



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/333-6254

BIB515 – Reading the Biblical Story, Module Spring 2011

Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available at http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential_Information. Additional technical support information can be found at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Master of Divinity Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS bookstore procedures
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

Instructor Information

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Catalog Description

An exploration of the historical, geographical, literary, and theological foundations for reading the Bible missionally in both faith and academic contexts. Passing a Bible Content Exam is required for successful completion of this course.

Course Narrative & Rationale

Reading the Scriptures is one of the most formative and fundamental practices of the Christian faith. The strategies that guide our reading represent some of the most important decisions we make before the Biblical text. This course asks what the Bible is by considering the history of its development and issues of its literary structure. The course asks from where the Bible comes in terms of its historical and geographical contexts. The course asks what the Bible says in terms of its content and theological themes. The course will reflect on the differences and commonalities of reading the Bible in the life of the Church and reading it in the context of the Academy. The purpose of the course is for the student to be more aware of and equipped for reading the Bible with strategies that include literary, historical, and theological perspectives. Certainly the full Bible curriculum at NTS is designed to accomplish the same thing. In that regard this course is introductory to matters that will be further developed in other courses in the curriculum, though the degree of development will vary.

BIB515, Reading the Biblical Story, is intended to assist students in accomplishing the second major objective of the MDiv, “The articulation of the knowledge of this God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.” It is also intended to assist student in accomplishing the follow part of the first objective of the MACE Degree program, “Appropriate and enhance the student’s ecclesial understanding of the Word of God . . . sufficient to enable him or her to deepen a personal commitment to God and His Church and to inform a passionate, vital, and redemptive ministry.”

Degree Program Objectives Addressed in this course

This course addresses the following NTS Degree Program Objectives:

- MDiv Objective 2, “The articulation of the knowledge of God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.”
- MACE Objective 1, “Appropriate and enhance the student’s ecclesial understanding of the Word of God, the heritage of the faith, the doctrines of the church, and the fellowship of believers, sufficient to enable him or her to deepen a personal commitment to God and the Church and to inform a passionate, vital, and redemptive ministry.
- MAICS Objective 4, “Graduates will articulate, communicate, and contextualize the essential affirmations of the Christian faith in a cross-cultural setting.
- MA(TS) General Academic Track Objective 1, “Students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the major theological disciplines and their interrelationships.

Course Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course the student should be able to:

- 1) Describe the major steps by which the Bible came into its present form, (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 4.5, 6)
- 2) Identify the translation philosophy used in major contemporary English versions of the Bible, (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 4.6, 6)
- 3) Explain the strengths and weaknesses of the translation philosophies in use, (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 4.6, 6)
- 4) Describe the general literary structure and story line of both Old and New Testaments, (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3.2, 4.7, 5, 6)
- 5) Identify the major genre(s) of each Biblical book and the general characteristics of that/those genre(s), (Accomplished by Assignments 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, 4.7, 5, 6)
- 6) Describe the historical context of each major section of the Bible, (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 4.3, 4.4, 5, 6)
- 7) Identify the chief persons, places, events, dates, and texts of the Bible, (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 5, 6)
- 8) Describe the major theological themes found in the Old Testament and the New Testament, and (Accomplished by Assignments 3.1, 4.8, 6)
- 9) Reflect on how literary structures, historical and geographical contexts, and theological perspectives impact one’s reading of Scripture. (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 6)

Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies

- CN 1** Ability to identify the literary structure and the main story line of the Old Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2.1, 3.2, 5, 6)
- CN 2** Ability to identify the books of the Old Testament by genre (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2.1, 2.6, 5, 6)
- CN 3** Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the Old Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)

