**REL 1310**

**The Christian Scriptures**

**Baylor University**

**Fall 2019**

**Instructor:**

Joe Coker, Ph.D.

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Office: Tidwell 302

Office hours: See me after class or email me to set up a time to meet.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

“An introduction to the Old and New Testaments (their contents, historical backgrounds, and major themes), and to appropriate strategies for interpretation of the Bible.”

In this course, students will:

* Examine the historical context and religious teachings of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures
* Cultivate critical competencies necessary for the academic study of traditional texts
* Become informed readers of the Bible and develop respect for its complexity and historical and religious significance
* Develop an understanding of the historical context in which the Bible took shape
* Appreciate the development of religious thought within the biblical period
* Examine how biblical teachings have been and continue to be interpreted and applied
* Use a variety of modern critical methods for studying the Bible.

**Texts:**

Arterbury, Andrew, W. H. Bellinger, and Derek Dodson, *Engaging the Christian Scriptures: An Introduction to the Bible* (Baker Academic, 2014).

Enns, Peter, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* 2nd edition (Baker Academic, 2015).

*The Baylor Annotated Study Bible.*

**Grading components:**

Exam 1 22% of final class grade

Exam 2 22%

Exam 3 (Final exam) 22%

Quizzes 22%

Enns writing assignment 4%

NSE activities 4%

Bible reading log 4%

**Grading scale:**

A = 90-100%  C+ = 77-79%

B+ = 87-89%  C = 70-76%

B = 80-86%    D = 60-69%

F= 59% and below

**Attendance and participation:**

Students are expected to attend every class session. Baylor University’s College of Arts & Sciences policy states that students must attend 75% of classes in order to receive credit for a course. So if you miss **11** or more classes this semester for any reason (excused or unexcused), you will not pass this course regardless of your test and quiz scores. Please note that an absence for **ANY** reason counts towards the 25% you are allowed to miss this semester, even those due to illness or school-sponsored trips. (N.B. Having a doctor’s excuse or being on a school trip does not change the fact that it still counts as an absence.)

While in class, students are expected to be engaged in the class. That means no sleeping, talking with neighbors, text messaging or calling others on cell phones, or distracting other students.

Students should be advised that there will be material covered in lectures that is not in the textbook, and that this material will show up on the examinations. If you are tardy to class, please enter as quietly and unobtrusively as possible. **TURN OFF** all cell phones during class, or **don’t bring them at all**.

**Examinations**:

This course will include three examinations, each composed of multiple choice and matching questions that will cover all in-class material (but not reading assignments).

**Examination make-up policy:**

Students who miss the one of the first two exams will have **ONE** **opportunity to make it up**: on the day of the course final exam. After completing the final exam, the student will be allowed to take the missed exam. Before missing an examination, students should consider that it will mean they will have to take two examinations on the final day, and that the content of the missed exam is subject to change from that taken by the rest of the class.

**Reading Quizzes:**

There will be 11 online quizzes during the course of the semester, usually every Friday (unless it is a week when we have a test). The class schedule below explains exactly what readings each quiz will cover, as will the Modules that have been set up in Canvas for each week. The quiz will be available on Canvas for two days prior to Friday’s class, and must be completed during that window of time. These quizzes will be open book and open notes, but will also be timed, so you need to have read the material prior to taking the quiz.

There will also be an in-class cumulative quiz at the end of the semester (more details will be given as the quiz approaches), for a total of 12 quizzes over the course of the semester. The student’s ten highest quiz grades will be counted towards his or her final quiz grade, and the lowest two will be dropped.

**Writing assignment**:

Students will write a brief paper (between 400 and 600 words) reflecting on chapters one and two of Peter Enns’ book, *Inspiration and Incarnation.* The bulk of the paper will summarize the problem that is addressed in chapter two (i. e. the similarities between Old Testament stories and other Ancient Near Eastern stories) and describe Enns’ approach to this conundrum. The final portion of the paper should provide your assessment of Enns’ approach. How is his approach different from other solutions (i. e. the more conservative approach and the more liberal one)? Is his approach more or less satisfactory than these other options? Why or why not?

A hard copy of the paper will be turned in during class on the day we discuss Enns’ book, September 16th. Late papers will lose 10 points per day that they are late (including weekends).

**Bible reading log**:

Over the course of the semester there will be 14 reading assignments from the Bible (see course schedule below). As students complete each of these reading assignments, they will fill out a Bible reading log sheet (found on Canvas) reflecting on the content of the assigned passages. Twice during the semester (on October 25th and December 6th) you will turn in hard copies of all your completed reading logs so far.

**Extra credit opportunity**:

Those students wishing to earn extra credit in the course can write an additional paper based on the Enns book. This paper will be the same style and length as the Writing Assignment described above, but will be based on **chapter five** of Enns’ book. Briefly summarize his point in this concluding chapter and give your reflection on his argument. Are there things we have discussed in this class or that you have learned this semester that shape your response to Enns?

