



HON395-40
Reading the Bible as Literature
College of Science and Arts
Fall 2012

Instructor Information

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Course Identification

Course Number: HON395- 40 Online
 Course Name: Reading the Bible as Literature

Required Textbooks

Jeanie C. Crain, *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction*, Polity Press, 2010.
 Jeanie C. Crain, *Biblical Genres: Introduction*, CreateSpace, 2011.

Bible Translation preferred—New Revised Standard Version (NRSV <http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>); the HarperCollins® *Study Bible* or *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*; both have extensive study notes that you will find helpful. For help on translation issues (Hebrew and Greek), you may access the Net Bible <http://bible.org/netbible/>.

Course Description/Overview

HON395-40 introduces you to ways of reading and writing about poetry, narrative, and drama in the Bible.

HON395-40 Reading the Bible as Literature emphasizes the act of reading the Bible itself, focuses upon the whole text as it exists in its current form, invites an experiential entering into and reliving of the Bible's stories, encourages analytical and holistic reading, explores multiple interpretations, and embraces a power of language originating in the mythological, metaphorical, and symbolic.

Such reading holds potential for helping you to understand literature generally and the Bible in itself. It introduces the common tools of literary analysis: language and style, the formal structures of genre (narrative, drama, and poetry), character study, and thematic analysis.

Moodle Course Environment

Once you log in, you will find announcements, the syllabus, assignments, and required activities within this environment. You will read all chapters in *Reading the Bible as Literature: An Introduction* and complete required colloquia, and chapter reviews; you will complete book reviews for both *Reading the Bible* and *Biblical Genres*. The design of the course provides both an interactive learning environment (colloquia) as well as required formal individual assignments; both have been selected to provide you with opportunity to display your careful reading and attention to the required texts of the course and to highlight your thoughtfulness and creativity.

For online classes, you will need a computer and reliable Internet access. The University has several computer labs available for your use. The following link provides you with the location and hours of these labs:

<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/imc/acs/labsmmap.asp>

Course Policies

Disability: If you have been diagnosed with a disability or if you suspect that you may have a disability that has never been diagnosed and would like to find out what services may be available, please visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in Eder Hall, room 203N or visit the ODS website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/ds/> as soon as possible. This syllabus, as well as all other printed or electronic materials, can be made available in alternative/accessible formats if requested with sufficient prior notice. Missouri Western is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

Academic Honesty: Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents, or academic records, or any other fraudulent classroom activity. Plagiarism is the unaccredited use (both intentional and unintentional) of somebody else's words or ideas. Violations of academic honesty will result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from school. Please consult your *Student Handbook*. See full policy <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/acadaff/documents/AcademicHonestyPolicy.pdf>.

Attendance Policy: While you experience more freedom in online classes, you still must meet the same standards required of a traditional class. This means scheduling sufficient time for reading all assigned materials and completing all required writing for the course. Assigned materials should be read prior to the first day of the week's assignments. You must meet all deadlines for submitting required material.

Late Work: You are expected to meet all submission deadlines with no extension on due dates.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Acquire familiarity with several of the tools used for reading and understanding literature generally: language and style, the formal structures of genre (narrative, drama, and poetry), character study, and thematic analysis.
2. Learn that the Bible shares the mythological, metaphorical, and symbolic language that belongs to literature across the centuries.
3. Read and study significant passages in the Bible and learn something about the Bible as a whole, which includes the Jewish and Christian biblical canons.
4. Learn to read the Bible more closely and to appreciate its nuanced and layered levels of meaning and its broad appeal to the interpretive imagination.
5. Discover a library that invites you to engage at deeper levels of study and to greater depths of insight; you have discovered why the Bible continues to appeal to and attract more scholarship than any other collection of literature.

Course Resources

Course Website(s)

- [Bible as Literature Web](#)
- [Professor's Home Page](#) (includes electronic, older Bible as Literature and other Bible Analyses)

Course Requirements

Approximately **every two weeks, you will read one chapter** in *Reading the Bible as Literature: An Introduction and complete colloquia discussions*. This requires reading carefully, taking comprehensive notes, and reviewing end-of-chapter reflective questions and exercises. For this course, you will participate in colloquia where you will learn with and from each other. Your primary text, *Reading the Bible as Literature*, has seven chapters, all focused on introducing you to some of the tools of literary analysis, including language and style, the formal structures of genre (drama, narrative, and poetry), character study, and thematic analysis. Colloquia address the content of each chapter (see Contents); discussion should follow careful reading of the texts. In the colloquia, you should focus on addressing the questions and exercises found at the end of each chapter. Generally, one member can begin discussion of a question or exercise with other members responding; answers and exercises (as well as responses) should be full and complete. Please address at least five of the more challenging questions and at least two exercises. **Colloquia work will receive up to 5 points each (35 total).**

In addition to colloquia work, you will be required to complete formal chapter reviews for each chapter in *Reading the Bible as Literature* (1.5 page single type, 10 point Times New Roman font) and two full book reviews (2 pages, single type, 10 point Times New Roman font), these last two due at the end of the semester. Chapter reviews will be posted on assignment due dates. **Chapter reviews will receive up to 5 points each (35 total), and book reviews will receive up to 15 points each (30 points).**

Use the following guidelines for this work: http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book_reviews.shtml You may wish to read the complete article.

Although you should include what you feel is appropriate for explaining your assessment of a [chapter] book, reviews generally include the following kinds of information.

Most reviews start off with a **heading** that includes all the bibliographic information about the [chapter] book. If your assignment sheet does not indicate which form you should use, you can use the following:

Title. Author. Place of publication: publisher, date of publication. [Range] Number of pages.

