Jewish and Christian Scriptures (RELG 207-01 CT LP)
Spring 2017 // Three (3) credits // TR 2:30 – 4:20 p.m., Old Main 329
Augustana College of Rock Island, Illinois
Instructor: Christopher M. Jones, Ph.D.

HOW TO CONTACT ME
Office: Old Main 003
Office hours: T 9-10 a.m. (Old Main 003); F 1-2 (Brew)
Email: christopherjones@augustana.edu
Cell: (608) 234-1952 (Text messages are fine, but ID yourself)
Starfish: Use it to make appointments to see me whenever I am available

WHAT THIS COURSE IS ABOUT
This course is an introduction to the critical study of Jewish and Christian scriptures. It is not a class about the Bible. That’s because 1) there’s no Bible accepted by all Jews and Christians, and 2) Bibles did not exist when the books that now make them up were being written. In this course, you will learn:

- What it means (and doesn’t mean) to study the Bible critically
- Where we got the bizarre idea that gods write books and gives them to humans
- The political reasons that people in ancient Israel, Judah, and Judea created and preserved traditions about their shared history
- The political reasons that these people wrote their traditions down and insisted that the written versions have normative force
- How to pose open-ended, authentic questions about ancient Jewish literature
- How to be a biblically literate citizen in a religiously pluralist society

Core Ideas
- Canon is a process, not a product.
- Myths matter to people. Facts do not.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
- Attendance and participation (15%)
- 3-2-1 assignments (10%) Due daily (4 drops)
- Posing and Answering Questions (50%)
  - Questions (5%); Due March 22 Revisions (10%) Due April 5
  - Answers (10%); Due April 24 Revisions (20%) Due May 8
  - Symposium presentations (5%)
- Final exam (take home) (25%) Due Wed., May 17 by 2 p.m.
AUGUSTANA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The specific content of REL 207 contributes significantly to two Augustana Student Learning Outcomes.

1. Ethical citizenship – In this course, we learn to read the Bible critically. Why read the Bible critically? Because the public square is full of people using the Bible to lend authority to their political agendas, and it’s up to you to decide whether or not you agree with them.

2. Intercultural competency – We are the products of a writing-saturated world, and we encounter the Bible as a book in fixed, written form. It has not always been that way. Biblical texts were first produced in an oral culture that lacked any concept of written textual authority. Can we bridge the gap in space and time and encounter these texts within their own cultural framework?

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Attendance and participation (15% of course grade)

- Attendance is mandatory. I excuse absences for legitimate reasons (e.g., illness, emergency, school trip, job interview) if you notify me beforehand.
- You get one “free” unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence after that is worth about 1% of your final course grade. Don’t skip class.
- You are still responsible for 3-2-1 assignments on days that you are absent.
- Participation is graded daily on a ten-point scale. Showing up on time and doing nothing else will get you a 7, a C. To earn an 8, 9, or a 10, do the following:
  - Bring your readings. You will need your Bible every single day. Other readings should be brought on the day that they are assigned. You can bring hard copies or electronic. You’ll need them to participate in discussion.
  - Come to class prepared. Develop a reasoned opinion on the readings. Volunteer to share it. Share it when asked.
  - Participate enthusiastically in group work.

Daily 3-2-1 assignments (10% of course grade)

- For every class period that we meet, you are required to complete a 3-2-1 report on the assigned reading for the day. This entails:
  - Identify the three (3) most important ideas in the readings, and explain specifically why they are important (no more than 2 sentences each).
  - Identify two (2) questions that you have about the reading (no more than 2 sentences each)
Identify one (1) strong response or reaction that the reading provoked in you—something that surprised you, angered you, made you happy, etc.

- Turn in your writing on Moodle alongside the day’s reading assignment.
- Upload your response to Moodle no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class. Late work cannot be accepted.
- You can miss up to four 3-2-1 reports without penalty.
- I will grade your work on a ten point scale. Here’s what I’m looking for:
  - Evidence that you did the reading, and did it carefully.
  - Evidence that you thought about the reading afterwards.
  - Evidence of intellectual curiosity about the reading.
  - Evidence that you will have insightful and provocative things to say about the reading in class.

