



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

BIB515 — Reading the Biblical Story, Block Spring 2012

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 in the Essential Information section at <http://support.nts.edu>.

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

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: By appointment

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.

Degree Objectives

BIB515, Reading the Biblical Story, is intended to assist students in accomplishing the following NTS Degree Program Objectives:

- MDiv Objective 2, “Articulation of the knowledge of God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student will: b. Use scholarly methods for understanding Scripture, c. Identify key theological themes as they arise from Scripture, d. Identify and relate literary and theological emphases of Scripture, e. Understand the formative power of Scripture in shaping corporate and personal Christian life, f. Appropriate Scripture to personal and corporate life both in and beyond the church.”
- MACFD 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, 5, 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, and participation in classroom discussion will be figured in the final course grade. (Outcomes 1-4, 6, 7, 9, CN 1-3, CN 5, CN 7-15)
By Friday, February 3, 2012, 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, February 5, read your classmates' autobiographical essays. Feel free to respond to them in the Moodle forum.
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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Friday, February 10, 2012 by 11:55 p.m.
 2. Essay 2 – Based on your reading of Lawrence, pp 14-41, and Coogan, pp. 3-88, write an essay of 300-400 words comparing and contrasting the kinds of information found in and the assumptions of the two works. Due to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Sunday, February 19, 2012 by 11:55 p.m..
 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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Thursday, February 23, 2012 by 11:55 p.m.
 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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Sunday, March 4, 2012 by 11:55 p.m.
 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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Friday, March 9, 2012 by 11:55 p.m.
 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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Friday, March 16, 2012 by 11:55 p.m.

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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site no later than Friday, April 6, 2012 by 11:55 p.m.

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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Friday, April 20, 2012 by 11:55 p.m. (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 to be uploaded to the course Moodle site by Friday, May 4, 2012 by 11:55 p.m. (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: February 12, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 2. Worksheet 2 – Geography and History | Due: February 26, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 3. Worksheet 3 – Historical Backgrounds | Due: February 29, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 4. Worksheet 4 – Intertestamental Backgrounds | Due: March 11, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 5. Worksheet 5 – How the Bible Came to Be | Due: February 15, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 6. Worksheet 6 – Bible Translations | Due: February 17, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 7. Worksheet 7 – Genres & Literary Structure | Due: March 18, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 8. Worksheet 8 – Theological Themes | Due: April 27, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 9. Worksheet 9 – Spiritual Reading | Due: May 9, 2012, 11:55 pm. |
| 10. Worksheet 10 – Hebrew Poetry | Due: March 30, 2012, 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 March 26-April 1, 2012. 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. May 9, 2012 is the latest date to achieve a 70 on the BCE to pass this course.

(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 May 1, 2012, 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 May 9, 2012. (Outcomes 1-9, CN 1-15)

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	Hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	39
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	1
Reading	61
Writing	19
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	18
Exams & Quizzes	10
TOTAL	148

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 Monday, May 7, 2012, 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 attend class.

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%

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

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. If a student is absent four or more weeks of the semester, the professor may automatically fail the student.

Daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits. Students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.

Course Calendar

Wk	Date	9:00-10:25 am	11:20 am -12:35 pm	Assignments
1	Feb. 6	Syllabus and Bibliography Scriptural Inspiration and Authority	Inspiration and Authority How the Bible Came to Be	Essay 1 – Due Friday, Feb. 10 Worksheet 1 – Due Sunday, Feb. 12
2	Feb. 13	How the Bible Came to Be Biblical Languages and Translations	Bible Translations	Worksheet 5 – Due Wednesday, Feb. 15 Worksheet 6 – Due Friday, Feb. 17 Essay 2 – Due Sunday, Feb. 19
3	Feb. 20	Physical and Political Geography of the Bible The Purpose and Value of Studying Biblical History and Geography	Historical Contexts The Patriarchal Context Egypt in the 2 nd Millenium B.C. Pre-Israelite Canaan Israelite Conquest of Canaan	Essay 3 – Due Thursday, Feb. 23 Worksheet 2 – Due Sunday, Feb. 26
4	Feb. 27	Historical Contexts David and Solomon – Minimalists and Biblicists The Divided Kingdom Assyrian Ascendency	Judah alone The Rise and Fall of Babylon The Exile and Dispersion The Persian Period	Worksheet 3 – Due Wednesday, Feb. 29 Essay 4 - Due
5	Mar. 5	The Hellenistic Period and Hellenization in Judea The Maccabean Revolt The Hasmonean Interlude	The Roman Conquest and the rise of the Empire The rule of the Herods and Roman governors First Century Jewish Sects	Essay 5 – Due Friday, March 9 Worksheet 4 – Due Sunday, March 11
6	Mar. 12	The First and Second Jewish Wars and parting of Pharisaism and Christianity	Macro Literary Structures of the Bible The Canonical Organizations and their message	Essay 6 – Due Friday, March 16 Worksheet 7 – Due Sunday, March 18
7	Mar. 19	Reading and Research Week		
8	Mar. 26	Biblical Genres	Modernity's Literary Criticism of the Bible Disputed Authorship and Integrity The Documentary Hypotheses of the Pentateuch The Synoptic Problem	Worksheet 10 – Due Friday, March 30 Bible Content Exam – First Attempt due this week

9	Apr. 2	The Function and Message of the Major Sections of the Bible	The Story Line of the Bible	Essay 7 – Due Friday, April 6
10	Apr. 9	Literary Conventions Literary Forms and How They Function	Literary Conventions The Use of Rhetoric in Old and New Testaments	
11	Apr. 16	Theological Reading of Scripture Pre-critical approaches Biblical Theology of the Old Testament	Theological Reading of Scripture Biblical Theology of the Old Testament Biblical Theology of the New Testament	Book Response 1 – Due Friday, April 20
12	Apr. 23	Theological Reading of Scripture Biblical Theology of the New Testament Theological Themes in the Old and New Testaments Theological Exegesis	Theological Reading of Scripture Theological Exegesis	Worksheet 8 – Due Friday, April 27
13	Apr. 30	Theological Reading of Scripture Theological Exegesis	Theological Reading of Scripture Missional Hermeneutics	Book Response 2 – Due Friday – May 4
14	May 7	Theological Reading of Scripture Missional Hermeneutics The Drama of Scripture – Finding Our Place	Reading the Bible Spiritually	Worksheet 9 – Due Wednesday, May 9 Bible Content Exam with a score of 70 must be achieved by Wednesday, May 9 Final Exam – Due Wednesday, May 9

Bibliography

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