The paper is due by class time on the last day of class, December 9th. A good paper will earn the student two extra points to be added onto their overall average fort the semester (i. e. if your overall average is an 88 it would bump you to a 90).

**New Student Experience:**

Baylor cares about your transition into college, so all incoming students are required to take a New Student Experience (NSE) course. NSE courses provide the opportunity for first-semester students to form meaningful connections with each other and with faculty in an academic community. NSE courses also introduce students to the key values of a liberal education including critical thinking, the integration of faith and learning, and social responsibility through the lens of religion. NSE courses are designed to support your success by engaging you academically, socially, and spiritually in the earliest stages of student development.

By the end of the first year, through your participation in the overall New Student Experience programming at Baylor including Orientation, Line Camp, Move-In, Welcome Week, Chapel, and this NSE course, we hope you will:

1. Understand Baylor’s mission and learning outcomes
2. Connect to Baylor
3. Engage in spiritual formation
4. Develop personal and professional goals
5. Succeed academically
6. Develop autonomy through caring community

[Learn more at http://www.baylor.edu/nse](http://www.baylor.edu/nse)

We will address some of the goals of the NSE experience in a number of ways, both in and out of the classroom. Here are the key elements:

* Each student will complete, over the course of the semester, a Baylor “scavenger hunt” using a checklist provided by the professor.
* Each student will, during the course of the first month of the semester, schedule an individual office meeting with the professor.
* Each student will be assigned to a small group that will meet with the professor during class on certain days of the semester.

**Computers in class:**

Laptop computers will not be allowed in class. They have proven to be too much of a distraction in class, both to the person using the computer and to the students around the user. Students will be expected to take notes in class the old fashioned way: with paper and pen. You will be provided with a “study guide” for each upcoming exam, which you will find provides a thorough outline of each topic that we cover in class. This, along with notes taken in class, should be all the student needs to keep track of the information needed for the exams. Consider it an exercise in experiencing what it was like to live in the olden days ☺.

**Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism or any form of cheating involves a breach of student-teacher trust. This means that any work submitted under your name is expected to be your own, neither composed by anyone else as a whole or in part, nor handed over to another person for complete or partial revision. Be sure to document all ideas that are not your own. Instances of plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Council and may result in failure of the course. Not understanding plagiarism is not an excuse. As a Baylor student, I expect you to be intimately familiar with the Honor Code at: <http://www.baylor.edu/honorcode/>

**Academic Success:**

I believe every student who has been admitted to Baylor can be successful and I want to partner with you to help you thrive academically. Be sure to take advantage of the many resources available for academic success, including coming to see me during my office hours. Students who regularly utilize the great resources in the Paul L. Foster Success Center ([http://www.baylor.edu/successcenter/)](http://www.baylor.edu/successcenter/)%20)  are among my most successful students. If your academic performance in this class is substandard, I will submit an Academic Progress Report to the Success Center so that the team of coordinated care professionals can ensure that you get the help you need.

**First Generation College Students:**

Baylor University defines a first-generation college student as a student whose parents did not complete a four-year college degree. The First in Line program at Baylor is a support office on campus for first-generation college students to utilize if they have any questions or concerns. Please contact First in Line at firstinline@baylor.edu, call 254-710-6854, or visit www.baylor.edu/firstinline to learn more about the services available. *[If you are a first gen college student, you may wish to add:]* *I was also the first in my family to graduate with a four-year bachelor’s degree and can answer questions about experiences as a first-generation college student.*

**Military Student Advisory:**

Veterans and active duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, any special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the VETS Program Office with any questions at (254) 710-7264.

**Students Needing Accommodations:**

Any student who needs academic accommodations related to a documented disability should inform me immediately at the beginning of the semester. You are required to obtain appropriate documentation and information regarding accommodations from the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation (OALA). Contact Information: (254) 710-3605 - Paul L. Foster Success Center, 1st floor on the East Wing of Sid Richardson.

**Title** **IX Office:**

Baylor University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities, and it does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex or gender. If you or someone you know would like help related to an experience involving sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, intimate partner violence, or retaliation for reporting one of these type of prohibited conduct, please contact the Title IX Office at (254)710-8454 or report online at [www.baylor.edu/titleix](http://www.baylor.edu/titleix).

The Title IX office understands the sensitive nature of these situations and can provide information about available on- and off-campus resources, such as counseling and psychological services, medical treatment, academic support, university housing, and other forms of assistance that may be available. Staff members at the office can also explain your rights and procedural options if you contact the Title IX Office. You will not be required to share your experience. **If you or someone you know feels unsafe or may be in imminent danger, please call the Baylor Police Department (254-710-2222) or Waco Police Department (9-1-1) immediately.** For more information on the Title IX Office, the *Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Interpersonal Violence policy*, reporting, and resources available, please visit the website provided above.