**Asking and Answering Questions (50%)**

People use the Bible to justify all sorts of beliefs, many of which have direct public policy implications. In this course, you must learn how to evaluate for yourself what the Bible says about a particular topic and whether you find other people’s interpretations persuasive. To demonstrate your ability to do this, I am asking you to pose four questions about one particular topic, and then do your own research to answer them.

Potential topics (or suggest your own!):
- Abortion
- Crime and law
- Slavery
- Warfare
- Immigration
- Political loyalty and dissent
- Race and ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Gender and sex
- Rape and rape culture
- Bodily autonomy
- Contraception
- Economics

**Asking questions (5%; revisions 10%)**

Each question will be at a different level of Bloom’s taxonomy: comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Here’s how to write them:

1. **Comprehension**: This question should identify something about the topic you’ve chosen that you don’t understand, and it should allow you to establish a solid background of knowledge on the topic. Don’t get into the Bible yet—focus on the topic itself more broadly.

2. **Analysis**: This question should identify a specific, short biblical passage that is relevant to your topic, and it should set you up to explore something in that passage that you need to understand in order to apply it to your topic.

3. **Synthesis**: This question should connect the passage in your Analysis question to another short biblical passage that says something different about your topic, and it should prepare you to compare and contrast something specific about these passages.
4. **Evaluation:** This question should bring together your knowledge of the topic with the two passages that you’ve explored in depth, and it should prepare you to discuss how the Bible ought to be used (or NOT used) in discussions about your topic.

Format is not important as long as you list your questions, 1-4. On citations, see below under “Answering questions.” The first draft of your questions is due by Wednesday of Week 3 (March 22) before midnight. *It is harder to write good questions than you think!* Use the rubric on Moodle to guide you, and give yourself time to think and do some preliminary research. You get to revise your questions once; revisions are due by Wednesday of Week 5 (April 5). **When you revise, use a different colored font for anything you change, please!**

**Answering questions (10%; revisions 20%)**
After you turn in your revised questions, you should begin working on your answers. Use the resources on the Library Resource Guide (see Moodle) to help you research your answers. Guidelines for writing your answers:

- Standard fonts (12 pt) and margins
- Make sure you include your questions with your answers
- Use any citation style you like, but be consistent
- Cite primary sources like this: Genesis 14:3; Jubilees 1:5; Letter of Aristeas 143.
- Be sure to use the resources in your OAB (I'll go over these in class)
- Length: each answer should be between 400 – 600 words long

Answers are due on the Monday of Week 8 (April 24) before midnight; revisions are due by the Monday of Week 10 (May 8) before midnight. **When you revise, use a different colored font for anything you change, please!**

**Symposium presentation (10%)**
After you have turned in your first set of questions, I will assign each of you to a group of students with similar topics. Your group, in turn, will be assigned an in-class presentation date when you will hold a symposium on your topic(s). Each of you will be asked to give a five minute overview of your work, focusing on your questions and how you’ve answered them. Then panelists will have time to ask questions of each other. Last, the discussion will be opened up to the whole class. Guidelines:

- Three days before your presentation date, you must email a draft of your Answers assignment to the other members of your group (cc me, please). That way, you can prepare questions for each other during the symposium.
- During the symposium, you will be required to engage in Q&A with the other members of your group.
• During your presentation, be prepared to have the class look at one biblical text that
you’ll be commenting on.
• Focus on persuading the other panelists, and the class as a whole, that your
interpretation of the biblical text(s) is the best one.

Please see Moodle for a complete set of rubrics covering questions, answers, and
presentations.

Final Exam (25% of course grade)

Your final exam will be open book/open notes, and will be due during finals week. You will
be asked to write three short essays analyzing and synthesizing primary sources that we
cover in class. I will provide you with the final exam questions during the last week of
classes.

