

Mr. Mark Bilby  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
[www.ibilby.info](http://www.ibilby.info)

210 Smee Hall  
(619) 849-2943  
Office Hours: TR 6:15-7:15, 8:30-9:30a, 4:30-6:30p

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**BIB 101: OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY AND RELIGION**  
**SPRING 2010**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Within the context of the history of Israel, an overview of the literature of the Old Testament with special attention to its literary history and theological themes (2 credits). NB: This course is one of the components of the General Education Program at PLNU, under the category of “Responding to the Sacred.” By including this course in a common educational experience for undergraduates, the faculty supports the study of Scripture and Christian heritage as foundational in the pursuit of knowledge and the development of personal values.

**GOALS**

At the conclusion of this class, the successful student will have:

1. A working understanding of the historical, cultural, geographical, and literary contexts in and among which the Old Testament / TaNaKh came into existence and the relevance of those contexts for interpretation. This includes aspects of Egyptian, Canaanite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and especially First and Second Temple Jewish history.
2. Added to one’s “interpreter’s tool belt” knowledge of and skill in various methods of Biblical interpretation (e.g., Textual, Historical, Form, Literary, Rhetorical, Reader-Response, Social-Scientific, Structuralist, Liberation, Feminist, Reception-History, Canonical, Theological).
3. Recognition of and interaction with the diversity of persons and communities, religious and secular, scholarly and non-scholarly, who have studied these texts across history, having learned to listen and to contribute to the interpretation of Scripture amidst this ongoing, lively conversation.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. Course Reader and Workbook (abv. R); purchase from <http://www.UniversityReaders.com> (NB: The first two weeks’ readings and journals will be available for download from University Readers *only after purchasing the Course Reader online.*)
2. *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, rev. student ed., SBL, 2006 (abv., HCSB; ISBN 9780060786830).
3. Michael Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation*, Point Loma Press, 2004 (abv., Lodahl).

## GRADE GOAL & WORKLOAD COMMITMENT

The professor recognizes that students have different goals and self-expectations for different courses, as well as different backgrounds, habits and patterns in life and study. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect students to perform at different levels and to be interested in different kinds of work. The professor also believes that much depends on the student's own motivation and initiative in the educational process. Therefore, the course assignments and grading system are set up to meet students where they are, and let them get what they want out of a class. At the same time, they incentivize excellence for highly motivated students while maintaining some basic requirements for the less motivated. Using quiz averages as the basis for grading should both relieve student stress (as long as students score consistently close to their peers, they will do fine), but also disincentivize cheating (only by consistently outperforming one's peers can a student earn an A). Students should choose what grade and corresponding workload / expectations they desire at the start of the semester and follow through with those expectations to receive their desired grade. Obviously, choosing a goal is no guarantee of achieving it. A student will only earn the desired grade if she or he fulfills ***all of its requirements***.

A. Students who desire an A must do ***all of the following at a minimum***: 1) have no more than one unexcused absence, contribute to almost every class with informed questions and comments, and engage in disruptive behavior one time at the most; 2) complete fifteen weeks of the Reading Journals; 3) score above the class average on 75% of the Quizzes, missing one at the most; 4) complete the two-part Survey of Attitudes toward the Bible and the two accompanying papers; and 5) complete a Creative Project.

B. Students who desire a B must do ***all of the following at a minimum***: 1) have no more than two unexcused absences, occasionally contribute with informed questions and comments, and engage in disruptive behaviors two times at the most; 2) complete fourteen weeks of the Reading Journals; 3) score no less than 10% below the class average on 75% of the Quizzes, missing two at the most; and 4) complete the two-part Survey of Attitudes toward the Bible and the two accompanying papers.

C. Students who desire a C must do ***all of the following at a minimum***: 1) have no more than four unexcused absences, sporadically contribute with informed questions and comments, and engage in disruptive behaviors four times at the most; 2) complete twelve weeks of the Reading Journals; 3) score no less than 20% below the class average on 75% of the Quizzes, missing three at the most; 4) complete the two-part Survey of Attitudes toward the Bible and the two accompanying papers.

