

FE'01

Course: Religion 211 Bible as Controversy

Time: Wednesday 5:30 - 9:40 pm

Instructor: Gene Mills, Th.M., M.Div.

Contact: email: Gene1991@hawaii.rr.com
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Textbook: Beasley, James R., ed. et al. 1991, *An Introduction to the Bible*, Nashville, Abingdon.
Keyes, Mardi. 1995, *Feminism & the Bible*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
Segovia, Fernando F. 2000, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View From the Margins*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
Any modern translation of the Christian Scriptures (e.g., NRSV, NKJV, NASB, NLT, NJB).

Course 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. The course fulfills the lower division religion general education requirement.

Course Objectives:

At the end of the course, the student will be able:

- * to articulate several views of the Bible.
- * to delineate their personal process for making hermeneutical decisions (interpretations) regarding the Bible.
- * to articulate a brief history of the views/understandings of the biblical texts.
- * to articulate a brief history of the development of the biblical texts.
- * to discuss various contemporary issues corresponding to the biblical texts and their religious and social implications.

Class Format:

The course will utilize lecture, discussion, student presentations, reading, reflective writing and examinations. Students are required to be prepared for each class session through readings and assigned activities so that the most benefit may come from the learning experiences in class.

Requirements and Grading:

Mid-term Examination	30 points
Final Examination	30 points
Research/Reflection Paper	40 points

A standard, 10-point scale will be used in regards to final letter grades. Any assignment turned in late will be lowered in grade unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

Attendance Policy:

Unexcused absences equaling 2 weeks of the course will be reported to the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Records office. Unexcused absence of more than one week of classes will result in a lowering of the final grade in the course.

Course Outline:

TOPIC	READING
I. Course Introduction	
II. What is the Bible?	Beasley: 15-28, 51-67
III. Issues of Content	Beasley: As assigned in class
IV. Issues of Translation & Interpretation	Beasley: 29-49 Segovia: 3-33, 145-77 Keyes: 3-28

Research/Reflection Project

The project will be on your choice of topic **from the list below**. It will be a paper of 6-8 pages in length, typed, double spaced, with standard font and 1" margins. It will be written in either MLA, Turabian or APA format **only** (preference is in that order), with footnotes and/or parenthetical citations, and a bibliography or works cited section. Use your style guide! Papers that do not follow the proper format will be lowered in grade, regardless of the content.

The purpose of this project is for you to gain and exhibit an in-depth understanding of *one particular issue and to develop a tentative proposal in its regard*. As such, your research should be broad, yet focused — consisting of more than 6, yet less than 12 sources. Internet sites are allowable as long as they are reputable, scholarly web pages directly related to your topic. In a research/reflection paper, the writer needs to share what has been written and then dialogue with it. It is not merely a series of quotations and/or paraphrases. Plagiarism is a severe offence and will not be tolerated. You need to tell me what has been said and then tell me, based on your knowledge and beliefs (hopefully expanded through this course) why the authority is correct or not. Be careful to support logically any disagreement with an authority in the field, but feel free to disagree when it can be supported. You should use inclusive language (e.g., use words like humanity and humankind, instead of man or mankind, etc.).

Possible topics:

- The Bible as History: Literal or Not
- Is the Bible Patriarchal?
- Slavery in the Bible
- How Accurate is Our Bible's Translation?
- Postmodern Interpretation and the Bible
- Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?
- Any other topic cleared by the instructor ahead of time

FE 01

**Chaminade University of Honolulu
Discipline of Religious Studies**

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RE211 Bible as Controversy
Rev. Herman Gomes, ss.cc.
Ph. 236-7749

Course Syllabus

Course Description: Ancient scriptural documents have erupted into modern , controversies, ranging from questions over biblical fundamentalism to the contorversial views espoused by the "Jesus Seminar". The 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 letters of Paul, and the historical and comtemporany uses of the Bible will be examined in detail.

Course Objectives:

1. To expose the biblical world in a way that allows the element of controversy to emerge - revelaing its complex nature and character.
2. To specifically study a number of controversial texts, events, individuals, messages, interpretations of and approaches toward scripture that both excite and alarm, and perhaps confuse believers and non-believers.
3. To learn the historical-critical method as well as to understand metaphor and allegory as it is applied to Biblical texts.
4. To encourage the research of modern biblical scholarship as a way of understanding the levels of meaning contained in the Sacred Scriptures.
5. To enhance knowledge of and appreciation for the spiritual value of the biblical content treasured yesterday and today, as a literary work and as a guide to faith.

Course Textbook and Materials:

1. Reading the Bible Again for the First Time by Masrcus J. Borg
2. An English translation of the Bible with critical apparatus.
Recommended: New American Bible
3. Handouts on specific topics will be distributed through the course.

Course Requirements:

1. Assigned readings and class participation.....25%
2. Research/Reflection Paper.....25%
3. Mid-term Examination.....25%
4. Final Examination.....25%

The assigned readings from the textbook have been scheduled into the course syllabus. The student is encourage to follow the reading guide. Class participation is expected. Shorts tests will be administered to assess comprehension and retention.

To cultivate research and analytical skills, the student will write a paper. This paper will be part research, part reflection. A 5-7 page paper will be turned in prior to the last class. Topics for this term paper will be discussed by the instructor.

90 minutes will be allotted for the mid-term exam and the final exam. Exam question are a compilation of those presented in the textbook as well as those formulated by the instructor. Short answers and essays will be employed.

Course Schedule:

October 2	Introductory overview of the Bible - allegory, symbol, exegesis
October 9	Chapters 1 and 2 - Seeing the Bible Again The Bible and God
October 16	Chapter 3 - History and Metaphor
October 23	Chapter 4 - Reading the Creation Stories Again
October 30	Chapter 5 - Reading the Pentateuch Again
November 6	Chapter 6 - Reading the Prophets Again
November 13	Chapter 7 - Reading Israel's Wisdom Again
November 20	Chapter 8 - Reading the Gospels Again
November 27	Chapter 9 - Reading Paul Again
December 4	Chapter 10 - Reading Revelation Again

N.B. Those students who wish to do so will be asked to share their term papers with the class.