- CN 4** Ability to identify the main characters of the Old Testament and their role in the story (Accomplished by Assignments 5,6)
- CN 5** Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament (Accomplished by Assignment 1, 2.2-2.4, 4.2-4.4, 6, 6)
- CN 6** Ability to chronologically order the main events and persons of the Old Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 5, 6)
- CN 7** Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3.1, 4.8, 5, 6)
- CN 8** Ability to identify the literary structure of the New Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2.7, 5, 6)
- CN 9** Ability to identify the genre and basic thrust of each New Testament book (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2.7, 5, 6)
- CN 10** Ability to summarize the significant life events of Jesus and Paul (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 5, 6)
- CN 11** Ability to identify the significant elements in the message of Jesus and Paul (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3, 4.8, 5, 6)
- CN 12** Ability to describe the impact of the historical background of the New Testament on the message of Jesus and Paul (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 6)
- CN 13** Ability to chronologically order the significant events and persons of the New Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 5, 6)
- CN 14** Ability to identify and describe the major theological concepts of the New Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3.1, 4.8, 5, 6)
- CN 15** Ability to describe how the Bible came into being up to contemporary translations (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 4.5, 6)

Required Texts & Course Materials

- The Bible.* It is important that if you do not read the Hebrew and Greek texts that in all Bible classes at NTS you use an ‘essentially literal’ translation of the Bible such as the NRSV, the NASB (or NASB95), the ESV, or the RSV, and not a ‘dynamic equivalence’ translation such as the NIV, TNIV, NLT, etc. If possible you should have an ‘essentially literal’ translation of the Apocrypha such as can be found in certain editions of the NRSV or the RSV.
- Bartholomew, Craig G. and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004. ISBN 978-0-8010-2747-8
- Coogan, Michael D., ed. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. ISBN 978-0-19-513937-2 (pbk.)
- Dauphinais, Michael and Levering, Matthew. *Holy People, Holy Land: A Theological Introduction to the Bible.* Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005. ISBN 978-1-58743-123-4
- Lawrence, Paul, ed. *The IVP Atlas of Bible History.* Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006. ISBN 978-0-8308-2452-6
- Ryken, Leland. *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible.* Second Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1992. ISBN 978-0-8010-7769-2

Recommended Texts & Course Materials

- Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible.* Baker Books, 1999. 2004 paperback edition. ISBN 978 0-8010-2799-04

Course Outline

Prolegomena - The Significance of Reading the Bible

- I. What Is It that We Read?
 - A. The Theology of Scriptural Inspiration and Authority
 - B. What Is This Book? - The History of How the Bible Came to Be
 - C. Biblical Languages and Bible Translation(s)

- II. Reading the Bible in Its Geographical and Historical Contexts
 - A. The Geography of the Bible
 - B. The Historical Contexts
 - C. The Significance of the Geographical and Historical “Gaps” between the Bible and the Present Reader(s)

- III. Reading the Bible as Literature
 - A. Macro Literary Structures of the Bible
 - B. The Story Line(s) of the Two Testaments
 - C. Literary Conventions of the Bible

- IV. Reading the Bible Theologically
 - A. Approaches to Theological Reading of Scripture
 - B. The Drama of Scripture - Finding Our Place
 - C. Theological Themes in the Old and New Testaments

- V. Reading the Bible Spiritually

Course Assignments & Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation. Attendance in class, punctuality in being in the classroom, participation in classroom discussion, and participation in the Moodle forums will be figured in the final course grade. (Outcomes 1-4, 6, 7, 9, CN 1-3, CN 5, CN 7-15)
 1. By Friday, December 10, 2010, post to the Moodle Autobiography forum an autobiography of approximately 250 words introducing yourself to the class. Indicate something you hope to learn in this class. By Sunday, December 12, read your classmates’ autobiographical essays. Feel free to respond to them in the Moodle forum.
 2. By Wednesday, January 12, 2011, post to the Moodle Intertestamental forum your Essay 5 (see below). By Friday, January 14, 2011, you should have read all of your classmates’ essays and have responded to at least two of them with a material response of at least 125 words.

