

COURSE #211 BIBLE AS CONTROVERSY (3 credits) Fall Day 2001/Main Campus
Instructor: D.Anderson (Humanities Department/ext.867) M-W-F/1:00-1:50PM/H202

Catalogue Description: Ancient scriptural documents have erupted into modern controversies, ranging from questions over biblical fundamentalism to the controversial views espoused by the "Jesus Seminar." This course will examine the notion of controversy both "within" and "about" the Bible and its texts. Questions of controversy concerning the creation stories, the monarchy of Israel, the movement of Jesus the Jew, the gospel of Paul, and the historical and contemporary uses and abuses of the Bible will be examined in detail.

Goal: to draw students into the world of biblical history, probing the texts that history has produced, being attentive to the thematic of controversy that permeates almost every portion and passage. Special focus will be given to the controversies that have erupted in modern times concerning the formation and interpretation of these Judaeo-Christian documents. The scrolls themselves carry essential freight that bespeaks controversy with regards to people and events past, present and future. Effort will be made to survey various layers of controversy within and about the books of scripture, all-the-while highlighting the truth, beauty and depth of vision and fire they contain.

Objectives:

- 1) to expose the biblical world in a way that allows the element of controversy to emerge for the sake of appreciating the complex character and nature of the material both as a whole as well as in its component parts
- 2) to sift a multitude of controversial texts, events, characters, messages, interpretations of and approaches toward scripture which excite and alarm both believers and non-believers
- 3) to foster critical use of the biblical material on the basis of contemporary biblical scholarship, utilizing available historical, scientific, linguistic and theological tools which enable examination and consideration of variant points of view with regard to the textual issues
- 4) to contextualize the controversial character of scripture within the scope of conflict that defines the human condition and which ranges through the bulk of human literature, religious and secular
- 5) to enhance knowledge of and appreciation for the spiritual value of the biblical content so long in its formulation and preservation, treasured yesterday and today by diverse individuals and religious communities dependent upon these texts for birthing and bearing faith forward

Requirements:

- 1) presence & participation in all scheduled classes for this course
- 2) completion of all assignments & projects as scheduled through the course
- 3) satisfactory completion of all examinations throughout the semester

Recommendations:

- 1) notebook for recording information during class presentations
- 2) research and reading of extra materials relevant to the course
- 3) attentive and participative class presence to foster learning attitude & aptitude

Important Notes:

Course Text: Reading the Bible Again for the First Time by Marcus Borg
New York, N.Y.: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001

Grading Method: 20% class presence & participation
40% mid-course examinations
20% final exam
20% course paper

Class Schedule: subject presentations may be amended as deemed necessary

Student Assignment: 5 page/typed/double-spaced paper on selected topic
relevant to The Bible As Controversy

Make-up Exams: administered orally only after submitting an official excuse
for failure to be present at time of written exam

Class Department: students are asked to be in class at the start time with only
appropriate course material at desktop / all cellphones are
to be on silent mode / no getting up or walking about during
classtime / no leaving class without permission

Final Exam: scheduled for Tuesday, December 11, 2001 from 10:30AM-12:30PM

Teacher: available during posted office hours & at other times by appointment
[Homephone: 947-8922 / Humanities Office: ext #867]

* Thank you for your cooperation on all of the above matters *

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Course Material</u>
8/27	M	1	Introduction
8/29	W	2	Thematic: The Bible As Controversy
8/31	F	3	Foundations [text: 3-53]
9/3	M		No Class (Labor Day)
9/5	W	4	The Genesis Debate: Genesis 1-11
9/7	F	5	Reading the Creation Stories Again [text: 57-84]
9/10	M	6	Patriarchal Stories: Genesis 12-50 [text: 85-92]
9/12	W	7	The Exodus Event: Israel's Primal Narrative [text: 92-109]
9/14	F	8	Controversy between Joshua & Judges
9/17	M	9	The Pentateuch: Debate about Authorship [handout material]
9/19	W	10	The Kingdom Controversy (I) [handout material]
9/21	F	11	Israel's Kings: Controversial Characters
9/24	M	12	Reading the Prophets Again [text: 111-144]
9/26	W	13	Israel's Prophets: Controversial Messages [handout material]
9/28	F	14	Reading Israel's Wisdom Again [text: 145-182]
10/1	M	15	Inter-Testamental Period: Religious Controversies in Judaism
10/3	W	16	Jesus of Nazareth: A Life of Controversy [handout material]
10/5	F	17	Jesus of Nazareth: Biblical & Theological Controversies
10/8	M		No Class (Discovers' Day)
10/10	W	18	Review
10/12	F	19	Mid-Course Exam I
10/15	M	20	Reading Paul Again [text: 227-263]
10/17	W	21	Paul: Apostle Steeped in Controversy (I)
10/19	F	22	Paul: Apostle Steeped in Controversy (II) [handout material]
10/22	M	23	Reading the Gospels Again [text: 185-225]
10/24	W	24	The Gospels: Conflicts & Controversies
10/26	F	25	Reading Revelation Again [text: 265-296]
10/29	M	26	The Church: Shift from Charismatics to Custodians
10/31	W	27	Scriptural Debates: Revelation/Inspiration/Interpretation
11/2	F	28	Canonicity Debates: Jewish/Catholic/Orthodox/Protestant
11/5	M	29	The Jesus Seminar Debate: Quest for the Historical Jesus
11/7	W	30	Fundamentalism [handout material]
11/9	F	31	The Bible Code [handout material]
11/12	M		No Class (Veterans' Day)
11/14	W	32	Old Testament: Theological Controversy (I) [handout material]
11/16	F	33	Old Testament: Theological Controversy (II)
11/19	M	34	New Testament: Theological Controversy (I) [handout material]
11/21	W	35	New Testament: Theological Controversy (II)
11/23	F		No Class (Thanksgiving Recess)
11/26	M	36	Review
11/28	W	37	Mid-Course Exam II
11/30	F	38	The Bible in Conflict with Sacred Texts of Other Faiths
12/3	M	39	Scripture As Controversy About Human Salvation
12/5	W	40	Group Discussion
12/7	F	41	Conclusion: Overview/Summary/Evaluation