D. Students who desire a D must do ***all of the following at a minimum***: 1) have no more than five unexcused absences, contribute minimally to class discussion, and engage in disruptive behaviors five times at the most; 2) complete ten weeks of the Reading Journals; 3) score a passing grade (50% or above) on 75% of the Quizzes, missing four at the most.

If *any* of the expectations for a given grade are not met, the student **will receive the next lowest grade**. If the basic expectations for a D (a passing grade) are not met, the student will fail the course.

***NB: See below for stipulations about whether to type or handwrite assignments. Handwritten assignments must be legible, single-spaced, using moderately sized and spaced letters. The Journals may only be done on the Journal pages themselves in handwriting. Typed assignments must be in Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double-spaced, with standard one inch margins on all sides. All assignments must cover the full-length stipulated in the assignment description (e.g., a one page journal entry must fill out the entire page; a four-page paper must fill out four whole pages, i.e. two sheets of paper front and back). All assignments are due in-class at the beginning of the period. Late work, work sent by email, or work that does not follow the stipulations or these formatting guidelines will receive a grade of incomplete or unsatisfactory.***

## **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

Note that numerical abbreviations below refer to [Week #].[Course#]. Thus, 1.2 = Week 1, Day 2. Or again, 16.1 = Week 16, Day 1. The PLNU calendar follows a sixteen week schedule, followed by a seventeenth week for final exams. Spring break week is not counted in the sequence.

### **1. Attendance and Participation (daily)**

PLNU students are required to attend class regularly to receive credit for a course. The absolute limit on unexcused absences for a two unit course such as this is six classes; after the sixth unexcused absence, immediate, automatic de-enrollment will ensue. If this happens after the drop deadline, it will result in automatic failure of the course. In regard to excused absences, the PLNU catalog states, “[t]here are no allowed or excused absences except when absences are necessitated by certain University-sponsored activities and are approved in writing by the Provost.” In other words, students should not directly contact the professor in the hope of being excused; emails in this regard will simply be deleted. The professor will only recognize an excused absence upon receiving written notice in keeping with the approval of the Provost. So, if a student is sick and expects to be excused, the student should request an official email from the PLNU Wellness Center. Student musicians and athletes will receive excused absences for University-related events through their respective officials. The professor will not recognize excused absences from other professors for projects or events related to other classes, since such voluntary events should be scheduled in a way that does not interfere with students’ other classes. Note that the final exam day, as a two-hour class, counts as two class periods.

Students are also required to maintain basic expectations for in-class behavior. This means being respectful of one's fellow students and the professor. A student who violates this fundamental rule may be asked to leave, whether for a day or for the remainder of the course, at the professor's discretion. In keeping with the format and goals of this class, the professor considers the following to be disruptive behaviors: arriving late or leaving early without a legitimate reason reported; any use of a laptop, cell phone, texting device, or music player during class-time; sleeping or a disengaged body posture (e.g., having one's head down on the desk, turning around in one's seat) during class-time; carrying on conversations with other students during lecture, etc. A student who arrives more than five minutes late or leaves more than five minutes early will be considered absent.

## 2. Reading Journal / Course Worksheets (due first class each week; handwritten only)

This assignment holds students accountable for doing the required readings (absolutely necessary for fruitful classtimes) by requiring completion of a Reading Journal. Most of these worksheets will consist of one page responses to a prompt or question. Some will involve filling out charts. At the beginning of the first class meeting each week, students will turn in **all** of the journal entries for that week as a stapled batch. Each week's collected journal entries will be graded as a whole on a complete/incomplete basis. Complete = meets above content and formatting guidelines, demonstrating a thorough and strong grasp of the reading material. Incomplete = does not meet requirements, submitted late or not at all, content incomplete, or evidencing a superficial grasp of readings. The first week's Journals will be due 1.2.