POLICIES

Grade Scale

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Credit Hours

This course counts for three (3) credit hours. In accordance with federal policy, Augustana
College defines a credit hour as the amount of work represented in the achievement of
learning outcomes that reasonably approximates one hour (50 minutes) of classroom
instructions and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work. Because we are on a
trimester system, a standard three credit course (like this one) meets for 220 minutes per
week and requires 8-10 hours of additional out-of-class work per week.

Late work

Late papers and exams will be penalized five points for every 24 hours after the due date.
Late focused reading responses cannot be accepted.

Honor Code

As an instructor, I abide by the Augustana College Honor Code. You have pledged to do so
as well. That means that, if I suspect that you have misrepresented the quality of your
work, whether by cheating, lying, stealing, or plagiarizing, I am required to give you a “0” on the assignment and to report the offense to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or to the Honor Council. **Please consult with me, before turning in an assignment, if you have concerns over whether you might be in violation of the Honor Code.**

**Accommodations for disabilities**

All students enrolled in this class who have a documented disability have the right to reasonable accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodations are required to provide documentation of their disability to the Coordinator of Student Success Services by filling out the “request for academic accommodations” form on the link provided: [https://www.augustana.edu/student-life/residential-life/accommodations](https://www.augustana.edu/student-life/residential-life/accommodations). Please present the Accommodation Letter to me after class or during office hours in the first week of the term or at least seven days before needing the accommodations. Students who have or think they may have a disability are invited to contact the Coordinator of Student Success services for a confidential discussion. For more information, please contact Yen Dao, Coordinator of Student Success Services, at yendao@augustana.edu or visit room 440 of the Gerber Center.

**Tech in the classroom policy**

You are permitted to use laptops, tablets, and smartphones for educational purposes (e.g., notetaking, bringing assigned readings). Please keep all non-educational tech usage to an absolute minimum. Inappropriate or distracting media is strictly prohibited.

**TEXTBOOKS AND READING MATERIALS**

The textbook is **required**. It is available in hard copy, for purchase or rent, in the campus bookstore. It can also be had (more cheaply!) via online sellers, and it exists in electronic editions (which is fine for this class). **Make sure you buy the edition that contains the whole Bible, including the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Apocrypha!**


Other readings will be available on Moodle or via hyperlink. “AR”
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1
March 6 (T) – Course Introduction
   AR Course syllabus

March 8 (R) – Universal Origins in Genesis
   OAB Genesis 1-12, 17, 22
   AR Essay: Eve

Week 2
March 14 (T) – Israelite National Origins, Version One (Jacob)
   CW: rape (of Dinah, Gen. 34)
   OAB Genesis 25-37
   AR Lecture: How Abraham connects Israel with “the World”

March 16 (R) – Writing and Authority in antiquity
   NOTE: We will not meet for class, as I have to be out of town. Instead, you will submit a short write-up answering some questions on the readings (see below) for your participation credit.
   AR Lecture: Writing and authority in antiquity
   AR Essay: The Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East
   AR Essay: How the Bible was formed
   AR Essay: Scribes, Scribalism, and the Origins of the Bible

Week 3
March 21 (T) – Israelite National Origins, Version Two (Moses)
   OAB Exodus 1-15; Hosea 12
   AR Listen to these songs and read the lyrics
   Bruce Springsteen, “Thunder Road” Listen Read
   (Pay special attention to the line “we’re riding out tonight to case the promised land”)
   Frank Ocean, “Pyramids” Listen Read
   (Pay special attention to the role of “Africa” in the song)

First draft of your questions is due Wednesday, March 22, before midnight

March 23 (R) – Judahite National Origins: David
   AR Essay: Dictionary entry on King Saul, David’s predecessor
AR Lecture: Israel and Judah
OAB 1 Samuel 16-19 (423–430); 2 Samuel 11–13 (pp. 459–464); 1 Kings 1-2 (pp. 488–492)
AR Essay: David v. Goliath: The Campaign Ad

