

REL430 HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

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urpose

Ben Bag-Bag said: Turn it and turn it again, for all things are in it (Mishnah 'Abot 5:22).

The Bible, as Christian scripture, is generally held to be the final authority for Christian doctrine. It is consequently the subject of frequent disputes regarding its essential nature. This course is designed to develop students' understanding of the processes involved in the formation, transmission, and translation of the Bible.

mericans with Disabilities Act Notice

Students with disabilities who are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and require special accommodations, should contact Ms. Brenda Waldrif at 601-318-6188. Ms. Waldrif is located in the Student Services Office in Lawrence Hall.

isaster Contingency

In the event of school closure due to natural disaster, epidemic, or act of violence: Students will be given every opportunity to complete the course. Depending on the situation, assignments may be substituted for lecture/exams, or on-line resources may be utilized. In case of extended school closure, students should make every effort to contact the instructor by email or telephone as indicated at the top of this syllabus.

cademic Integrity

*I do not agree that students should be flogged. First, because flogging is disgraceful and is therefore suitable only for slaves and is certainly an insult, a fact which is indisputable if you substitute an older age group. Second because if a boy has a disposition so intractable that he cannot be corrected by scolding, he will become hardened even to your blows, just as the worst slaves are (Quintilian *The Elements of Oratory* 1.3.13-14).*

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: William Carey University seeks to create an environment that encourages continued growth of moral and ethical values, which include personal honesty and mutual trust. The University places the highest value on academic integrity and regards any act of academic dishonesty as a serious offense. Academic dishonesty is considered unethical and in violation of William Carey University's academic standards and Christian commitment. If such an incident occurs, students, faculty, and/or staff are obligated to initiate appropriate action. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, sanctions could include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and could lead to suspension or dismissal from the University. A full explanation of the procedures for responding to instances of academic dishonesty is contained in the University's *Policies and Procedures Manual* and in the student handbook, *The Lance*.

INSTRUCTOR'S POLICY FOR THIS COURSE: ALL incidents of academic dishonesty (whether involving in-class exercises or plagiarizing of research papers) will be considered as the most serious offense; ANY cases WILL result in immediate failure of the course and possible further actions according to University policy.

A ttendance Policy

Whoever has lain down to sleep during an Assembly of the Congregation: thirty days. And likewise, whoever has left, without reason, an Assembly of the Congregation as many as three times during one Assembly, shall do penance for ten days (Community Rule VII, 9-10).

It is far preferable to teach and learn in an atmosphere in which students are eager to learn and display mutual respect for instructors and other students alike. Unfortunately, recent trends in student behavior, specific actions by certain students, and results of those acts make this section necessary.

General Classroom Policies

- † The instructor is the final authority in matters of class decorum; if any student is deemed to be disruptive to the learning environment, the instructor—at his sole discretion—may dismiss that student and assign an absence for the period
- † Class begins at the specified time; any quizzes or quiz questions missed as a result of tardiness may not be made up
- † Getting up to leave temporarily during class is not acceptable, except in cases of severe distress; students must regulate their bodily functions like adults (go to the potty before class!)
- † Cell phones or pagers are not allowed in class, for voice or text communication; if a cell phone rings, the student in possession may be dismissed from the class and assessed an absence
- † Recording of class sessions is not allowed except by special permission

Attendance

- † The William Carey University catalog states, “students must attend 75% of the class meetings in order to receive credit for the course;” this policy will be enforced with the following additions
- † NO distinction is made between “excused” and “unexcused” absences for attendance reporting; if you are not in class—for *any reason*—you are considered absent, plain and simple; this means that: 1) absences for school activities count as regular absences and the student is responsible for keeping their total absences within the limits specified by the College catalog (above), and 2) doctor’s excuses are not needed and will have no bearing on attendance reporting
- † If a student adds the course late and misses classes, those absences *will be* recorded as absences
- † If a student is not present when attendance is determined (either by roll call or by work performed in class), the student will be considered absent (there will be no “tardy” category)
- † If a student leaves class early, they will be assessed an absence and will not receive credit for work completed in the class; for example, students will not be given credit for a quiz if they leave class during the period in which the quiz was administered

Examination Policy

- † Students must be present for all sectional exams (each designated “Exam” on the course schedule); absence from an exam will result in a grade of zero, unless *prior* arrangements have been made with and approved by the instructor
- † Makeup exams will be given only under extreme circumstances or in cases of absence for school sponsored programs, and only by prior approval from the instructor; it is the student’s responsibility to request such arrangements

T exts

The English Bible, a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power

(Thomas Babington Macaulay [1800-1859], “On John Dryden,” Edinburgh Review [Jan 1828]).

Bruce, F.F. *The Canon of Scripture*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988. ISBN: 0-8308-1258-X

Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. ISBN: 0-8010-2799-3 (paper); or 1999. ISBN: 0-8010-2799-3 (hardback).

R requirements and Evaluation

Ben He-He said: According to the suffering so is the reward (Mishnah 'Abot 5:23).

