

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' & '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, THE BOOK OF REVELATION, HISTORICAL & CONTEMPORARY USE & ABUSE 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 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 & events past, present & future. Effort will be made to survey various layers of controversy within & about the books of scripture, all-the-while highlighting the truth, beauty and depth of vision & 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 & 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 & non-believers
- 3) To foster critical use of the biblical material on the basis of contemporary biblical scholarship, utilizing available historical, scientific, linguistic & theological tools which enable examination and consideration of variant points of view with regards to the textual issues
- 4) To contextualize the controversial character of scripture within the scope of conflict that defines the human condition & which ranges through the bulk of human literature, religious & 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 and participation in all scheduled classes for this course
- 2) completion of all assignments/projects as given throughout the course
- 3) satisfactory completion of all examinations during the semester

**Recommendations:**

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

**Grading:**

20% class presence & participation	45% mid-course examinations
20% course paper	15% final exam

[Paper: 5 page report on any scriptural book/event/character relevant to the theme of controversy:  
 3 page subject summary/1 page reason for selection/1 page contemporary correlation]

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Presentation</u>	RE#280 <u>Bible As Controversy</u> (M-W-F: 8 or 9 AM)
8/28	M	1	Introduction to Course & Course Thematic	
8/30	W	2	Israel: A History of Controversy [Text: 15-22]	
9/1	F	3	The Genesis Debate [Text: 153-157]	
9/4	M		No Class (Labor Day Holiday)	
9/6	W	4	Creation Stories: History & Myth	
9/8	F	5	Patriarchal Stories: History & Characters [Text: 93-104]	
9/11	M	6	The Exodus Event [Text: 104-117]	
9/13	W	7	Controversy Between Joshua & Judges [Text: 119-134]	
9/15	F	8	The Pentateuch: Debate About Authorship	
9/18	M	9	The Kingdom Controversy: The Making & Unmaking of Israel [Text: 135-153]	
9/20	W	10	Israel's Kings: Controversial Characters [Text: 159-180]	
9/22	F	11	Israel's Prophets: Controversial Messages [Text: 181-250]	
9/25	M	12	The Job Story: Controversy About Good & Evil [Text: 264-266]	
9/27	W	13	Review	
9/29	F	14	* Exam I	
10/2	M	15	Inter-Testamental Period: Religious Controversies in Judaism [Text: 280-289]	
10/4	W	16	Jesus of Nazareth: A Life of Controversy [Text: 319-344]	
10/6	F	17	Jesus as Scandal	
10/9	M		No Class (Discoverers' Day)	
10/11	W	18	Film	
10/13	F	19	Paul: Controversy in the Early Church [Text: 389-407]	
10/16	M	20	Paul: Controversial Mission & Letters [Text: 409-449]	
10/18	W	21	Film	
10/20	F	22	Film	
10/23	M	23	Gentiles/Jews/Christians: Groups in Controversy [Text: 473-482]	
10/25	W	24	The Book of Revelation: Conflict & Controversy [Text: 482-490]	
10/27	F	25	The Gospels: Chronologies in Conflict [Text: 345-363]	
10/30	M	26	Review	
11/1	W	27	* Exam II	
11/3	F	28	The Gospels: Theologies of Contrast [Text: 365-387]	
11/6	M	29	The Church: Shift From Charismatics to Custodians [Text: 451-471]	
11/8	W	30	Scriptural Debates: Revelation/Inspiration/Interpretation/Canonicity	
11/10	F		No Class (Veterans' Day)	
11/15	M	31	Old Testament Theological Controversy [Israel's God-Image & Message I]	
11/17	W	32	Old Testament Theological Controversy [Israel's God-Image & Message II]	
11/19	F	33	Old Testament Theological Controversy [Israel's God-Image & Message III]	
11/22	M	34	New Testament Theological Controversy [Christianity's Jesus-Image & Message I]	
11/24	W	35	New Testament: Theological Controversy [Christianity's Jesus-Image & Message II]	
11/26	F		No Class (Thanksgiving Holidays)	
11/29	M	36	New Testament Theological Controversy [Christianity's Jesus-Image & Message III]	
12/1	W	37	Review	
12/3	F	38	* Exam III	
12/6	M	39	Christian Scripture in Conflict with the Sacred Texts of Other Faiths	
12/8	W	40	Christian Scripture & the Controversy about Human Salvation	
12/10	F	41	Semester: Overview & Evaluation	

- 1) The above schedule of presentations may be amended as deemed necessary during the semester. Please be advised.
- 2) Course Text: Introduction to the Bible (Beasley)
- 3) Prof. David Anderson (Humanities Department)/Home Phone: 947-8922
- 4) Final Exam: