

LSC Use Only Proposal No:	UWUCC Use Only Proposal No: 11-16c	Senate Action Date: 4/17/12 App
LSC Action Date: AP-2/9/12	UWUCC Action Date: AP-2/14/12	

Curriculum Proposal Cover Sheet - University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

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Proposing Department/Unit Religious Studies	Phone 357-1360

Check all appropriate lines and complete all information. Use a separate cover sheet for each course proposal and/or program proposal.

1. Course Proposals (check all that apply)

☐ New Course	☐ Course Prefix Change	☐ Course Deletion
☒ Course Revision	☐ Course Number and/or Title Change	☒ Catalog Description Change

Current course prefix, number and full title: **RLST 250 Understanding the Bible**

Proposed course prefix, number and full title, if changing:

2. Liberal Studies Course Designations, as appropriate

This course is also proposed as a Liberal Studies Course (please mark the appropriate categories below)

☐ Learning Skills	☒ Knowledge Area	☐ Global and Multicultural Awareness	☐ Writing Across the Curriculum (W Course)
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☐ Liberal Studies Elective (please mark the designation(s) that applies – must meet at least one)

☐ Global Citizenship	☐ Information Literacy	☐ Oral Communication
☐ Quantitative Reasoning	☐ Scientific Literacy	☐ Technological Literacy

3. Other Designations, as appropriate

☐ Honors College Course	☐ Other: (e.g. Women's Studies, Pan African)
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4. Program Proposals

☐ Catalog Description Change	☐ Program Revision	☐ Program Title Change	☐ New Track
☐ New Degree Program	☐ New Minor Program	☐ Liberal Studies Requirement Changes	☐ Other

Current program name:

Proposed program name, if changing:

5. Approvals	Signature	Date
Department Curriculum Committee Chair(s)		10/24/11
Department Chairperson(s)		10/25/11
College Curriculum Committee Chair		12/12/11
College Dean		12/14/11
Director of Liberal Studies (as needed)		12/23/12
Director of Honors College (as needed)		
Provost (as needed)		
Additional signature (with title) as appropriate		
UWUCC Co-Chairs		2/23/12

Received

FEB 23 2012

Received

DEC 15 2011

Liberal Studies Liberal Studies

RLST 250 Understanding the Bible Syllabus of Record

I. Catalog Description

RLST 250 Understanding the Bible

3 credits

3 lecture hours

Prerequisite: None

0 lab hours

(3c-01-3sh)

An academic introduction to the sacred writings known as the Bible. The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the basic contents and major themes of the books of the Bible (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and New Testament), as well as the goals and methods of the most recent scholarship in biblical studies.

II. Course Outcomes and Assessment (Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes - EUSLO)

Objective 1:

Demonstrate knowledge of the basic content and major themes of the Bible, including both Old and New Testaments.

Expected Student Learning Outcome 1:

Informed Learners

Rationale:

Course assignments such as quizzes and exams will require students to have a basic level of knowledge about the individual parts of the Bible and their contents. Furthermore, assigned readings (including selected portions of the Bible), lectures, and documentary film clips will emphasize major themes, such as conquest and exile in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, or the Gentile mission of Paul in the New Testament.

Objective 2:

Exhibit appropriate knowledge, skills, and appreciation of biblical studies as an academic discipline.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes 1 and 2:

Informed and Empowered Learners

Rationale:

Course assignments will require students to evaluate modern approaches to the Bible, such as textual criticism, historical criticism, and literary criticism. These assignments will engage students in evaluating the many theoretical perspectives that have evolved from research methods and in assessing how the dialogue among the proponents of these perspectives has provided insights into the nature of religious experience, practice, and belief. By applying the critical

methods on an appropriately introductory level, the students will be encouraged to join and participate in this scholarly dialogue. Furthermore, readings, lectures, and documentary film clips will emphasize the historical development of the Bible in its composition, canonization, and translation.

Objective 3:

Discuss and analyze how the Bible and its interpretation has influenced the development of Judaism, Christianity, and, to some extent, Islam.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes 1 and 3:

Informed and Responsible Learners

Rationale:

Course assignments (including essays), lectures, and discussions will require students to analyze the Bible as the textual foundation for the three monotheistic religious traditions that stem from the ancient Near East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Students will be encouraged to consider those religions' historical and religious development in light of how the Bible has been differently interpreted in those traditions, and to evaluate these religions' historical and other relationships to each other with an eye toward understanding certain commonalities as well as important differences.

Objective 4:

Discuss and evaluate how implicit and explicit beliefs about the Bible have impacted cultural norms in our society.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes 2 and 3:

Empowered and Responsible Learners

Rationale:

Course assignments and class discussion will require students to assess the immense impact interpretations of the Bible have had on cultural norms ranging from the arts, politics, medicine, international affairs and the law to ethical and moral issues that face individuals in a democratic society. Lectures and discussion will also encourage students to evaluate what their own interpretations of the Bible have had on their own views and attitudes about various issues, such as politics, sex, and gender.