- † Class format will approach that of a seminar; participation WILL BE A COMPONENT IN GRADING! Readings from the texts and other material will be subject to daily reading quizzes
- † Two Exams will be administered (Mid-term and *comprehensive* Final); one project and one major review are also required
- † Grading System (this may be altered by the professor with written notification to the class); **A 10-point scale will be used for grading**

Exams (Midterm and Final; 20% each)	= 20%
Reading Quizzes and class participation	= 20%
Outside reading reviews	= 20%
Project or group presentation	= 20%
Bible translation review	= 20%

O Projects/Group Debate

*Both read the Bible day and night,
But thou read'st black where I read white
(William Blake [1757-1827], *The Everlasting Gospel*).*

The student may choose between the following options for the fulfillment of the Project or Group Presentation portion of their grade.

Option A: The student may produce an extensive presentation paper, explanatory poster, or create an Internet website, explaining some aspect of the history of the Bible. This should be produced for an informed layperson audience. The specific topic must be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Good graphical skills and clarity of presentation are essential for each option. In either case, form and presentation will be a major part of the grading, in addition to content. An oral review/defense of the project will also be a factor in grading. Due dates will be negotiated upon instructor approval of topics.

Option B: Students choosing this option will be divided into groups for the purpose of debate. The number of topics will depend on the number of students electing this option. It is anticipated, however, that one or more of the following topics will be debated: 1) The King James Version versus modern translations; 2) “literal” versus “dynamic equivalence” translation (to include issues of inclusive language and political correctness). Students will be assigned a group, regardless of their personal view on the question. Each student's grade for the assignment will be a combination of the group's effectiveness and that student's contribution to the group effort. In addition to the debate itself, all members of each group will be subject to questioning by the instructor at the conclusion of the debate. Additional information and specific grading criteria will be provided.

Outside Reading

*For he that occupies himself not in the study of the Law is called 'reprobate' (רַבִּי)
(Mishnah 'Abot 6:2).*

- † The student must read and turn in written notes on or reactions to selected articles (these written notes must be neat, although typing is optional); grading will be on a 10-point basis, with 10 articles assumed as the baseline number to be completed; additional readings will result in low scores being dropped
- † Written notes/reactions must be presented the class day in which the topic is to be discussed in order to receive credit *and for maximum credit, the student must give evidence of having read the material in that day's class discussion*—this is an attempt to integrate and maximize this assignments learning value
- † A Reading List of locally available material will be provided on the instructor's web page; this will be updated throughout the course; no more than 2 readings may come from a single sub-section (categorized by subject according to class material) of the Reading List, without instructor approval; other appropriate readings may be used if approved

Review of Bible Translation

The Green Lizard! (Bennie R. Crockett, Jr., in reference to *The LivingBible*).

- † The student must complete a major review of a modern Bible translation, chosen or assigned by the instructor, incorporating all areas of potential variance covered in the course
- † Additional details are provided in the form of a template

Schedule

*... these abominable heretics that readeth the New Testament in English . . .
As a scabbed sheep infestesh the whole flock, so these abominable heretics
infect the whole company with their new learning
(Mr. Lovell [incumbent at Sturminster Newton in Dorset; June, 1536])*

NOTE: For this course, it is imperative that reading assignments be completed before class. Part of the students' grade will depend upon participation in class discussion and awareness of the reading material

Day	Date	Topic	Bruce	Wegner
1	Feb 24	Introduction; Pretest; Form of the Bible		
2	Feb 26	Writing; Alphabet; Biblical Languages	Chapter 1	Chapters 1-2, 6
3	Mar 3	Old Testament Canon	Chapter 2	Chapter 3, 7
4	Mar 5	Old Testament Text; Video: "Testament: As it Was In the Beginning"		Chapter 11

chedule, continued

*Our holy prelates [say God's Word] causeth insurrection and teacheth the people to disobey . . .
(William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* [1528])*

Day	Date	Topic	Bruce	Wegner
5	Mar 10	Dead Sea Scrolls; OT Textual Criticism		Chapter 12
6	Mar 12	Video: "Testament: Chronicles and Kings"		
-	Mar 17, 19	✠ Spring Break!! ✠		
7	Mar 24	"Testament: Mightier than the Sword;" Old Testament Versions; Septuagint	Chapters 3-4	Appendix 1 (50)
8	Mar 26	Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha	Chapters 5-7	Chapter 8
9	Mar 31	Formation of the New Testament Canon	Chapter 8-12	Chapter 4, 9
10	Apr 2	New Testament Apocrypha; "Testament: Gospel Truth"	Chapters 13-18; Appendix 1	Chapter 10; Appendix 2 (63-68)
11	Apr 7	<i>Mid-Term Exam</i>		
12	Apr 9	"Testament: Thine is the Kingdom;" New Testament Text		Chapter 13
13	Apr 14	"Testament: The Power and the Glory;" New Testament Text, cont'd		Chapter 14
14	Apr 16	Early Translations and Versions; The Latin Bible		Chapter 15
15	Apr 21	Medieval Period; Renaissance & Reformation	Chapter 19-20	
16	Apr 23	"Testament: Paradise Lost"		Chapter 16
17	Apr 28	English Translations: Early Efforts		Chapter 17
18	Apr 30	English Translations: the King James Version	Chapter 21	Chapter 18
19	May 5	Modern Versions; Issues in Modern Bible Translation	Appendix 2; Chapters 22-23	Chapter 19-21
20	May 7	The Great Debate		Appendix 3