I. Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

II. Course Description

The Bible has been an influential and often fundamental source for many modern, Western views of God, nature, human beings, a just society, and the origin and destiny of humanity and the world. An intelligent, serious reading of the Bible raises most of the perennial questions that have traditionally stood at the center of philosophical and theological debate. Thus, a thorough analysis of Biblical texts in terms of the central concerns of the Core curriculum will be the primary goal of the Biblical Heritage.

Biblical Heritage is one of several ways to meet the general theology requirement at Boston College. Please note, however, that both Biblical Heritage I and II must be completed to meet the requirement.

III. Etiquette:

Students are expected to be mentally and physically prepared for class each day and to conduct themselves responsibly during class each day. This preparation includes the following:
1. Students must bring their Bibles to every class meeting.
2. Students should arrive to class punctually.
3. Cellular phones and communication devices should not be consulted during class.
4. Except in the case of emergency, students should not leave and reenter the class during session.
5. The use of electronic devices as learning aids (e.g., taking notes during lectures) is acceptable, provided the device is not used in ways that detract from learning for the student or others.

IV. Textbooks & Readings (Required)
A. Study Bible: Every student must have a study Bible in a modern English translation. The following are good options; the first of which will be available in the book store.


      -Since this Bible does not include the New Testament, choosing this option will require an additional purchase for Biblical Heritage II, such as *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (2011)


C. There may be supplemental readings by topic; these will be available online via Canvas or sites such as Oxford Biblical Studies online (accessed through BC libraries) or Bible Odyssey.

V. Canvas
Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click here.

VI. Course Objectives
The Theology Department maintains the following learning outcomes for its core courses:
   1. Engaging the quest for truth and meaning that generate theological insight in Christianity and other religious traditions;
   2. Exploring the fundamental texts and practices that shape Christian theology;
   3. Understanding the dynamic relationship between religious truth-claims and their moral implications, both personal and societal;
   4. Engaging the various disciplinary methods required for theological reflection, including textual, historical, social and cultural analysis; and
5. Relating theological inquiry to the enduring questions animating the broader liberal arts tradition.

More specifically, this course will have the following objectives:

6. Gaining familiarity with the Hebrew Bible as a corpus of texts.
8. Developing competence across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age in biblical interpretation as evidenced through thoughtful reflection on biblical law (Canvas discussion 6/4) and cultural and religious identity (Canvas discussion 6/18).
9. Demonstrating ethical awareness pertaining to Jewish-Christian relationships with respect to the shared interpretation of the scriptures.

VII. Grading
The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:

A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services.

VIII. Deadlines and Late Work
Deadlines are included in the course schedule. Given the nature of the summer schedule, failure to keep up with the schedule presents a problem for both student and instructor.

IX. Course Assignments
As an introduction to a substantial religious text and its history of interpretation over several millennia, this course requires a significant amount of reading and writing. The course schedule below indicates the volume and pace of expected work. The university expects a minimum of 2 hours per week for every hour of instructional time and this course meets for 6 hours per week; thus, expect a minimum of 12 hours of work on reading and preparation outside of class.

Course readings are expected to be completed before the class period for which they are assigned.

In addition to course readings, assignments will include:
A. Quizzes: Brief (10 to 15 minute, short answer) quizzes on the content of the readings for the day (25%)

B. Online Discussions: (15%)
   1. Posting responses to prompting questions in the course schedule, and
   2. Posting at least two comments to other students’ responses

C. A Major Writing Project (35%)
   Choose one of the following options. Each version of the major writing project should result in a polished 7–10 page final project.
   1. Multiple Reflections on the Flood Story
This project consists of analyzing the flood narrative of Genesis 6–9 in four distinct ways:

a. Source Criticism – Divide Genesis 6–9 into two coherent stories and address why the biblical account has included both accounts
b. Ancient Near Eastern Comparative Material – compare to Atraḫasis or Gilgamesh (How does the biblical story compare/differ with its Mesopotamian predecessors?)

c. Critical biblical scholarship – Using at least two good commentaries and at least one other scholarly source, address the point of the J and P accounts
d. Contemporary Reuse: Reflecting on one of the following movies, address how the movie appropriates the biblical account? How does the movie’s point compare to the point of the story?

