

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

- A. Department information
Division: Humanities and Social Science
Department: Philosophy/Religious Studies
Course ID: RELIG 175
Course Title: Literature and Religion of the Bible
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 Hours
Prerequisite: ENGL 101
- B. Catalog and Schedule Description:
The English Bible as literature and as religion including an examination of the types of literature found in the Bible, the historical and religious context in which the literature was developed and an extensive reading of the two testaments. This course is also offered as ENGL 175.

II. NUMBERS OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to.

- A. Identify various types of literature found in the Bible, including short stories, history, poetry, proverbs, letters, parables, and prophetic writings.
- B. Explain, in coherent and unified prose, how literary devices such as figures of speech, symbolism, and parallelism enable the reader to fully grasp biblical concepts.
- C. Utilize tools of criticism, such as plot structure and character analysis, to write a thorough explication of the relative merits of a literary work.
- D. Describe the historical development of the Bible and its cultural importance in the history of Western Civilization.
- E. Articulate an understanding of the moral, philosophical and religious heritage of Western Civilization emerging from biblical concepts of human nature, social responsibility, and spirituality.

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

- A. The Literary Nature of the Bible
- B. The Stories of the Bible
 1. Historical Documentation versus Literary Narrative
 2. The Functions of Settings
 3. Structural Unity
 4. The Role of Character in Narrative
 5. Plots and the Conflicts that drive them
 6. Narrative Unity
 7. The Test Motif in Bible Stories
 8. The Role of Foils in Characterization
 9. Dramatic Irony
 10. Point of View in Biblical Narrative
 11. Literary Heroes
 12. Epic Literature
 13. Biblical Tragedy
- C. The Poetry of the Bible
 1. Pattern and Design
 2. Parallelism
 3. Figurative language-simile, metaphor, etc.
 4. Poetic License
 5. Poetic Symbolism
 6. Biblical Allusion

7. Lyric Poetry
 8. Types of Psalms
 9. Encomium
 - D. The Proverb as a Literary Form
 1. Description and Prescription
 2. Simplicity and Profundity
 3. The Quest for Meaning
 - E. The Gospel as Literary Form
 1. Knowledge of Genre Aids Understanding
 2. Parables as Secular Stories
 3. The Rule of End Stress
 4. Archetypes
 5. Allegory
 6. Analogy and Comparison
 - F. Biblical Satire
 - G. The Literary Unity of the Bible
 1. Narrative Unity
 2. The Prevalence of Human Choice
 3. God as Protagonist
 4. The Divine-Human Relationship
 5. Human Evil and Suffering
 6. Unity of Faith
 7. Literary Archetypes
 8. Stylistic Traits
 - a) Concreteness and Abstraction
 - b) Realism
 - c) Simplicity
 - d) Brevity
 - e) Repetition
 - f) Elemental Quality
 - g) Affective Power
- V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**
- A. Lecture: The historical development of the Bible and its philosophical and religious impact on Western Civilization.
 - B. Discussion of moral dilemmas such as David's with Nathan, and literary devices such as the allegorical nature of the Songs of Solomon.
 - C. Audio Visual excerpts from movies with biblical themes and Bible reading interpretations which enhance understanding of context and diction.
 - D. Oral Readings of poetry, speeches and arguments (e.g. Job, Psalms, and Paul's speech on Mars Hill), with a view toward appreciation of the rhetorical and poetic elements employed.
 - E. Archeological presentations and artifacts which enhance understanding of biblical settings and allusions.
- VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**
- A. Write a comparison and contrast between the Book of Esther and a current soap opera of your choice. Analyze both in terms of plot, character, theme, setting, symbolism and style.
 - B. Read the story of Samson and compare his life with Aristotle's profile of a tragic hero: status, hamartia, act of hubris, peripeteia, anagnorisis and ultimate end. Or Investigate the Greek concepts of supernatural intervention as shown in the life of Hercules, and compare with that of the Hebrews' as reflected in the story of Samson.
 - C. Discuss, in a five-page paper, the use of dramatic dialogue in the Book of Job.

VII. EVALUATION(S):

- A. Methods of evaluation
 - 1. Quizzes covering factual content, such as literary archetypes, point of view, and types of literature found in the Bible.
 - 2. Typical question: Define allegory and cite an example from your reading assignment.
 - 3. Class participation in the collective exploration of biblical concepts of the nature of man and man's concepts of God.
 - 4. Typical question: What disparities do you see between the portrayal of God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament?
 - 5. Papers and projects requiring analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of literary works, including proverbs, stories, encomium, lyrics, etc.
 - 6. Typical question: Discuss Psalm 23 as therapy for the modern soul. What literary devices are used to affect its appeal?
 - 7. Mid-term and final examinations written in essay format and requiring an application of the literary concepts learned to the various genres represented in the Bible. Typical question: Discuss the symbolic role of clothing in the story of Joseph.
- B. Frequency of evaluation
 - 1. Major and minor weekly quizzes
 - 2. Paper assignments: Students will be required to write three to six papers (approximately 4,000 words) outside of class
 - 3. One mid-term examination
 - 4. One final examination

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

How to Read the Bible as Literature, Leland Ryken, Zondervan, a division of Harper Collins, 1984.
The Literary Art of the Bible: a Commentary, Mario L. D'Avanzo. American Press, 1988.
Holy Bible: New International Version

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None