**Other Matters:**

* Students are responsible for all material presented in the syllabus, as well as for additional updates to the syllabus provided by the instructor.
* Students are expected to familiarize themselves with Baylor’s honor code policy, which will be strictly enforced in this class.
* You have many opportunities to improve your grade in this class during the course of the semester, including every time there is a quiz or an exam. At the very end of the semester, however, most of these opportunities will have passed by. Please do not wait until the final week of the semester then ask the professor what extra work can be done to improve your grade. Short of building a time machine in order to travel back in time and work harder on all previous quizzes and exams, there is at that point nothing left to do except study hard for the final exam.

**Course Schedule**

**Week of August 26-30**

**Monday: introductions**

**Wednesday & Friday: Introduction to biblical criticism**

**No quiz or reading this week**

**Week of August 2-6**

**Monday: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**

**Wednesday: Introduction to textual criticism and other forms of biblical criticism**

**Friday: half session then Group A stays for discussion**

**Complete quiz 1 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 1-20 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of September 9-13**

**Monday: intro to the Hebrew Bible**

**Wednesday: Creation stories in Genesis (Bible reading 1: Genesis 1-11)**

**Friday: half session on the flood then Group B stays for discussion**

**Complete quiz 2 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 22-35 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of September 16-20**

**Monday: Ancient Near Eastern stories of creation and flood**

**Enns writing assignment due in class today**

**Wednesday: Enns discussion and documentary hypothesis**

**Friday: half session on Genesis 12-50 then Group A stays for discussion**

**Complete quiz 3 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 35-62 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of September 23-27**

**Monday & Wednesday: The Ancestral History (Bible reading 2: Genesis 12, 27, 28, 37, Exodus 3, 20, Deuteronomy 6)**

**Friday: half session on the Pentateuch then Group B stays for discussion**

**Complete quiz 4 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 64-104 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of September 30-October 4**

**Monday: exam review**

**Wednesday: EXAM ONE**

**Friday: half session then Group A stays for discussion**

**No quiz or reading this week!**

**Week of October 7-11**

**Monday: History of Israel (Bible reading 3: Joshua 10, 24, 1 Samuel 8, 9, 16, 2 Kings 17, 22, 25)**

**Wednesday: The Latter Prophets (Bible reading 4: Isaiah 7, 45, 62)**

**Friday: half session on the minor prophets then Group B stays for discussion (Bible reading 5: Hosea 2, 3, 4, Joel 1)**

**Complete quiz 5 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 105-128 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of October 14-18**

**Monday: Kethuvim (Bible reading 6: Proverbs 10, Psalm 23, 100, Ecclesiastes 4, Song of Solomon 8)**

**Wednesday: Biblical inerrancy**

**Friday: Introduction to the New Testament**

**Complete quiz 6 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 129-142 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of October 21-25**

**Monday & Wednesday: The Synoptic problem**

**Friday, October 25th: NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)**

**Complete quiz 7 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 143-167 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of October 28-November 1**

**Monday: review for exam**

**Wednesday: EXAM #2**

**Friday: The Gospel of Mark (Bible reading 7: Mark 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16)**

**No quiz or reading this week!**

**Week of November 4-8**

**Monday: Mark continued**

**Wednesday: Matthew (Bible reading 8: Matthew 1, 2, 5, 7, 16, 23, 27, 28)**

**Friday: Luke (Bible reading 9: Luke 2, 6, 15, 23, 24)**

**Complete quiz 8 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 167-191 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of November 11-15**

**Monday: John (Bible reading 10: John 1, 2, 6, 11, 13, 19, 20, 21)**

**Wednesday: Gnostic gospels & the Historical Jesus**

**Friday: The Epistles of Paul (Bible reading 11: Acts 9, 15, Romans 5, Philippians 2)**

**Complete quiz 9 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 194-209 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of November 18-22**

**Monday & Wednesday: Paul continued (Bible reading 12: 1 Corinthians 1, Galatians 5, Philippians 3, 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Timothy 1)**

**Friday: The General Epistles (Bible reading 13: Hebrews 1, 9, 1 Peter 2, James 2)**

**Complete quiz 10 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 209-235 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of November 25-29**

**Monday: NO CLASS**

**Wednesday: NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING**

**Friday: NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING**

**No quiz or reading this week!**

**Week of December 2-6**

**Monday and Wednesday: Revelation and apocalyptic literature (Bible reading 14: Daniel 7, Revelation 1, 5, 6, 8, 13, 20, 22)**

**Friday: final cumulative quiz in class and exam review**

**Complete quiz 11 over *Engaging the Christian Scriptures* pages 238-259 by 9AM Friday**

**Week of December 9**

**Monday December 9 – Exam Three (THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM)**