_Evan Almighty_ (Shadyac 2007)
_Noah_ (Aronofsky 2014)

2. Book Review

a. Read one of the following popular/semi-popular texts related to the Hebrew Bible:

b. Write a review that describes
   1) The purpose and argument of the book
   2) Method(s) of biblical interpretation employed in the book
   3) The effectiveness of the book in making its argument

c. The review should proceed along the following lines:
   1) Deadline 1: The purpose and argument of the book
   2) Deadline 2: Methods of biblical interpretation employed in the book
   3) Deadline 3: Effectiveness of the book in making its argument
   4) Deadline 4: Final version of the paper

3. Research Paper

a. Select a topic in consultation with the instructor and write a thesis-driven research paper.

b. The paper should proceed along the following lines:
   1) Deadline 1: Proposed topic and tentative bibliography
   2) Deadline 2: Proposed thesis and outline
   3) Deadline 3: Rough draft of the paper
   4) Deadline 4: Final version of the paper

D. A Final Exam (25%)

X. Course Schedule

5/16: The Bible in its Ancient Near Eastern Environment

A. To Read:

Primary: Biblical and Parallel Texts (Parallel Texts can be found on Canvas)

   parallel: The Wisdom of Amenemope (COS)

2. The Flood Narrative of Genesis 6–8
   parallel: Gilgamesh tablet XI (Hays 75–82)

3. Psalm 29
4. The “Goring Ox” of Exodus 21

Secondary
Collins, chapter 1
[optional] Michael V. Fox, “From Amenemope to Proverbs” (Canvas)

B. To Discuss:
In two substantial paragraphs, answer the following the questions:
1. Is it surprising to you that the Hebrew Bible shares such close similarities with other ancient Near Eastern texts?
2. Benjamin Sommer argues that the Bible must be understood as both scripture (texts held to be sacred and in some sense divinely inspired by a religious community) and artifact (a product of human culture). Do the similarities shared between the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern texts impact your opinion of what the Hebrew Bible is?

Submit your written response on Canvas by Friday, May 18.

5/21: Religion in Ancient Israel: God(s) and Cosmology
A. To Read
   Primary: Psalms 11, 29, 47, 82, 96, 104, 115; Genesis 1:1–2:3a
   Secondary:
   Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses
   (http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/index.html)
   An
   Enki/Ea
   Enlil/
   Inana
   Iškur/Adad
   Marduk
   Utu/Šamaš
   Benjamin Sommer, “Heavenly Beings”
   (https://www.bibleodyssey.org/tools/ask-a-scholar/heavenly-beings)
   Review Collins, chapter 1
B. To Watch (Collins/Baden: Flood https://vimeo.com/137872839)
C. To Discuss
   In two substantial paragraphs, answer the following the questions:
   1. How are the Mesopotamian gods similar to or different from their counterpart(s) in the Hebrew Bible?
   2. Is there evidence in these Psalms of development from polytheism to monotheism in the Hebrew Bible?
   Submit via Canvas by Wednesday, May 23.
D. Quiz

5/23: Religion in Ancient Israel: Cult
A. To Read
   Primary: Psalms 13, 30, 47, 50, Leviticus 1–16
   Secondary: Collins, chapter 7
B. To Write
The first part of the major writing project
Submit via Canvas by 5/25

C. Quiz

5/28: Memorial Day – No Class

5/30: Pentateuchal Narratives
A. To Read:
   Primary: Genesis 2:3b–3:24; Genesis 6–9; Genesis 12–17, 21–22; Exodus 1:1–6:13;
   Exodus 14–17;
   Secondary: Collins, chapters 2–4
B. To Watch
   Collins/Baden “Genesis Introduction” (https://vimeo.com/137872842)
C. To Write:
   The second part of the major writing project
   Submit via Canvas by 6/1
D. Quiz

