor and those who seek to abolish welfare; it is quoted both by those who advocate women's rights and by those who advocate women's subordination. This course will examine the basic writings that comprise the Bible, seeking first their original meaning and context, and then trace some of the major influences the Bible has had on our culture.

**Area four learning outcome(s) addressed:**

Recognize and critically discuss significant religious works

Understand the complex blend of personal vision, social-cultural background, ethical values and aesthetic judgement in such works

Discuss the diverse means of communication in such works

**Area six learning outcome(s) addressed:**

Communicate with individuals who are in the student's major, in allied fields, and non-specialists

Understand important relationships and interdependencies between the student's major and other academic disciplines, world events or life endeavors

**For WI Courses: WAC Objectives**

- Improves writing proficiency through writing assignments
  - Uses writing as a tool for learning what one knows and does not know
- Typically, instructors in REL 204 use the following kinds of assignments: essay questions on quizzes and examinations and/or formal critical papers. Some also use one or more of the following kinds of assignments: reading journals; in-class reading responses; electronic class discussion groups (through chat rooms or email); In all sections of REL 204, all or nearly all the course grade is based on written assignments. Students who cannot complete the writing-intensive portion of the course will not receive a C or better in the course grade.

### **3. Suggested Course Materials**

Text(s): *The Access Bible: News Revised Standard Version with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)

### **4. Suggested Methods of Evaluation**

Daily worksheets, one paper in draft and revised form and final objective and essay exam.

### **5. Grading Policy**

All GE courses are graded A-F.  
WI component is graded Pass/Unsatisfactory.

### **6. Suggested Weekly Course Outline Including Typical Assignments**

#### **Wk 1: Where on Earth Did the Bible Come From?**

A brief overview of the historical origins of our Bibles from earliest oral stories to the various Bibles of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants today.

#### **The Kinds of Writings in the Bible: An Overview.**

Genesis 11:1-9; Exodus 20:1-17; II Samuel 11; Proverbs 6:6-11; Amos 5:21-24; Daniel 6:1-24; Luke 20:19-26; Philemon; Revelation 12:1-7. Worksheet due.

#### **When Was the Bible Written: An Historical Overview**

Exodus 15:21; 15:1-19; 14:1-30. I Samuel 9; Jeremiah 36-37. II Kings 22. I Thessalonians 1 & Romans 16. Worksheet due.

#### **Wk 2: Understanding the Biblical Worlds: Changing Times**

Genesis 38; Compare II Samuel 24:1-14 & I Chronicles 21:1-13; Luke 3:1-20; review readings from last class. Worksheet due.

#### **The World of The Prophets: Oracle & Vision**

#### **The Development of Prophecy in Israel.**

I Samuel 9-10; II Samuel 12; I Kings 1, 17-19; Isaiah 6-7. These stories take us back to the time of the early monarchy; locate their era on your timeline. Worksheet due.

#### **Wk 3: The Prophet as Covenant Judge: The Call for Social Justice.**

Amos 1-9 with II Kings 14; Jeremiah 36-37; 27-28. Worksheet due.

#### **The Later Prophets: New Times and New Issues.**

Habakkuk 1-3; Isaiah 40-42; Malachi 1-3. Worksheet due. **Book & Thesis Due**

#### **Prophecy Transformed: Apocalyptic Expectation**

I Maccabees 1-6; II Maccabees 7; Daniel 12. Worksheet due.

#### **Wk 4: Unweaving the Tapestry: Strands of Tradition**

Genesis 1-11, concentrating on the Creation and Flood Stories; read Gen. 12. Worksheet due.

**The World of the Politicians: History & Power**

**Stories of the Ancestors: God, Land, and History**

Genesis 12, 15-22, 26-34, 37-45, 50. Worksheet due.

**The Story of Israel's Redemption: Exodus as Foundation Event**

Review Genesis 12 & 15; read Exodus 1-7, 12-15, 32; Joshua 1-8, 11; Judges 1:1-2:5. Worksheet due.

**Wk 5: History from the Viewpoint of National Disaster: The Deuteronomic History**

II Kings 21-25; Deuteronomy 6-8, 12, 15:9-18:22; 34; Judges 2:6-23; 4-5.

Worksheet due.

**History from the Viewpoint of National Reconstruction: The Chronicler's Review of Kings**

Read the Introduction to I Chronicles and then skim I Chronicles 1-9 and then read 10-11, 20:1-23:1; II Chronicles 33-36. Worksheet due.

**The Chronicler's Own Times: Ezra and Nehemiah**

Nehemiah 1-5, 13; Ezra 7, 9-10; Nehemiah 8 with the Introductions. Worksheet due.

**Wk 6: The World of the Priests: Law and Covenant**

**Israel's Law as Covenant Law.**

Genesis 17 and Exodus 19-24. Worksheet due.

**Law as Holiness: Separation and Purity**

Deuteronomy 13, 14, 17, 20-25, 28; Leviticus 1-3, 11-12, 15, 18-20. Worksheet due.

**The World of the Teachers: Wisdom in Human Form**

**Learning How To Live: Proverbs as Education**

Jeremiah 18:18; Proverbs 1, 5-6, 8, 10, 22, 25, 30-31; Song of Solomon 1-4; Worksheet due.

**First Draft Due**

**Wk 7: When Wisdom Doesn't Work: The Skeptical Tradition**

Job 1-6, 38, 42; Ecclesiastes 1, 3, 8, 12. Worksheet due.

**Singing the Truth: Temple Hymns.**

Psalms 96, 15, 19, 72, 1, 2, 18, 137, 30, 119. Worksheet due.

**The World of the People: Stories that Entertain and Educate**

**Stories of Dragons and Fair Women: The Apocrypha**

Read as much of the story of Tobit as you have time for; you can follow the plot

**Peer Assessment Due**

by reading chapters 2-3; 4:1-4; 5:4-8; 6:1-12; 8:1-3; 10:7b-10; 11:1-14; & 12:1-15. Also read the Greek additions to the Book of Daniel known as Bel & the Dragon (184 AP). Also read Wisdom of Solomon 1-3; Sirach's prologue & 4-5, 24-26, 41, 42:9-14; (be sure and read the introductions to each; and note that these are not found in all Bibles). Worksheet due.

**Wk 8: Women Recounted: Judith and Susanna**

Judith 8-16; Susanna. Worksheet due.

**Stories as History and Parable**

Ruth, Esther, and Jonah Worksheet F4 due. The World of Jesus: A Second Testament

**New Stories: The Gospels**

Mark 1-16 Worksheet due.

**Wk 9: The Gospels as Unique Stories**

Study the accounts of Jesus' Baptism and Death in the Resources Packet. Worksheet due.

**Who is Jesus? Deductions of the Gospel Openings**

Mark 1, Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2; John 1. Worksheet due.

**The Earliest Christian Writings: The Letters of Paul**

Philemon; I Thessalonians 1-5. Worksheet due.

**Revised Draft Due**

**Wk 10: Other Voices: A Christianity more Jewish than Paul's Version**

James; Hebrews 1-3, 9; I Peter Worksheet due.

**Imagining an End: Revelation as Genesis Revisited**

Revelation 1, 5-6, 12-14, 21-22. Worksheet due.

**Review and Reflect**

Do final Worksheet.

**7. Other**

Syllabus distributed to students should employ the format approved by UCAP and must include:

- Instructor name, office hours, and contact information
- Office of Disability Services information
- Information on how grades will be determined
- Attendance policy