I. Locator Information
Professor: Joyce Russell, Ph.D.
Course Title: ENGL 323: Literature of the Bible
Office Location: Butler 132
Office Hours: MW 10-11
MWF 12-2
Semester Credit Hours:
Office Phone: 672-1589
Total Contact Hours for Class: 45
Email address: jrussell@uncfsu.edu

FSU Policy on Electronic Mail: Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account (username@uncfsu.edu) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf.

II. Course Description
Literature of the Bible is a literary overview of the Bible with emphases on the stylistics and formal influences of the Bible in world literature.

What This Course Is Not
This course explores the Bible as literature. As noted in the catalogue description above, the course is concerned with the manner in which the Bible has influenced other literatures( and peoples ) of the world. It will therefore be necessary, from
time to time, to draw upon the views of thinkers and writers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, John Donne, William Blake, Martin Luther King Jr., and others whose literary creations were influenced by the Bible. The course will touch upon all three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

**Literature of the Bible** is not a course in theology, divinity, or religious dogma.

III. Disabled Student Services: In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA)of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203.

IV. Textbook:


**Other Readings and Resources:**

“The Hermeneutics of the ‘Happy’ Ending in Job 42: 7-17,” Claude Cox
*The Epic of Gilgamesh* (online)
The Code of Hammurabi (online)
*Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche (online)
*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche (online)
*The Wisdom of the Prophet: The Sayings of Muhammad*, Thomas Cleary
*Fear and Trembling*, Soren Kierkegaard (excerpts)
*Jesus Christ Superstar*, Andrew Lloyd Weber/Tim Rice, Dir. Norman Jewison
*Jeremiah the Prophet*, Dir. Harry Winer
*The Book of Esther 2013*, Dir. David A.R. White
*King David*, Dir. Bruce Beresford

V. **FSU Student Learning Outcomes** –

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1) Understand characteristics of the various genres used in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Covenant such as poems, songs, letters, apocalyptic literature, biographies, and allegories.
2) Identify and discuss selected Apocryphal and Deuterocanonical texts;
3) Discuss in detail the books of the Hebrew Bible which are called Wisdom Literature;
4) Write a researched analytical paper on a topic related to the Hebrew Bible, the New Covenant, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical texts; the other Abrahamic religion (Islam); or write a paper on a philosopher’s perceptions of religion—Kierkegaard or Nietzsche. (A writer from the British, American, or African American literary canon might also be considered.);

5) See how the Bible has influenced verbal, pictorial, and performing artists.

VI. COURSE OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the semester, students will have met specific objectives. Student will be able to do the following:
A. List various nonbiblical literary works which influenced the Bible;
B. Compose definitions for specific literary forms used in the Bible;
C. Construct a timeline which illustrates the literary history of the Bible;
D. Apply a Biblical analysis to a work (or works) of a writer from the British, American, or African American literary canon.

VII. COMPETENCIES:
Students will demonstrate knowledge of the following, as recommended by the Department of Public Instruction and stated in “Guidelines and Competencies for Undergraduates in the English/Communication Skills Preparation Program”:
2.2 Basic information concerning the English language: its structure, standards, and variations;
2.6 Various modes of discourse (narration, exposition, description, and persuasion) and their appropriate use in all areas of experience: personal, social, educational, business, and vocational;
2.7 Elements of literature and how these elements affect interpretation;
2.8 The genres common to oral, written, and visual expression.
This course will also develop knowledge and competencies consistent with the standards recommended by the National Council of Teachers of English. Specifically, students will be able to do the following:
1.1 Complete a specific language arts course of study;
2.6 Recognize the impact that culture, societal events and issues have on
teachers, students, the English language arts curriculum, and education in general;
3.1.2 Demonstrate how reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking are interrelated;
3.1.3 Recognize the impact of cultural, economic, political, and social environments upon language;
3.1.4 Show a respect for and an understanding of diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles;
3.1.5 Show an understanding of the evolution of English language and the historical influences on its various forms;
3.1.8 Show various purposes for which language is used;
3.2.2 Use writing, speaking and observing as major forms of inquiry, reflection, and expression;
3.2.5 Apply knowledge of language structure and conventions of creating and critiquing print and non-print texts;
3.3.1 Demonstrate how to respond to and interpret what is read in different ways;
3.3.2 Demonstrate how to discover and create meaning from texts;
3.3.3 Use a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts;
3.4.3 Demonstrate how written discourse can influence thought and action;
3.5.3 Show knowledge of a broad historical and contemporary spectrum of United States, British, and world literature, including:
3.5.1.1 works from a range of cultures;
3.5.1.2 works from a range of genres.