Like most pieces of writing, the review itself usually begins with an **introduction** that lets your readers know what the review will say. The first paragraph usually includes the author and title again, so your readers don't have to look up to find the title. You should also include a very brief overview of the contents of the book, the purpose or audience for the book, and your reaction and evaluation.

Reviews then generally move into a section of **background information** that helps place the book in context and discusses criteria for judging the [chapter] book.

Next, the review gives a **summary** of the main points of the [chapter] book, quoting and paraphrasing key phrases from the author.

Finally, reviewers get to the heart of their writing—their **evaluation** of the [chapter] book. In this section, reviewers discuss a variety of issues:

- how well the [chapter] book has achieved its goal,

- what possibilities are suggested by the [chapter] book,
- what the [chapter] book has left out,
- how the [chapter] book compares to others on the subject,
- what specific points are not convincing, and
- what personal experiences you've had related to the subject.

It is important to carefully distinguish your views from the author's, so that you don't confuse your reader.

Like other essays, [chapter] book reviews usually end with a **conclusion** which ties together issues raised in the review and provides a concise comment on the book.

There is, of course, no set formula, but a **general rule of thumb is that the first one-half to two-thirds of the review should summarize the author's main ideas and at least one-third should evaluate the [chapter] book.**

Evaluation Guide

The following guide should enable you to understand how your work for each chapter will be evaluated:

- (Full and productive participation in seven colloquia with peers focused on chapter content (up to 5 points each, possible total of 35 points). Generally, discussions should focus upon 5-7 of the more challenging questions and at least two of the exercises. Discussions should reference the text specifically as well as provide application to reading the Bible.
- Thoughtful, original, and well-developed chapter and book reviews following provided guidelines (up to 5 points each for chapter reviews, possible 35 points total, and up to 15 points each for book reviews, possible 30 points).

Grading Scheme

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade points/credit	Rating
A	90 points & above	4.00	Excellent
B	80– 89 points	3.00	Good
C	70 –79 points	2.00	Average
D	60 – 69 points	1.00	Below Average
F	59 and below	0.00	Failure
I	An incomplete grade may be given when accident, illness, death in the immediate family, or other documented circumstances beyond your control prevent you from completing some course requirements. An incomplete grade will be considered only when you have satisfied the majority of course requirements. An incomplete grade must be removed within six weeks after the first day of the next term (fall, spring, summer) of the semester in which it was received; otherwise, the grade will be recorded as "F."		

University Fall Schedule

Event	Date	Day
Independence Day Holiday (no classes/campus closed)	July 7	Wednesday
Last Day to Withdraw from 2nd four-week session	July 12	Thursday
Final Exams for Eight-week & 2nd four-week session	July 19	Thursday
Final Grades Due	July 25	Wednesday
Fall 2012		
Walk-In Registration	Aug. 21	Tuesday
Griffon Edge	Aug. 23-25	
Classes Begin	Aug. 27	Monday
Labor Day Holiday (no classes/campus closed)	Sept. 3	Monday
Mid-term Grades Due	Oct. 24	Wednesday
Last Day to Withdraw	Nov. 2	Friday
Registration Begins for Spring	Nov. 5	Monday
Fall Break (no classes/campus closed)	Nov. 18-25	
Last Day of Classes	Dec. 7	Friday
Final Exams	Dec. 8-14	
Commencement	Dec. 15	Saturday
Final Grades Due	Dec. 18	Tuesday
Wintersession	Dec. 15-Jan. 11	
Campus Closed	Dec. 24-Jan. 1	
Spring 2013		
Campus re-opens	Jan. 2	Wednesday
Spring Registration/Orientation Program	Jan. 8	Tuesday
Walk-In Registration	Jan. 10	Thursday
Wintersession Ends	Jan. 11	Friday
Classes Begin	Jan. 14	Monday

Course Schedule

Week One **Aug.** 27-31

Assignment: Read Preface and Chapter 1

Week Two **Sept.** 4-7

Complete Colloquia postings for Preface and Chapter 1 by 12:00 midnight Sept. 9 as well as chapter reviews.

Week Three 10-14

Assignment: Read Chapter 2

Week Four 17-21

Complete Colloquia postings for Chapter 2 by 12:00 midnight Sept. 23 as well as chapter reviews.

Week Five 24-28, **MT Grades Due 24.**

Assignment: Read Chapter 3

Week Six **Oct.** 1-5

Complete Colloquia postings for Chapter 3 by 12:00 midnight Oct. 7 as well as chapter reviews.

Week Seven 8-12

Assignment: Read Chapter 4

Week Eight 15-19

Complete Colloquia postings for Chapter 4 by 12:00 midnight Oct. 21 as well as chapter reviews.

Week Nine 22-26

Assignment: Read Chapter 5

Week Ten Oct 29- **Nov. 2 Last Day to withdraw Nov. 2**

Complete Colloquia postings for Chapter 5 by 12:00 midnight Nov. 4 as well as chapter reviews.

Week Eleven 5-9

Assignment: Read Chapter 6

Fall Break 18-25

Week Twelve 12-16

Complete Colloquia postings for Chapter 6 by 12:00 midnight Nov. 18 as well as chapter reviews.

Week Thirteen 26-30

Assignment: Read Chapter 7

Week Fourteen **Dec.** 3-7

Complete Colloquia postings for Chapter 7 by 12:00 midnight Dec. 9 as well as chapter reviews.

Last Day Class Dec. 7

Week Fifteen **Final Examination Dec. 8-14**

Complete Book reviews for Reading the Bible and Biblical Genres by December 12, noon.

Final grades will be posted Dec. 18. Your final grade for the course will be based on total points earned throughout the semester (up to 35 points for colloquia, up to 35 points for chapter reviews, and up to 30 points for two book reviews).