Week 4
March 28 (T) – Ancient Israel in history

OAB Essay on the Ancient Near East and Israel (pp. 2236–2242)
AR Essay: Kingship in the Ancient Near East (pay special attention to the part about kings and national gods)
AR Essay: Shrines at Dan and Bethel (Focus on what god(s) were worshipped at these sites)
AR Khirbet ’el Qom and Kuntillet ‘Ajrud inscriptions
AR Tel Dan inscription

March 30 (R) – Ancient Judah in History

OAB Isaiah 7-8; 2 Kings 17-21

Week 5
April 4 (T) – Law Codes in the ancient Near East

CW: slavery, rape, homophobia
AR Comparative ancient Near Eastern law codes
AR Essay: The Code of Hammurabi
OAB Exodus 20-23; Leviticus 18-20; Deuteronomy 12, 15, 24
AR Essay: Law and the Bible

Second draft of Questions is due by Wednesday, April 5, before midnight

April 6 (R) – King Josiah and the Deuteronomic Reforms

OAB 2 Kgs 22-25; Deuteronomy 6-8, 12; Jeremiah 7

Week 6
April 11 (T) – Library Day! (Meet on 2nd floor of Thomas Tredway Library)

Assigned reading: Online modules on information literacy
April 13 (R) – Jews and empire, part one: resistance (?)

**AR** Online lecture: the Persian Period

**OAB** “The Persian and Hellenistic Periods,” pp. 2242-2244 (stop at the heading “The Hellenistic Period”)

**OAB** Haggai 1-2 (pp. 1333-1336); Zechariah 3-4, 6 (pp. 1337-38, 1340-42); Nehemiah 1-2, 6, 8-10 (pp. 685-688, 692-693, 696-701)

Week 7

April 18 (T) – MUESDAY: NO CLASS

April 20 (R) – Jews and empire, part 2: accommodation (?)

**OAB** Isaiah 44-45, 55 (pp. 1027-1030); Ezra 7-10 (pp. 677-684)

**AR** Short lecture on Elephantine

**AR** Elephantine Papyri

Week 8

The first draft of your Answers is due Monday, April 24, before midnight.

April 25 (T) – When God Spoke Greek

**Class symposium 1**

**OAB** “The Hellenistic Period,” pp. 2244-2246 (up to the words “The eventual triumph of the Seleucid kingdom…”)

**AR** Timothy Michael Law, excerpt from When God Spoke Greek (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 33-42 (pp. 43-57 are optional).

**AR** Letter of Aristeas 1-34, 121-127, 301-322 (stuff in brackets)

April 27 (R) – The Maccabees and Jewish Nationalism

**OAB** “The Hellenistic Period,” pp. 2246-2247

**OAB** Daniel 7, 9-11; 1 Maccabees 1-4 (pp. 1557-1568); 2 Maccabees 1-2 (pp. 1600-1604)

**AR** Temple Scroll LVI:20-LVII:15; Jubilees 1

Week 9

May 2 (T) – The Sadducees and the Dead Sea Scrolls

**Class symposium 2**

**AR** Lecture: The Dead Sea Scrolls
AR Halakhic Letter (4QMMT); The Rule of the Congregation (1QSa) I-II; War Scroll (1QM) XI

May 4 (R) – Paul and the early Jesus Followers

Class symposium 3

AR Lecture: The Historical Jesus?
OAB Romans 9, 13; Galatians 1-3

Week 10

The final draft of your Answers is due Monday, May 8, before midnight.

May 9 (T) – Jesus and the Gospels

Class symposium 4

OAB “Introduction to the Gospels” (pp. 1743-1744; “The Sources of the Gospels” is optional)
OAB Matthew 1-2, 5; Luke 22-24 (pp. 1867-1869).

May 11 (R) – Canon and Conflict

Class symposium 3

OAB “The Canons of the Bible,” pp. 2185-2191
AR Mishnah Avot 1-2

Final exam is due on Moodle by 2 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17

All work must be turned in by 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 18 to be counted towards your grade.