VIII. Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria -
A. Grading Scale – The class grading scale must be consistent with the university catalog.
Final Grades – This policy becomes effective on August 16, 2007
Final grades are calculated on a four-point system and affect a student’s grade point average as indicated below.
Faculty members will delineate in each class syllabus the methods and evaluative criteria for determining final grades in the class.

**Grade Credit Hours Quality Points Meaning:**

A-- Hours attempted and earned
4 per credit hour: **Exceptionally high**

B-- Hours attempted and earned
3 per credit hour: **Good**

C-- Hours attempted and earned
2 per credit hour: **Satisfactory**

D-- Hours attempted and earned
1 per credit hour: **Marginally passing**

F-- Hours attempted – Not earned
0 per credit hour: **Failing**

B. Attendance Requirements: This is an online course. Attendance (participation) will be monitored by the number of times you access Blackboard. Please participate regularly. I expect you to check in at least weekly through BB.

No emailed papers will be accepted unless you are given permission to email an assignment. You must submit your work through BB. This course presupposes that you know how to use the BB learning platform. Papers must be submitted so that they may be graded through the system. If not, they will not be graded and you will receive a 0 (zero) on that assignment.
Graded Assignments:

Discussion 1 12.5 points
Discussion 2 12.5
Quiz 1 12.5
Midterm Essay 12.5
Discussion 3 12.5
Quiz 2 12.5
Report 12.5
Final Essay 12.5

You are required to complete and submit all assignments on or before the day and
time they are due. Note also that if, for whatever reason, you fail to submit the
midterm and/or final essay, you will not pass this course.

Also, you must check your email and your Blackboard
frequently for announcements, instructions, and course updates.

IX. Course Calendar and Assignments
Module I:

Week 1  Introduction: General information—What the Bible Is; Its Genesis; the Bible
as collection of stories and myths; creation myths

Gabel’s *The Bible As Literature*: Chapter 1 of B as L (authorship, redactors)

Week 2  *The Bible As Literature* Chapter 2 of B as L Literary terms: The canon,
English translations of the Hebrew Bible, critical methodology;

Week 3  Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Bible, Chapter 3 of B as L;
Gilgamesh

Week 4  The Formation of the Canon, Chapter 6 B as L

Film: *Jeremiah the Prophet*

Module II:
Week 5  Comparing the deluge myth in *Gilgamesh* to the deluge myth in the Hebrew Bible  
**Chapter 7** (The Pentateuch); Code of Hammurabi; Kierkegaard


Week 7  The Book of Ecclesiastes; pp. 142-144 in B as L  
*Thus Spake Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil* (Nietszhe) and *The Wisdom of the Prophet: The Sayings of Muhammad* (Cleary)  
Note the use of aphorisms.

Week 8  The wisdom literature of the apocryphal/deutercanonical books: Ben Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon

Films: *King David*  
*The Book of Esther 2013*

---

**Module III:**

Week 9  Apocalyptic Literature, B as L—Chapter 10

Week 10  The Bible in John Donne, William Blake, John Milton, Jonathan Edwards, MLK and others

NOTE: You will need to find copies of the Gnostic Gospels online or elsewhere.  
Film: *Jesus Christ Superstar*
Module IV:

Week 13  Biblical Women in B as L – Chapter 19

Week 14  Reports: These reports will be assigned at midterm but will be presented by the students during or just before the week of the final examination.

Week 15  Wrap –up (which includes the final examination)

Please note that I will make adjustments to this syllabus as needed.

The specific requirements for each assignment will be given well in advance of the due date. For starters, see below. Note also that each module requires that you view a film which was inspired by a character or a story from the Bible.

Discussion 1
(While I refer to these types of assignments as discussions, they are really short essays and must be submitted through a link which will be created on the “Content” page.)

Directions: Write a short discussion of Module 1. You must include the following terms in your 600 –word discussion. This is due on or before Saturday, September 14, 2015, 11:00 p.m. Mainly, I want you to discuss the authorship of the Bible and comment on the veracity of its content.

Redactor
Creation myth
Biblical authorship
Anthology
Wife-sister tales
Hebraic Bible
Cuneiform
Gilgamesh epic
Noah
Discussion 2
Write and submit a review of *Jeremiah the Prophet* (Dir. Harry Winer). See the rubric which has been posted. You will use this rubric to write your review of each of the films. Your review should not exceed 600 words and is due before 11:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2015.