2. Essays in response to Reading. The following essays are due to be uploaded to the appropriate Moodle assignments tab on the indicated date. (Outcomes 5, 6, CN 1-3, CN 5, CN 8-9)
 1. Essay 1 - Based on your reading of Ryken, pp. 11-156, write an essay of 350-450 words describing the key elements of narrative that you believe are important for understanding Biblical narratives. Indicate why you think these elements are important. Due Wednesday, December 15, 2010.
 2. Essay 2 - Based on your reading of Lawrence, pp 14-41, and Coogan, pp. 8-88, write an essay of 300-400 words comparing and contrasting the kinds of information found in and the assumptions of the two works. Due Wednesday, December 22, 2010.
 3. Essay 3 - Based on your reading of Lawrence, pp. 42-76, and Coogan, pp. 90-203, write an essay of 400-500 words describing the historical contexts that are important for understanding the era of the Conquest, Judges, and first 3 kings of Israel. Indicate why understanding these contexts are important for reading this portion of the biblical story. Due Wednesday, December 29, 2010.

4. Essay 4 - Based on your reading of Lawrence, pp. 78-117, and Coogan, pp. 206-315, write an essay of 400-500 words describing the key historical insights into Assyria, Babylon, and Persia that are necessary to understand the divided kingdom, the Fall of Jerusalem, and the Exile. Indicate why understanding these insights is important for reading this portion of the biblical story. Due Wednesday, January 5, 2011.
5. Essay 5 - Based on your reading of Lawrence, pp. 118-175, and Coogan, pp. 317-418, write an essay of 400-500 words describing the key historical insights from the time between the Old and New Testament and the value of those insights for understanding the New Testament. Due Wednesday, January 12, 2011.
6. Essay 6 - Based on your reading of Ryken, pp. 159-352, write an essay of 350-450 words summarizing what you believe to be the most important insights of your reading and why. Due Wednesday, February 9, 2011.
7. Essay 7 - Based on your reading of Ryken, pp. 355-512, write an essay of 450-550 words describing the significance of what you read for the interpretation of the New Testament. Due Thursday, February 17, 2011.

3. Book Responses. Two response essays to the following books:

1. After reading Dauphinais and Levering, write a response of 750-1000 words summarizing and evaluating the book. In the essay give particular attention to the 4-6 theological themes in the Old Testament and the 4-6 themes in the New Testament that are most important and why they are important. This report will be due Friday, February 25, 2011. (Outcomes 8, CN 3, CN 7, CN 11, CN 14)

2. After reading Bartholomew and Goheen, write a response of 750-1000 words describing and evaluating the primary thesis of the book. Include a description of how you think you understand the book differently now than you would have before the course. Due Friday, March 4, 2011. (Outcomes 4, CN 1, CN 3, CN 11)

4. Worksheets. Complete the following worksheets (which are available to you at the Moodle site):

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| 1. Worksheet 1 - Reading Narrative | Due: December 17, 2010, 11:55 pm. |
| 2. Worksheet 2 - Geography and History | Due: December 31, 2010, 11:55 pm. |
| 3. Worksheet 3 - Historical Backgrounds | Due: January 7, 2011, 11:55 pm. |
| 4. Worksheet 4 - Intertestamental Backgrounds | Due: January 18, 2011, 8:00 am. |
| 5. Worksheet 5 - How the Bible Came to Be | Due: January 20, 2011, 8:00 am. |
| 6. Worksheet 6 - Bible Translations | Due: January 24, 2011, 8:00 am. |
| 7. Worksheet 7 - Genres & Literary Structure | Due: January 26, 2011, 8:00 am. |
| 8. Worksheet 8 - Theological Themes | Due: January 28, 2011, 8:00 am. |
| 9. Worksheet 9 - Spiritual Reading | Due: January 28, 2011, 12:15 pm. |
| 10. Worksheet 10 - Hebrew Poetry | Due: February 11, 2011, 11:55 pm. |

(Outcomes 1-6, 8, CN 5, CN 7, CN 11, CN 14, CN 15)

5. Bible Content Exam. To pass this course a student must pass the Bible Content Exam with a minimum score of 70. Students who passed the BCE prior to enrollment in this class may use their score or their class average (whichever is higher) to be entered into the gradebook for the Bible Content Exam. If such student wishes to raise their BCE score for the purpose of this class, they may request permission from the instructor to re-take the exam. They may not take the exam more than two times attempting to improve their score.