III. Course Outline

- I. Introduction (6 hours)
 - A. Basic information about the Bible; differences between the Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic/Orthodox Bibles.
 - B. History of composition and canonization of the various parts of the Bible.
 - C. Overview of interdisciplinary methodologies for studying the Bible; views of biblical interpretation.
 - C. The Biblical world - setting in the Ancient Near East and historical overview.
- II. The Hebrew Bible or Old Testament (21 hours)

- A. Major themes in the Law/Pentateuch (*Torah*)
 - 1. Primordial stories of Genesis
 - 2. The ancestors or patriarchs/matriarchs
 - 3. Exodus and wanderings
 - 4. The Law and law codes
- B. Major themes in the Prophets (*Nevi'im*)
 - 1. Deuteronomistic History or Former Prophets
 - a. Conquest of Canaan and the judges period
 - b. The United Monarchy
 - c. The Divided Monarchy and the fall of the nation
 - 2. Prophetic Literature and the Latter Prophets
 - a. Preexilic prophets
 - b. Exilic prophets
 - c. Postexilic prophets

Midterm - 1 hour

- C. Major themes in the Writings (*Ketuvim*)
 - 1. Psalms and other poetry
 - 2. Themes in the Wisdom books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)
 - 3. Short stories (Ruth, Daniel, etc.)
 - 4. Historical writings of the Persian period (Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles)
 - 5. Apocalyptic writings
- D. Selected books of the Apocrypha/Deuterocanon (the extra Old Testament books in Catholic and Orthodox Christian Bibles)

III. New Testament (13 hours)

- A. Introduction to the Hellenistic and Roman world
- B. Major themes in the Gospels
 - 1. Gospel according to Mark
 - 2. Gospel according to Matthew
 - 3. Gospel according to Luke
 - 4. Gospel according to John
 - 5. The synoptic problem and the non-canonical gospels
 - 6. The historical Jesus
- C. The beginnings of the early church
 - 1. Acts of the Apostles
 - 2. Pauline and pseudo-Pauline letters
 - 3. Themes in Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles
- D. Revelation of John

IV. Beyond the New Testament into early Christianity (1 hour)

Final exam (2 hours)

IV. Evaluation Methods:

The final grade will be determined as follows:

4 pop quizzes, 20 points each	80 points
Midterm exam, 80 points	80 points
Final exam, 100 points	100 points
Short response writing assignment	<u>40 points</u>
Total	300 points

V. Grading Scale

A = 90-100% (270-300); B = 80-89% (240-269); C = 70-79% (210-239); D = 60-69% (180-209); F = below 60% (179 and below)

VI. Undergraduate Course Attendance Policy

The university expects all students to attend class. It is important that students keep up with the readings and attend class regularly. While attendance and participation is not mandatory in all classes, experience has shown that both attendance and participation have a direct impact on learning and grade performance. Actual attendance policy will vary from instructor to instructor in compliance with the university attendance policy.

VII. Required Textbooks and Supplemental Books

Exemplary textbooks:

Coogan, M. *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. <http://bible.oremus.org>.

Harris, Stephen L. *Understanding the Bible*. 8th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011.

Hauer, Christian A., and William A. Young. *Introduction to the Bible*. 8th edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 2011.

Supplemental books or readings:

The following are examples of possible choices that could be used as supplemental books:

Bellis, A. O. 2007. *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

Ehrman, Bart D. 2009. *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Handy, Lowell K. 1997. *The Educated Person's Thumbnail Introduction to the Bible*. Atlanta: Chalice.

Kugel, James L. 1997. *The Bible as It Was*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

www.earlychristianwritings.com

VIII. Bibliography

- Barton, John, ed. 2002. *The Biblical World*. 2 vols. New York: Routledge.
- Boadt, Lawrence. 1984. *Reading the Old Testament*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist.
- Borg, Marcus J. and John Dominic Crossan. 2008. *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2010.
- , *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary*. San Francisco: HarperOne.
- Brown, Raymond E. 1997. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Crossan, John Dominic. 2009. *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. San Francisco: HarperOne.
- Ehrman, Bart D. 2009. *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , 2009. *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- , 2003. *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finegan, Jack. 1992. *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*. Rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Freedman, D. N., ed. 1992. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday.
- Handy, Lowell K. 1997. *The Educated Person's Thumbnail Introduction to the Bible*. Atlanta: Chalice.
- Harris, Stephen L. 2008. *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kugel, James L. 1997. *The Bible as It Was*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- , 2002. *The God of Old: Inside the Lost World of the Bible*. New York: The Free Press.
- , 2007. *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now*. New York: The Free Press.
- Mazar, Amihai. 1992. *The Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 B.C.E.* New York: Doubleday.
- Metzger, Bruce M. and Michael D. Coogan, eds. 1993. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Meyers, E. M., ed. 1997. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*. 5 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rofé, Alexander. 2009. *Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible*. Jerusalem: Simor.
- Stanley, Christopher D. 2010. *The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Stern, Ephraim. 2001. *The Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Volume II: The Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods (732-332 B.C.E.)*. New York: Doubleday.
- Trebolle Barrera, Julio. 1997. *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible: An Introduction to the History of the Bible*. Transl. W.G.E. Watson. Leiden: Brill.

