




# ☆ Syllabus (/Syllabus)

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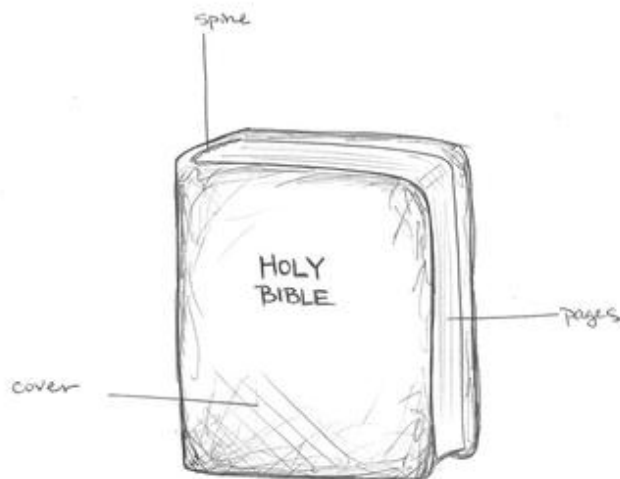
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**Time:** MW 2-3:15PM

**Location:** PERC 210

**Syllabus:** “*Bible as Literature*”



## Course Description

“To comprehend the Bible in ways similar to its original audiences, a modern reader must learn something of the alien and long-dead cultures standing behind these texts.” (Tolbert, “Reading the Bible,” *Oxford Study Bible*, 4)

“To most educated modern readers the Bible probably seems both familiar and strange, like the features of an ancestor. They will know, if only in a general way, of its central importance in the history of the culture they have inherited; but they will also be aware that in its modern forms that culture has denied the Bible the kinds of importance it had in the past.” (Alter and Kermode, “General Introduction,” *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, 1)

This course seeks to examine the “familiar and strange” text of the Bible. The Bible is a collection of texts written, revised, and collected by different people at various periods of history, all with their own unique aims and objectives. For our purposes, we will work with the Bible as a work of literature and we will study it as such. Although the text can never be completely separated from matters of religion and faith – and should not be, as our beliefs inform our reading – it is important that we consider and discuss it as we would any other literary text by thinking about and identifying themes, forms, and historical and cultural contexts. We will read the Bible, not in its original language(s), but in translation, and will reflect on how this affects our interpretations.

## What Will We Learn?

At the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- identify and analyze the textual, historical, and cultural contexts of works of literature;
- identify and articulate the issues concerning the translation, mistranslation, application, and/or appropriation of the Bible;
- read works of literature closely and thoroughly;
- develop their insights effectively through written and oral communication, particularly via essay and collaborative wiki;
- and identify the steps of the research process and apply information literacy skills in a variety of contexts.

**Instructor:** Dr. Kisha Tracy



**Office:** Miller Hall 204

**Office Hours:** MW 9:30-10:45 or by appointment

**Phone:** x4827

**Mailbox:** Miller Hall, English Studies Department Office

**\*Email:** [ktracy3@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:ktracy3@fitchburgstate.edu) (best way to contact)

*\*Email Policy: with the exception of weekends, if you do not receive a reply in 24 hours, email again.*

Dr. Tracy is an Assistant Professor of English Studies, specializing in medieval British and early world literatures. Her research specialty is Middle English literature, the time period of Geoffrey Chaucer. Her hobbies include photography, martial arts, classic films, and trips to historical sites. She is also an avid fan of the Boston Bruins.

## Course Requirements:

*At a Glance*

- [Badges](#): 15%
- [Activities](#): 15%
- Monthly Focus Assignments (3): 30%
  - Introduction and Background Video
  - Disability in the Bible Reflection
  - Non-Traditional Biblical Text Evaluation
- [Course Research Scavenger Hunt/Course Research](#): 20%
- Final: 10%
- Participation (discussion, [Facebook group](#), attendance, class preparation, etc.): 10%

### **[Badges](#): 15%**

By completing certain criteria, there will be opportunities to earn a variety of Badges. A certain number will be required, but options will be provided. Much of the work for the Badges will be completed on your personal wiki

page, which we will create on the second day of class. Requirements, expectations, and details about this assignment will be introduced and discussed in class. See "Late/Incomplete Work" section under "Course Policies."

*Assignment demonstrates student achievement of learning outcomes: to identify and analyze the textual, historical, and cultural contexts of works of literature; to identify and articulate the issues concerning the translation, mistranslation, application, and/or appropriation of the Bible; to read works of literature closely and thoroughly; and to develop insights effectively through written communication, particularly via collaborative wiki.*

**Activities: 15%**

Several Activities will be required throughout the semester. Instructions will be given for each one individually. Much of the work for the Activities will be completed on the wiki or on the Facebook group.

*Assignment demonstrates student achievement of learning outcomes: to read works of literature closely and thoroughly; to develop insights effectively through written communication, particularly via collaborative wiki; and to identify the steps of the research process and apply information literacy skills in a variety of contexts.*

**Monthly Focus Assignments: 30%**

Each month, there will be a different focus culminating in an assignment, each with their own instructions. These will include: researching and presenting information related to the background of the Bible, identifying and interpreting language employed throughout the history of the Bible, and evaluating modern, non-traditional versions of the Bible. See "Late/Incomplete Work" section under "Course Policies."

*Assignments demonstrate student achievement of learning outcomes: to identify and analyze the textual, historical, and cultural contexts of works of literature; to identify and articulate the issues concerning the translation, mistranslation, application, and/or appropriation of the Bible; to read works of literature closely and thoroughly; and to develop insights effectively through written and oral communication.*

**Course Research Scavenger Hunt/Course Research: 20%**

The culminating assignment of the semester will be the Course Research. A research project (the Course Research Scavenger Hunt) will also be a part of this assignment. Requirements (such as MLA format), expectations, and details about this assignment will be introduced and discussed in class. Assignments will be turned in through Blackboard ONLY. I will NOT accept work handed in through any other method (this includes hard copies and email). See "Late/Incomplete Work" section under "Course Policies."

*Assignment demonstrates student achievement of learning outcomes: to identify and analyze the textual, historical, and cultural contexts of works of literature; to read works of literature closely and thoroughly; to develop insights effectively through written communication, particularly via essay; and to identify the steps of the research process and apply information literacy skills in a variety of contexts.*

**Final: 10%**

There will be a final exam in this course, which will consist of a combination of activities. I will give you more specific information concerning the format when appropriate. Please note that we may not have time to discuss every text extensively in class, but the exam will cover all assigned readings. See "Late/Incomplete Work" section under "Course Policies" for procedures for missing an exam.

*Assignment demonstrates student achievement of learning outcomes: to identify and analyze the textual, historical, and cultural contexts of works of literature and to read works of literature closely and thoroughly.*

**Participation (discussion, [Facebook group](#) , attendance, group work, class preparation, etc.): 10%**

Since it is necessary to attend class in order to receive instruction and participate, attendance will be noted. You

have 3 absences – excused or unexcused – to use as you see fit. Suggestion: “spend” them wisely. 2 late arrivals will count as 1 absence. More than 3 absences will cost 1 letter grade per absence. 6 absences will result in FAILURE of the course. Students are responsible for signing themselves in each class period. Students who must miss a number of classes or who have a conflict with the final exam due to extenuating circumstances should contact the Dean’s Office (Sanders 204; 978-665-3130) and ask them to issue formal notification to all instructors regarding the absence. Students are responsible for all work despite any missed classes.

\*Students may, if they choose and as a courtesy, inform me of impending absences that fall into the above category. However, I will not always reply unless there is a question or concern to be addressed.\*

While including attendance in class, this part of the final grade will involve participation in discussion and preparation of assigned materials, including readings and written responses. In order to participate in class and earn the participation grade, you must be fully prepared, engaged (which includes using laptops, etc., appropriately during class time – also, besides laptops, please turn off all electronic devices, especially cell phones and iPods, during class), present a positive attitude, and contribute to class.

*Assignment demonstrates student achievement of learning outcome: to develop insights effectively through written and oral communication.*



#### **Note on Wiki and Facebook**

Our Wiki is a public space; our Facebook is a closed group, but on the social media site. If, at any time, you have issues with any information (i.e. creating accounts, user names, use of legal name, etc.) that you are asked to publish in these spaces, especially if these issues are privacy related, please see the instructor in order to discuss your concerns and potentially make alternate arrangements. If you have any concerns with course responsibilities as related to [FERPA rights](#) , please see the instructor in order to discuss alternative options.

#### **Note on Turnitin**

Much of the work will be turned in through the University's Turnitin system on Blackboard. This is a plagiarism software that checks work against other work uploaded to it as well all digital sources available.

#### **Other Course Policies:**

*Special Needs*

If you have a documented special need for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please contact me and the [Disability Services Office](#) in the Hammond Building as soon as possible.

### *Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty*

It is assumed that, at this point in your academic career, you are aware of proper citation and citation styles as well as appropriate use of source materials. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in FAILURE of the course. Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Fitchburg State University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. Types of misconduct and ways to avoid it are on Blackboard under "Course Documents." Pay attention as ignorance of the policy will not serve as an excuse. If an assignment becomes frustrating or you have questions, please discuss the problem with me. Read the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) as well as the [Office of Student Conduct, Mediation and Education](#).

### *Facebook/Blackboard/Email*

There will be a [Facebook group](#) for this course, which will include announcements, discussion, links, etc. A Blackboard course has been created for this class, and all of the information, including the syllabus, course schedule, and any changes thereto, will be posted. Links to on-line readings will be posted periodically. Only important Blackboard announcements will be posted; notices of these go to your school email. Students are responsible for accessing and reading all materials, including ANY announcements on Facebook and Blackboard. In addition, students will be responsible for checking the Facebook group and their school email account as both will be the primary methods of communication for the course. This means students are responsible for immediately contacting me if Facebook, Blackboard, and/or email become a problem.

### *Cell Phones, iPods, Other Electronic Devices*

Besides laptops (or equivalent), please turn off all electronic devices, especially cell phones and iPods, during class. Laptops (or equivalent) will be needed regularly; however, it is expected that all activity on laptops will be focused on the class.

### *Late/Incomplete Work*

Late assignments without prior permission or without the presence of extenuating circumstances will result in a lowering of the assignment grade. For each class period that an assignment is late, the final will be docked one letter grade. In-class work must be completed at the designated times unless we have made a previous arrangement. PLEASE MAKE SPECIAL NOTE that any incomplete work that does not meet the guidelines provided for that assignment (i.e. page length, font, etc.) will be docked one letter grade.

### *Canceling Class*

If, for some reason (especially illness or weather-related), I must cancel class when the campus is not closed, an email will be sent to all students by at least 6AM.

### **Course Commandments:**

#### *Thou shalt...*

...PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION. (Some of the best insights for understanding texts and deciding on assignment topics comes from sounding ideas off of other people; use the class setting as an opportunity to do this. Also, class will be more interesting for everyone if there is lively discussion.)

...read and adhere to "Writing Expectations" document.

...remember to complete your on-going assignments.

...NOT try to complete the Badges work at the last minute. It will not be manageable. Complete the work a little along so that you do not get behind and so that you can get the full benefit of the assignment.

...prepare questions and thoughts before coming to class. (It will be easier to participate in discussion if a few

questions and impressions are brought to class.)

...attempt to make connections between readings.

...do all of the readings. (Not completing the readings is always very tempting. However, doing so will make it much more challenging to participate in discussion.)

...create drafts of work. (The importance of working on early drafts and soliciting feedback cannot be stressed enough. Turning in work that has not been reread, revised, and proofread will automatically result in a lower grade.)

...plan ahead. (There is a schedule attached with all of the readings and assignments; take the time to look at this schedule and plan accordingly.)

...do outside reading. (It is perfectly appropriate and is encouraged for students to do readings and research outside of what is assigned; this will help to generate more discussion in class and will make writing essays easier.)

...TALK TO THE INSTRUCTOR. (If there is a problem or a question, particularly about ANYTHING that may prevent you from completing readings/assignments, please talk to me either before or after class or by email. There is much I can do to help, but only if I know there is a problem. Unfortunately, I am NOT a mind reader.)

*Did you know...*

...every three-credit course is allowed and encouraged to require a MINIMUM of six hours of work per week OUTSIDE of the time spent in class? Keep this in mind as you are planning your schedule and thinking about how much effort you are putting into this course. See the [Purdue University Student Guide to Creating a Successful College Experience](#).

#### **Grading Scale:**

<i>GPA</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Number Grade</i>
4.0	A	95 – 100
3.7	A-	92 – 94
3.5	A-/B+	89 - 91
3.3	B+	86 – 88
3.0	B	83 – 85
2.7	B-	80 – 82
2.5	B-/C+	77 – 79
2.3	C+	74 – 76
2.0	C	71 – 73
1.7	C-	69 – 70
1.5	C-/D+	67 – 68
1.3	D+	64 – 66
1.0	D	60 – 63
0.0	F	0 – 59

 Add Discussion