

**Missouri Western State University  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Department of English and Modern Languages**

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**Office Hours: MWF 9-10, 11-12**

### **Course Identification**

**Course Number: ENG210-40, 41 Approaches to Literature: Bible as Literature**

## **Course Description**

*Reading the Bible as Literature*, seven chapters, introduces you to the tools used in literary analysis, including language and style, the formal structures of genre (drama, narrative, and poetry), character study, and thematic analysis. Reading the Bible as literature means using the common tools of literary analysis.

Actually, the Bible is literature—great literature—sacred story. Story, indeed, religion, theology, and philosophy have the advantage of being older than the disciplines of history and science. Embracing history and science in an empirical world should not necessarily lead to the abandonment of these older siblings. Literature, in fact, invites readers into the human experience (existentially, rather than empirically and propositionally) through language, image, metaphor, symbol, and archetype; through story/narrative, character, and theme.

Not surprisingly, literature tells the human story often in terms of religious themes such as creation, relation (otherness, personhood, Trinity), mediation of the divine (law, gift, justice), interpretive communities (tolerance, intolerance), sin/transgression and atonement, suffering, and redemption. Religion provides a lens for reading literature just as literature provides another set of lens for understanding sacred text.

## **Required Textbooks**

Jeanie C. Crain, *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction*, Polity Press, 2010.

Bible Translation preferred—New Revised Standard Version (NRSV <http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>); the *HarperCollins® Study Bible* or *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*; both have extensive study notes that you will find helpful. For help on translation issues (Hebrew and Greek), you may access the Net Bible <http://bible.org/netbible/>.

## **Summary Course Requirements**

**Mid-term and Final Research Essay=2 x potentially 15 points each =30 points**

**Chapter Assignments (for 7 chapters) x potentially 10 points each = 70 points**

## Class Policies

MOODLE ENVIRONMENT : The student toolbox

(<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/imc/student/index.asp> ) contains information and resources that can aid students with any technical issue that may arise on campus. You may also go to the department online course web <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/online/>

The menu on the left will help students troubleshoot issues with their online classes delivered through Moodle. You will find a number of tutorials that will help to orient you to the online learning environment. Make sure you watch the opening video *Student Introduction to Moodle*. You should review other tutorials then become familiar with the course weekly layout in Moodle.

Generally, you should expect to complete the same work for online courses that you would complete in a traditional classroom. You should login the first day classes begin during a semester and frequently thereafter. All work should be completed and posted by the due date. Additionally, you should review informational articles and videos, complete suggested reviews, and generally demonstrate you have a good grasp of the course as a whole.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ATTENDANCE: “Missouri Western State University has the expectation that students should be active participants in their coursework. Regular class attendance is considered a key element of participation and an essential part of the educational experience.” (Re. MWSU 2012-2013 Catalogue, pg. 27) **Late Work will not be accepted.**

Online Class: You will be expected to login to Moodle regularly. It is extremely important that you login on the day that classes begin at Missouri Western. You will confirm your attendance during the first week of class and by doing so, also confirm that you have read the syllabus and gained an oversight of the Moodle environment and class requirements. You are expected to submit all required work as stated on the syllabus and within the Moodle environment.

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY: Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another’s work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure for the course, or expulsion from the University:

<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/acadaff/documents/AcademicHonestyPolicy.pdf>

### Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a specific kind of academic dishonesty in which you take another’s ideas or words and claim them as your own. When you draw on someone else’s work, you must indicate the source of that material, whether you are repeating another’s words, argument or thought. Even if you paraphrase another’s work and are not using the exact wording, you are still required to indicate the source of the material. This material must be clearly identified with appropriate citations. If you do not do that, you have plagiarized those materials. Any time you copy and paste any writing that is not your own for an assignment, you must use quotation marks and give the source of that material. If you cut and paste without noting what you have done, you will be guilty of plagiarism. Even if the writing is your own, if it has been used for a previous assignment that should be indicated.

**CIVILITY AND COOPERATION:** Missouri Western requires all students to help us maintain good conditions for teaching and learning. All students will treat their classmates, teachers, and student assistants with civility and respect, both inside and outside the classroom. Students who violate this policy may, among other penalties, be counted absent and asked to leave temporarily or permanently based on the seriousness of the violation. You should review your Missouri Western student handbook, specifically sections of Community Expectations and Code of Conduct and Procedures for further information. This handbook is available online at

<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have been diagnosed with a disability or if you suspect that you may have a disability that has never been diagnosed and would like to find out what services may be available, please visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in Eder Hall, room 203N or visit the ODS website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/ds/> as soon as possible. This syllabus, as well as all other printed or electronic materials, can be made available in alternative/accessible formats if requested with sufficient prior notice. Missouri Western is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. **OUR COURSE POLICY:** If you have a recognized disability, please make an appointment to see me during the first week of classes so that we can discuss how I might help you to succeed.

**GRADE APPEAL:** Please refer to the EFLJ's Department policy at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/appendixb.asp> and the University policy on page 11 of the Student Handbook for the Grade Appeal Process.

## Spring Calendar

<b>Spring 2014</b>		
Campus re-opens	January 2	Thursday
Spring Registration/Orientation Program	January 7	Tuesday
Walk-In Registration	January 9	Thursday
Wintersession Ends	January 10	Friday
Classes Begin	January 13	Monday
Martin Luther King Day Holiday	January 20	Monday
President's Day Holiday	February 17	Monday
Spring Break (no classes)	March 9-16	
Mid-Term Grades Due	March 19	Wednesday
Last Day to Withdraw	March 28	Friday
Registration Begins for Summer/Fall	March 31	Monday
Last Day of Classes	April 28	Monday
Study Day	April 29	Tuesday
Final Exams	April 30-May 6	
Final Grades Due	May 8	Thursday
Commencement	May 10	Saturday

- Number of class days - M=13, T=14, W=14, Th=14, F=14, Sa=14
- 6 Final Exam days

January 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## Class Schedule and Requirements

### **\*January 13, 15, 17 Read Preface and Chapter One**

You should open, print, and carefully read the syllabus for this course; you should keep a copy of it with your text and at your computer.

Please note that requirements for the course include careful reading of seven chapters in your primary textbook; as you read each chapter of the text, you are to think about what changes in your reading habits occur as you read the Bible as literature. Each chapter concludes with questions and exercises; for the chapter assignments, you should address up to five of the more challenging questions and complete at least two exercises during a two-week interval. You should answer each question in at least three developed paragraphs; exercises require 5-7 well-developed paragraphs. You will post your chapter assignments in designated forums. You should complete your work outside Moodle then copy and paste the chapter assignments (as one entry) into the submission space. This work will be available to all class members.

All work must be substantive, original, and carefully proofed. You should use both the textbook and the Bible as references. Use MLA parenthetical notes to provide page numbers.

**Please note: You will receive up to 10 points each for chapter work (total 70 points). You will also complete two research essays (2 x 15 points each equals 30 total potential points).**

Moodle contains additional readings and links to help orient you to the kind of work being required of you in this course. In particular, the web supplement for the text provides tables, PowerPoint chapter presentations, student reviews, and other study aids.

<http://crain.english.missouriwestern.edu/ReadingBible/>

**January\*20 Holiday, 22, 24**

\*Chapter Work due **January 26 by midnight.**

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January 27, 29, 31

**Read Chapter 2** carefully, taking extensive notes. In the second week of the assignment, or sooner, begin completing work on the questions and exercises.

\*February 3, 5, 7

**Chapter 2** work due **February 9 by midnight.**

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February 10, 12, 14

**Read Chapter 3** carefully, taking extensive notes. In the second week of the assignment, or sooner, begin chapter work on the questions and exercises.

February 17 Holiday, 19, 21

**\*Chapter 3** work due **February 23 by midnight.**

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February 24, 26, 28

**Read Chapter 4** carefully, taking extensive notes. In the second week of the assignment, or sooner, begin work on the questions and exercises.

March 3, 5, 7

**Chapter 4** work due **by March 9 midnight.**

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**Spring Break March 9-16** MT Grades March 9. Please note that midterm grade will be based on the work for three chapters, leaving four to complete and two research papers.

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March 17, 19, 21

**Read Chapter 5** carefully, taking extensive notes. In the second week of the assignment, or sooner, begin work on the questions and exercises.

**\*Research Essay 1 March 23 midnight.**

Your textbook introduces the tools of literary analysis as a special way of reading and understanding the Bible. Of course, millions have read, and will continue to read, the Bible as sacred text. All too often, people have read the Bible poorly, imposing upon it pre-determined interpretations and theologies. For this paper, you are to use your textbook (chapters 1-4) and any additional sources you wish to write an exploratory research essay (4 pages minimum-7 pages maximum, Times New Roman, double-spaced) in

which you address **what it means to read the Bible as literature** and to explain how this kind of approach enhances meaning. Show how the tools introduced have helped you to analyze and to understand a specific passage(s) of the Bible.

Chapters 1-4, introduced theory (chapter 1); style, tone, and rhetorical strategy (chapter 2); image, metaphor, symbol, and archetype (chapter 3); and major genres. You will need to pay attention, in particular, to each chapter's outline, which lays out the literary tools you should address in your paper. In submitting this paper, you are joining an academic conversation. Your paper should be publishable in its final form. This means you must provide stimulating, well-developed, and original thinking. You will use your textbook as your main research resource, using MLA format.

March 24, 26, 28

**\*Chapter 5 work due March 30 midnight.**

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March 31, April 2, 4

**Read Chapter 6** carefully, taking extensive notes. In the second week of the assignment, or sooner, begin work on the questions and exercises.

April 7, 9, 11

**\*Chapter 6 work due April 13 midnight.**

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April 14, 16, 18

**Read Chapter 7** carefully, taking extensive notes. In the second week of the assignment, or sooner, begin group work on the questions and exercises.

**\*Chapter 7 work due April 27 midnight.**

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\* April 21, 23, 25

April 28 Last Day

Research Essay 2 **April 30 midnight.**

Your textbook introduces the tools of literary analysis as a special way of reading and understanding the Bible. Of course, millions have read, and will continue to read, the Bible as sacred text. All too often, people have read the Bible poorly, imposing upon it pre-determined interpretations and theologies. For

this paper, you are to use your textbook (chapters 5-7) and any additional sources you wish to write an exploratory research essay (4 pages minimum-7 pages maximum) in which you address **what it means to read the Bible as literature** and to explain how this kind of approach enhances meaning. . Show how the tools introduced have helped you to analyze and to understand a specific passage(s) of the Bible.

Chapters 5-7 introduced you to sub-genres (chapter 5); character (chapter 6); themes and motifs (chapter 7). You will need to pay attention, in particular, to each chapter's outline, which lays out the literary tools you should address in your paper.

In submitting this paper, you are joining an academic conversation. Your paper should be publishable in its final form. This means you must provide stimulating, well-developed, and original thinking. You will use your textbook as your main research resource, using MLA format

Final Exams April 30-May 6

**Final grades will be posted by May 8.** Your final grade for the course will be based on total points earned throughout the semester (up to 70 points for chapter work and up to 30 points for research essays).