IX. Summary of the Proposed Revisions

- A. Catalog description change.
- B. Revision of course objectives.
- C. Addition and expansion of other items on the syllabus including assessment resources, supplemental books and an updated bibliography.

X. Rationale for proposed revisions

- A. The changes more clearly indicate the emphasis on the “Western” cultural heritage in global context.
- B. The objectives have been updated to meet the requirements for the Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes.
- C. These revisions reflect changes in the expectation for a syllabus of record and newer academic resources available since the last version of this syllabus.

XI. Sample Assignment for a Liberal Studies Course

Short response writing assignment:

This assignment involves reading another ancient Christian gospel which did not make it into the canon of the New Testament, and comparing it to gospels in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) which we have discussed in class. For background on canonical and non-canonical gospels in general, you should review the assigned readings for weeks 11 and 12 in Harris *Understanding the Bible* before proceeding to the following website. This is not a research paper; students are asked to use only the Harris textbook and this website in order to complete this assignment. The purpose is to think about issues of canon - why are some early Christian writings in the canon of the New Testament and others not?

Part One

Go to the website www.earlychristianwritings.com, and read one of the following non-canonical gospels from the website. Note that dates of composition are given here:

- Infancy Gospel of James (date: 140-170 CE)
- Gospel of Peter (date: 70-160 CE)
- Gospel of Mary (date: 120-180 CE)
- Gospel of Thomas (date: late 1st to mid-2nd century CE)
- Gospel of Judas (date: before 180 CE)

Part Two

After reading your chosen non-canonical gospel on-line, you are to write and turn in a **2 1/2 to 3 page double-spaced typed or computer-generated essay** (with no wider than 1-inch margins and using no larger than 12 cpi font), **that addresses the following questions:**

- 1—Give at least a one or two-page description of the non-canonical gospel you read. What does it contain? If a story, give the outline of the story and important incidents. If a series of sayings, then give an overview with samples.
- 2—How does this reading seem to compare to writings that are in the New Testament? (At least half a page). Please be specific. Cite and/or quote appropriate passages from the NT writings and the non-canonical writings at least 3-5 times, or you will be docked points. When you quote directly, use quotation marks and be brief if you can.
Very Important Hint: you don't have to read the entire New Testament or an entire book of the New Testament to do the comparison to the non-canonical writing, just look to the parts of the NT that can be compared to the 2 non-canonical writings you read on-line. If a non-canonical gospel you read was about the birth of Jesus, only chs. 1-2 of Matthew and chs. 1-2 of Luke can be directly compared to that gospel (they are the only two of the four NT gospels to mention Jesus' birth). If a non-canonical gospel you read is about the death of Jesus, only the last few chapters of all 4 NT gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) can be directly compared. More indirect comparisons (tone, style, vocabulary, stories of Jesus healing, etc.) can be included too, but **the direct comparisons are the most important and are what the professor is looking for.**
- 3—In your opinion, why didn't this writing make it into the New Testament? (At least half a page.) There are some clues in the **date and content** that you should include as well as your own observations. Dates are given in the above list.

Evaluation of the sample assignment: This assignment is worth 40 points, 20 points on style and 20 points on content. Style involves but is not limited to: few typos; good grammar and complete sentences; appropriate citations of gospels and/or the Harris textbook in parentheses (no bibliography needed, since all sources are already known). Content involves: a sufficient response to all three points listed above.

XII. RLST 250 Liberal Studies Approval Questions:

A. This is an introductory course that can be taught by more than one member of the Religious Studies Faculty. At least once a year, the full faculty will discuss options and resources to meet the departmental guidelines, and exchange and evaluate instructor syllabi and potential innovations in resources and media.

B. This course will include the perspectives of African-Americans, Native Americans, other racial and ethnic minorities, and women. The study of religion by its very nature is inherently multiethnic, multicultural, and global. Supplemental readings, such as Kugel's *The Bible as It Was*, Ehrman's *Jesus, Interrupted*, and Bellis' *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes*, give examples of diverse interpretations of and approaches to the biblical text (e.g., Jewish, Christian, women, and minorities). Students will be able to analyze both the individual and cultural influences on interpreting the Bible with examples that emphasize the recognition and appreciation of ethnic and cultural difference.

C. The course includes a requirement for another book in addition to the primary textbook. There are a plethora of possibilities for this requirement including books, articles, or websites (e.g., www.earlychristianwritings.com) that offer diverse perspectives and opportunity for critical reflection.

D. This is an introductory course in religious studies intended for a general audience with little or no formal knowledge of religion or the Bible. Given the general lack of instruction in public schools about world religions, contents of the Bible, and popular misinformation regarding religion and the Bible, this course has, as its main function, a broad introduction to the Bible's history and content as well as its contemporary implications. While the course is required for beginning majors, its primary audience is the non-major who wishes to broaden his/her knowledge of religion in general.