

**BIE 500A: Introduction to the Bible**  
**Associated Canadian Theological Schools**

**2 Semester Hours Credit**  
**Professor: Lyle Schrag, D.Min.**

**Fall, 2007**  
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**Course Description**

This foundational course is intended to assist students to gain an overall understanding of the chronology and content of the Bible. It serves as an orientation to the general disciplines of Biblical study. The class will meet on three Saturdays: **September 13, October 18, and November 29**. Time for each Saturday is 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, and attendance at all three sessions is required. In addition, students need to begin working on assignments throughout the Fall, beginning **the week of September 1-7** [see weekly reading assignments.] The course will include tests utilizing the on-line services of My Courses. **It is imperative that students have a working connection with My Courses as provided during their general ACTS orientation.**

**Course Objectives:**

1. The student will develop an understanding of the value and nature of the Bible as divine revelation.
2. The student will identify general terms, issues, and principles of Biblical study and interpretation.
3. The student will learn to trace the development of central and general Biblical/theological themes and identify how they relate to specific book studies
4. The student will be exposed to the general geographical, cultural, and historical setting of the Biblical world and identify how they shape the unique character of the Biblical message
5. The student will grasp the overall content of each Biblical book
6. The student will develop confidence in the use of resources to study the Bible for the purpose of deeper love, understanding, communication and application

**Course Texts:**

Arnold, B.T. and Beyer, B.E. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. Grand Rapids, Michigan; Baker Books, 1999. [500 pages and cd.]

Elwell, W.A. and Yarbrough, R.W. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, Michigan; Baker Books, 2005 [420 pages and cd.]

A Bible, preferably New International Version [NIV] or New American Standard Bible [NASB]. Students are encouraged to consider a good study Bible with adequate study notes and other help.

***Recommended, but not required:***

1. Bruce, F.F. *The Canon of Scripture*, (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988)
2. Fee, Gordon and Stuart, Douglas. *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan, 1982 [updated])
3. Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Whose Bible Is It? A History of the Scriptures Through the Ages* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005)
4. Yancey, Philip. *The Bible Jesus Read* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999)
5. A more extensive list of books and resources will be circulated during the class session. Students will be encouraged to review the resources as a guide to build a personal reference library.

## Course Outline

### September 13

Introduction to the Course  
 Overview of the nature of the Bible  
 Review of the development of the Bible  
 Overview of topics in Bible study  
 Historical geography – culture of the Bible  
 Begin Issues in Old Testament Study

### October 18

Survey of Old Testament  
 Issues in Old Testament studies  
 Old Testament Biblical Simulation

### November 29

Student Research Presentation  
 Survey of New Testament  
 Issues in New Testament studies  
 New Testament Simulation

## Course Assignments:

### 1. Textbook Reading and Weekly Quizzes

A reading of both textbooks is required. There are weekly assignments for each reading. There will be an online quiz for each week's assigned reading: 13 quizzes in all. **Quizzes can be taken anytime in the assigned week, but not after the last day of each assigned week.** For example: the quiz for the first week, September 8 - 14, will be available on line from 12:00 am on September 8 until 11:59 pm on September 14. **All quizzes will be available through the BIE 500A course webpage at the Mycourses website [<https://courses.mytwu.ca/>].** Instructions are at the site as to how to access the course. **NOTE: Quizzes are to be taken closed-book, ie. without the aid of the textbook.**

***Further note: As a study aid, students have found it helpful to read through the material 2 or 3 times before taking the quiz.***

September 8 - 14	<i>Encountering the Old Testament</i> pp. 5-59
September 15 - 21	<i>Encountering the Old Testament</i> pp. 61-139
September 22 - 28	<i>Encountering the Old Testament</i> pp. 141-208
September 29 – October 5	<i>Encountering the Old Testament</i> pp. 209-277
October 6 - 12	<i>Encountering the Old Testament</i> pp. 279-335
October 13 - 19	<i>Encountering the Old Testament</i> pp. 337-405
October 20 - 26	<i>Encountering the Old Testament</i> pp. 407-476
October 27 – November 2	<i>Encountering the New Testament</i> pp. 4-76
November 3 - 9	<i>Encountering the New Testament</i> pp. 77-151
November 10 - 16	<i>Encountering the New Testament</i> pp. 153-208
November 17 - 23	<i>Encountering the New Testament</i> pp. 209-250
November 24 – 30	<i>Encountering the New Testament</i> pp. 251-326
December 1 - 7	<i>Encountering the New Testament</i> pp. 237-394

## **2. Research Paper**

The student will write a paper of 2,000 words on one of the following topics. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and be submitted in the Turabian format used at ACTS. Students are expected to be aware of ACTS policies [see Student Handbook] concerning plagiarism and academic integrity. Grading will be done on the basis of the Marking and Grade Interpretation guide for Written Assignments found with this syllabus. **Due date for papers: Class session - November 29.** Students will be expected to present the substance of their research during the class. Estimated time to complete the project is 20 hours. Students will be asked to submit the amount of time spent on the project.

### **Format:**

A summary of the contents and message of one of the following Biblical books. The paper will be guided by **an outline discussed in the first class session** that will describe the central message of the book as well as the themes that appear throughout the book. The first half of the paper should include a sense of the historical setting and understanding of the message. This includes identifying such necessary details as authorship, date, setting, theme, purpose, and general contribution to the overall message of the Bible including discoveries can be made of the God and His attributes, Christ and His presence, the Holy Spirit and His activity.

The second half of the paper will address a one feature in the book which has generated legitimate debate. The student will be asked to research the controversy and identify at least three potential positions and the authorities who have shaped the debate. From this research, the student will be asked to present and explain their own personal position regarding the debate. The paper should be a synthesis of the student's own reflections drawn from reading in the text and at least 5 secondary sources, all cited.

### **Subjects: Book and Debate question**

1. Esther: Does this book belong in the Biblical Canon?
2. Ecclesiastes: Was this book written by Solomon?
3. Mark: Should the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter be included in the text?
4. John: Should the passage 7:53 – 8:11 be included in the text?
5. Hebrews: Who wrote Hebrews? Should it belong in the New Testament Canon?
6. I Corinthians: How do the statements in 7:12 and 7:40 fit with the idea of inerrant authority?

### **3. Class Simulation:**

Students will be asked to do assignments in preparation for the classes on October 13 and November 24 for class interaction. The class will conduct two simulations, one each for the Old and New Testament that will require role preparation. The class will be divided into specific teams for the simulation. Each team will be expected to prepare for their specific role, and submit both written notes and bibliographic record of their preparation. Estimated time for preparation for both: 3 hours. The assignment for October 13 will be made on September 15, and the assignment for November 24 will be made on October 13. Students will be expected to participate in active class discussion. **Grading will be given on a team basis and will take into account team creativity.**

### **Grade Distribution for Assignments**

Textbook Reading and Tests	60%
Research Paper	30%
Class Simulation [written notes and bibliography]	10%

### **Grading of Course**

Pre-requisite courses for ACTS are graded on a pass/fail basis. **The passing grade is 75% and above.** Since the course is a Pass/Fail course, grading of the research essay will be adapted from the attached marking guide.

### **Campus Closure Policy**

In the event of deteriorating conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate the decision to local radio stations: CKNW [980 AM]; CKBD [600 AM]; CKSR [104.9 FM]; MAX [850 AM]; PRAISE [106.5]; and KARI [550 AM] by 6:30 a.m. and an announcement will also be placed on the university switchboard and bulletin board [email.]

## Paper Grading Guidelines

Grade	Content (40%)	Organization (30%)	Expression/Diction (20%)	Mechanics (10%) (Grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc)
<b>Outstanding Excellent  A  (90%)</b>	<p>Clear central thesis Intelligent consideration and knowledge of topic with considerable originality of thought Carefully selected details which support general statements and central thesis Good synthesis evident among various subject areas represented</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /36)</p>	<p>Effective introduction, body, and conclusion Various parts of the essay effectively tied together Writing flows smoothly, with effective paragraphs and transitions Effective plan of development using order of importance, cause and effect, etc</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /27)</p>	<p>Clear, controlled, and fluent diction Effective variety in sentence type, length, and structure Effective subordination and coordination Appropriate, lively, and wide-ranging word choice</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /18)</p>	<p>No major errors Sentence fragments, if present, are used deliberately for effect and emphasis Impeccable punctuation and spelling Evidence of careful proofreading throughout</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /9)</p>
<b>Proficient Competent  B  (75%)</b>	<p>Clear central thesis Adequate engagement with topic but little originality Appropriate details most of the time</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /30)</p>	<p>Clear introduction, body, and conclusion albeit somewhat mechanical at times Unified, well-developed paragraphs Effective paragraph transitions; sentence transitions sometimes conventional Specific plan followed fairly consistently</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /22.5)</p>	<p>Clear and reasonably fluent Appropriate sentence variety Satisfactory subordination and coordination Appropriate, clear, and correct word choice</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /15)</p>	<p>A few minor errors and one or two major errors which do not reduce the clarity of communication</p> <p style="text-align: right;">( /7.5)</p>
<b>Minimally Acceptable  C  (60%)</b>	<p>Ambiguous central thesis Writer demonstrates some understanding of topic but ideas are mainly obvious or conventional Insufficient, unclear, or repetitious details</p>	<p>Identifiable but mechanical introduction, body, and conclusion Some paragraphs inadequately developed Transitions may be weak or ill-chosen Plan of development barely apparent</p>	<p>Fairly clear, but functional and occasionally awkward Little sentence variety Overuse of co-ordination Correct but unimaginative word choice Limited and sometimes inaccurate word choice</p>	<p>Minor errors and a few major errors which sometimes impede communication OR Many minor errors and several major errors which result in clumsy writing</p>

	( /24)	( /18)	( /12)	( /6)
<b>Inadequate</b>  <b>F</b>	Central thesis not clear and topic not limited Limited knowledge; trite ideas Insufficient, inappropriate, unclear or illogical details	No clear introduction or conclusion Paragraphs not sufficiently unified or developed Transitions poor and inappropriate Confused order of development and misplaced emphasis	Frequently awkward Almost no sentence variety Excessive use of co-ordination or simple sentences Restricted vocabulary (frequently inaccurate dependence on slang or idiom)	Frequent errors which seriously impede communication