6/4: Pentateuchal Law
A. To Read:
   Primary
      Exodus 19–24; Deut 12–27; Lev 17–27
   Secondary
      Collins, chapters 6, 8
B. To Watch:
   Collins/Baden: “The Book of the Covenant” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2e2zIYeRKY)
C. To Discuss:
   Is the Bible Guilty?
   In two substantial paragraphs, answer the following questions:
   1. To what extent is Bible morally culpable for accepting or promoting slavery, racism, or sexism, in its laws?
   2. What kind of evidence would either convict or exonerate the Bible?
   Submit via Canvas by Wednesday, 6/6.
D. Quiz

6/6: The Deuteronomistic History
A. To Read:
   Primary
      Deuteronomy 28–32; Judges 1–3 (skim); Judges 6–8; 1 Samuel 16–18, 27;
      2 Samuel 15–19 (skim); 1 Kings 16:29–22:40
   Secondary
      Collins, chapters 10–12, 14
B. To Discuss
   Reflecting on 1 Samuel 16–18, in two substantial paragraphs, answer the following questions:
   1. What difference does it make if Goliath is almost 10’ tall or if Goliath is only 6’ 9”?
   2. Why would a compiler include multiple conflicting accounts of the first meeting
between David and Saul?
Submit via Canvas by Friday, 6/8.
C. To Write
The third part of the major writing project
Submit via Canvas by Friday, 6/8.
D. Quiz

6/11: Prophets I
A. To Read
   Primary
   Isaiah 1–39 (Read carefully Isaiah 1–5, skim the rest)
   Secondary
   Collins, chapter 16
B. To Discuss:
   In two substantial paragraphs, answer the following questions:
   1. Is biblical prophecy concerned with the present or the future?
   2. Is biblical prophecy political or religious?
Submit via Canvas by Wednesday, 6/13.
C. Quiz

6/13: Prophets II
A. To Read:
   Primary
   Isaiah 40–66 (Read carefully Isaiah 40, 54–55, 56, 58, 60; skim the rest)
   Secondary
   Collins, chapter 19
B. To Write
   Complete major writing project
   Submit via Canvas by Friday, 6/15.
C. Quiz

6/18: Apocalyptic & Identity
A. To Read:
   Primary
   Daniel 1–12, Esther 1–9; Ezra 3–7; 8:31–10:17; Nehemiah 2–5, 13
   Secondary
   Collins, chapters 21, 26b, 27a
B. To Discuss
   In two substantial paragraphs, compare religious exclusivity and inclusivity in Nehemiah
   13 and Isaiah 56. If both texts come from roughly the same time and place, what does this
   suggest about the nature of their community?
Submit via Canvas by 6/20.
C. Quiz

6/20 Final Exam

XI. Written Work
Summer Session students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials
must be typed and submitted in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough yet concise
style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA or CLA style per your instructor’s requirements. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. For writing support, please contact the Connors Family Learning Center.

XII. Attendance
1. Attending class is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. When circumstances prevent a student from attending class, the student is responsible for contacting the instructor before the class meets. Students who miss class are still expected to complete all assignments and meet all deadlines.

2. Consistent with BC’s commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

3. Given the nature of the summer session, missing a single class is the equivalent of missing a week of classes during the academic year. As a result, only one excused absence will be permitted. Missing substantial portions of a class period will also be considered an unexcused absence. Any unexcused absences will result in the reduction of the student’s final grade by 3% per absence.

XIII. Accommodation and Accessibility
Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Summer Session courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:

- The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD.
- The Disabilities Services Office (DSO) coordinates services for all other disabilities.

Find out more about BC’s commitment to accessibility at www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility.

XIV. Scholarship and Academic Integrity
Students in Summer Session courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work. Please see the Boston College policy on academic integrity for more information.