Students who have not passed the BCE prior to enrolling in this class must take the BCE until they achieve a minimum grade of 70. Their first attempt of the BCE should be no later than during the week of January 10-16, 2011. Once they have achieved at least a 70 on the exam, they may request permission from the instructor to re-take the BCE one additional time to raise their grade. Their highest grade on the BCE will be entered in the gradebook

for the BCE requirement. No student will receive a passing grade in BIB515 who has not passed the BCE.

(Outcomes 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, CN 1, CN 2, CN 3, CN 4, CN 6, CN 7, CN 8, CN 9, CN 10, CN 11, CN 13, CN 14, CN 15)

6. **Final Exam.** On March 11, 2011, the Final Exam for this course will be made available on Moodle. The Exam will include objective questions including questions similar to those on the BCE and essays. Once the student has opened the exam they will have two hours to upload the completed exam back into Moodle. It must be completed by no later than 11:55 pm on March 11, 2011. (Outcomes 1-9, CN 1-15)

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	pre-module hours	module hours	post-module hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions		38	
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	5		0
Reading	28.5	0	32
Writing	9.5	0	9.5
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	8	8	1.5
Exams & Quizzes	2	0	8
TOTAL	51	46	51

Method for Submitting Assignments

With the exception of Worksheet 9 all other assignments must be submitted via Moodle. Worksheet 9 may be submitted in paper form at the end of class on Friday, January 28, 2011, or it may be also submitted via Moodle.

Form and Style Expectations

When referencing a textbook in one of the essays use the author's (or editor's) last name and the page number. When referencing a non-textbook (no assignment requires this) use the form and style provided by Turabian.

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

Assignments may be reduced by 10% per day late. The Final Exam will be given a 0 if not taken at the assigned time. In cases of significant emergency regarding due dates, you may contact the professor to seek specific possible extensions.

Additional Costs

There are no costs for this course beyond tuition, textbooks, and whatever costs of living and transportation required to be in Kansas City during the Module time.

Course Grading

Each assignment will be assigned a grade between 0 and 100 inclusive. The final class grade will be weighted as follows:

7 Essays @ 3% each	21%
2 Book Responses @ 8% each	16%
10 Worksheets @ 3 % each	30%
Bible Content Exam	10%
Final Exam	15%
Attendance & Participation	8%

It is the commitment of NTS to make every reasonable effort to facilitate the learning of students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of her or his abilities (e.g., difficulty seeing or hearing, dyslexia or other learning disabilities) should contact the instructor immediately, or as soon as possible, to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies which have been beneficial for the student in the past. The instructor and the student will determine mutually acceptable accommodations to ensure the student's full participation and appropriate evaluation in the course. NTS does not provide tutorial assistance for students who have reading or learning disabilities.

Class Attendance

Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. If you must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

By NTS policy if a student is absent 2 1/2 or more days during the module, the professor may automatically fail the student. Daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits.

Course Calendar

Dates	Week	Assignments and Learning Activities
12/ 6-12	1	Friday, Dec. 10, by 11:55 pm post a brief autobiography introducing yourself to the class. Indicate something you hope to learn in this class. Your post should be about 250 words. By Sunday, Dec. 12, read your classmates' autobiographies. Feel free to respond to them at you have time and interest.
12/ 13-19	2	Read Ryken, pp. 11-156, and write an essay of 350-450 words describing the key elements of narrative that are important for understanding Biblical narratives. The essay (Essay 1) is due Wednesday, December 15, 2010. Complete Worksheet 1. It is due Friday, December 17, 2010.
12/ 20-26	3	Read Lawrence, pp. 14-41, and Coogan, pp. 3-88, and write an essay of approximately 300-400 words comparing and contrasting the kinds of information and the assumptions of the two works. The essay (Essay 2) is due Wednesday, December 22, 2010.
12/ 27-1/ 2	4	Read Lawrence, pp. 42-76, and Coogan, pp. 90-203 and write an essay of 400-500 words describing the historical contexts that are important for understanding the era of the Conquest, Judges and the first 3 kings of Israel. The essay (Essay 3) is due Wednesday, December 29, 2010. Complete Worksheet 2. It is due Friday, December 31, 2010.

1/ 3-9	5	Read Lawrence, pp. 78-117, and Coogan, pp. 206-315, and write an essay of 400-500 words describing the key historical insights into Assyria, Babylon, and Persia that are necessary to understand the divided kingdom, the Fall of Jerusalem, and the Exile. The essay (Essay 4) is due Wednesday, January 5, 2011. Complete Worksheet 3. It is due Friday, January 7, 2011.
1/ 10-16	6	Read Lawrence, pp. 118-175, and Coogan, pp. 317-418, and write an essay of 400-500 words describing the key historical insights from the time between the Old and New Testaments and the value of those insights for understanding the New Testament. The essay (Essay 5) is due Wednesday, January 12, 2011. In addition to uploading the essay as an assignment, it should be uploaded in the Intertestamental Forum for the class. By Friday, January 14, 2011, you should have read your classmates' essays and have responded to at least 2 of them with a material response of at least 125 words. Complete Worksheet 4
1/ 17-23	7	Module - See Course Outline Worksheet 4 due Tuesday, January 18, 2011, 8:00 am Worksheet 5 due Thursday, January 20, 2011
1/ 24-30	8	Module - See Course Outline Worksheet 6 due Monday, January 24, 2011 Worksheet 7 due Wednesday, January 26, 2011 Worksheet 8 due Friday, January 28, 2011 Worksheet 9 due Friday, January 28, 2011 (done in class)
1/ 31- 2/ 6	9	Reading and Research Week
2/ 7-13	10	Read Ryken, pp 159-352 and write an essay of 350-400 words summarizing what you believe to be the most important insights of the reading and why. The essay (Essay 6) is due Wednesday, February 9, 2011. Complete Worksheet 10. It is due Friday, February 11, 2011.
2/ 14-20	11	Read Ryken, pp 355-512 and write an essay of 450-550 words describing the significance of what you read for the interpretation of the New Testament. The essay (Essay 7) is due Thursday, February 17, 2011.
2/ 21-27	12	Read Dauphinais and Levering, and write a 750-1000 word report summarizing and evaluating the book. Remember to give attention to the 4-6 theological themes in the Old Testament and 4-6 theological themes in the New Testament that you believe most important. This book response is due Friday, February 25, 2011.
2/ 28- 3/ 6	13	Read Bartholomew and Goheen and write a 750-1000 word responding essay. Include a description of how you think you understand the book differently than you would have before this course. This book response is due Friday, March 4, 2011.
3/ 7-13	14	Final Exam - Friday, March 11, 2011

Bibliography

General Introductions

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- Chance, J. Bradley and Horne, Milton P. *Rereading the Bible: An Introduction to the Biblical Story*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.
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- Varughese, Alex, ed. *Discovering the Bible: Story and Faith of the Biblical Communities*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005.

Old Testament Introductions

- Anderson, Bernhard W. *Understanding the Old Testament*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1975.
- Archer, Gleason L. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1964.
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- Holladay, William L. *Long Ago God Spoke: How Christians May Hear the Old Testament Today*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995.
- LaSor, William Sanford, Hubbard, David Allan, and Bush, Frederic William. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982.
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- Achtemeier, Paul J., Green, Joel B., and Thompson, Marianne Meye. *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001.
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