## 3. Quizzes (first class each week)

This assignment also helps students keep up with readings, complementing the previous assignment. Each quiz will have a Quotation component, requiring students to identify (citing author, title, and century) a list of direct quotations from the assigned texts for that week, including those in the Course Reader and the Old Testament. The professor will choose quotations that reflect the unique content and style of each reading. Starting the second week, one or more additional primary source readings from previous weeks may also be included. Quizzes will also include a Language component, requiring students to define scholarly terms and transliterate and translate Hebrew terms. Quizzes will also usually include other components, e.g.: Calendar (identifying important holidays), Chronology (dating important events or periods), Geography (identifying important locations), Prosopography (identifying important persons) or other background information relevant to the course content for that week. At the professor's discretion, and with advance notice, the quiz may include an essay component as well. The final exam will be an extended form of the weekly quiz, but will count the same as all other quizzes. The final exam will take place at the time slot officially designated on the University final exam schedule, available from <http://www.pointloma.edu/>. If and only if a student has three final exams on the same day, may one of those exams be re-scheduled.

#### 4. Surveys and Reports (1<sup>st</sup> survey & report due 1.2; 2<sup>nd</sup> survey & report due 16.2; handwritten or typed)

Students will take a survey that the professor has created to gauge one's understanding of and attitude toward the Christian Bible. After taking the first survey, students will write a two page, single-spaced paper (or, if typed, a two page, double-spaced paper) that **lists the reported results (specific percentages for each category)** and addresses the question, "Did the survey accurately reflect my understanding of and attitude toward the Christian Bible?" After taking the second survey, students will write a second two page paper that **lists the results (specific percentages for each category) from the first and second survey** and **specifically addresses the question**, "How did my understanding of and attitude toward the Bible change during this course? If so, how? If not, why not?" The professor will provide the web address and login information for the online survey. The assignment will be graded as a whole, as complete or incomplete. In other words, students must adequately complete **both** surveys and papers to get credit for the assignment.

#### 5. Creative Project (proposal due 4.2; final project due 16.2)

Meet with the professor no later than class 4.2 to discuss and get approved an idea/proposal for a creative project (e.g., a research paper, an article for a popular periodical, educational curriculum, writing poetry, creating music or art, analysing the Bible in pop culture, interviews/surveys about the interpretation of the Bible, constructing a blog, delivering an in-class lecture, etc.). A student will not be able to get credit for a Creative Project without this approval. After approval, the student must stay in contact with the professor on a monthly basis regarding progress on the project. The project may be combined with a project from another class so long as both professors are informed and in agreement. After completion, the student will present the project in class no later than the final exam period. The project will be graded as satisfactory / unsatisfactory.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

***All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported in a letter to administrators and will result in a zero on the assignment and likely failure and de-enrollment from the course.*** NB: the PLNU catalog states, “[a]cademic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one’s own when in reality they are the results of another person’s creativity and effort. Such acts include plagiarism, copying of class assignments, and copying or other fraudulent behavior on examinations.”

## **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

The PLNU School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the department urges students, faculty and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions and especially in their writings.

## **LATE WORK POLICY**

Late work, including the possibility of taking make-up quizzes, will not be accepted. Students who are scheduled to participate in a University-sponsored event should submit any upcoming work and arrange to take any quizzes before the due date.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY**

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student’s instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual learning needs of the student. This policy assists the University in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

## RECOMMENDED REFERENCES FOR OLD TESTAMENT / TANAKH STUDIES

### *General Reference*

*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990 (abv., BHS; Hebrew and Aramaic text of OT, based on Masoretic text in Leningrad Codex).

Freedman, D.N., ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992 (abv., ABD).

*SBL Handbook of Style* (includes Transliteration and Abbreviation/Reference Guidelines).

### *Ancient Primary Sources*

Charlesworth, J., ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vol. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983 (abv., OTP).

García Martínez, F., and E.J.C. Tigchelaar, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 vol. Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998 (abv., DSSSE).

Hallo, William W., ed. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 vol. Leiden: Brill, 1997-2002 (abv., COS).

## **ADDENDUM: COURSE OF STUDY LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course meets the following learning outcomes for Course of Study for ordination within the Church of the Nazarene.

1. Ability to identify the literary structure & the main story line of the Old Testament.
2. Ability to identify the books of the OT by genre.
3. Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the Old Testament.
4. Ability to identify the main characters of the Old Testament & their role in the story.
5. Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament.
6. Ability to chronologically order the main events and persons of the Old Testament.
7. Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament.