

Bergen Community College  
Division of Arts and Humanities  
Department of Philosophy and Religion

**Course Syllabus**

**PHR-124 The Christian Scriptures**

**Basic Information about Course and Instructor**

Semester and year:  
Section Number:  
Meeting Times and Locations:  
  
Instructor:  
Office Location:  
Phone:  
Departmental Secretary: [optional]  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

**Course Description**

**PHR-124 The Christian Scriptures** is an introductory study of traditional and modern perspectives on the Old and New Testaments, with primary emphasis on the New Testament.  
3 lectures, 3 credits  
General Education Course – Humanities Elective

**Student Learning Objectives:** As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to

1. identify and discuss, both orally and in writing, the historical origins and theological content of the Old and New Testaments;
2. identify and discuss, both orally and in writing, the major approaches to and perspectives on the Bible;
3. identify the major similarities and differences between various interpretations of the biblical text;
4. identify and summarize the major developments in, and the major strengths and weaknesses of, modern biblical scholarship and criticism;
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing their own views on biblical issues; and
7. participate actively in discussions of ideas and issues in biblical studies (re: SLOs 1-4).

In pursuit of the foregoing objectives, the course is based on the reading and discussion of both primary and secondary sources in the field of biblical studies; the essential principles of critical thinking are introduced; techniques of scholarly research and writing are reviewed; students are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions; and students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

**Learning Assessment**

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Philosophy Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through various means of assessment, such as the "Suggested Means of Assessment" listed below.

Student Learning Objective	Suggested Means of Assessment
1. identify and discuss, both orally and in writing, the historical origins and theological content of the Old and New Testaments;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> </ul>
2. identify and discuss, both orally and in writing, the major approaches to and perspectives on the Bible;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
3. identify the major similarities and differences between various interpretations of the biblical text;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
4. identify and summarize the major developments in, and the major strengths and weaknesses of, modern biblical scholarship and criticism;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing assignments*</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing their own views on biblical issues; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> </ul>
7. participate actively in discussions of ideas and issues in biblical studies (re: SLOs 1-4).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graded class discussions</li> </ul>

\*Writing assignments for the purpose of assessing student success on SLO 5 will include research and writing projects, possibly including term papers, in which a student identifies an information need, accesses and evaluates appropriate resources, and uses the information effectively and ethically for a specific purpose.

**Course Content**

As with all BCC religion courses, "The Christian Scriptures" (PHR-124) is designed to be an academic study its subject matter and not to advocate particular sectarian views. The course should survey current scholarly opinion on the Bible, as well as various ways in which diverse traditions construe the authority and meaning of the Bible.

The instructor need not hesitate to challenge the preconceptions of students in the course, especially since many such tend to cluster about the Bible. By the same token, however, care should be taken never needlessly to affront the sensitivities of students, since such sensitivities may be keen and deeply held. If all goes well, the course will furnish students with many new tools and much information to enrich any interest they may already have (or may gain) in the study of the Bible. Just as important, the course ought to impart a firm sense of the plurality of perspectives and a new understanding and tolerance of perspectives other than one's own.

**Special Features of the Course** (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, web enhancement via a parallel course website, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy learning in the course; etc.

### **Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials**

The only **required text** is the Bible, Genesis through Revelation. Recommended versions: the King James Version (KJV); the New King James Version (NKJV); the New International Version (NIV); and the New American Standard Bible (NASB). Not recommended are those Bibles, which are paraphrases rather than translations such as the Good News Bible, Today's English Version, the New Jerusalem Bible, and Good News for Modern Man. The King James Bible, one of the greatest monuments of English prose, is a careful and most accurate translation, but one whose seventeenth century language can be a problem for those not accustomed to it.

### **Useful Secondary Sources – most recent editions of the following:**

Barth, Karl. *The Epistle to the Romans*  
Borg, Marcus. *Jesus and Contemporary Scholarship*  
Brown, Raymond. *The Birth of the Messiah*  
Brown, Raymond. *The Death of the Messiah*  
Bultmann, Rudolf. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*  
Bultmann, Rudolf. *Kerygma and Myth*  
Bultmann, Rudolf. *The New Testament and Mythology*  
Ehrman, Bart. *After the New Testament*  
Ehrman, Bart. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*  
Goppelt, Leonhard. *The Theology of the New Testament*  
Harris, Stephen L. *Understanding the Bible*  
Holmberg, Bendt. *Sociology and the New Testament*  
Jeremias, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus*  
Koester, Helmut. *Introduction to the New Testament*  
Ludemann, Gerd. *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts*  
Mbiti, J.S. *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*  
Moltmann-Wendel. *The Women Around Jesus*  
Pagels, Elaine. *Adam, Eve, and The Serpent*  
Sanders, E.P. *The Historical Figure of Jesus*  
Schlatter, Adolf. *The History of the Christ*  
Schussler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her*  
Schussler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *The Book of Revelation*  
Schweitzer, Albert. *The Quest of The Historical Jesus*  
Schillebeeckx, Edward. *Jesus*  
Theissen, Gerd. *The Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*  
Thurston, Bonnie. *Women in The New Testament*  
Wenham, David and Steve Walton. *Exploring the New Testament*

### **Writing and Critical Thinking Requirement(s)**

PHR-124 requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

### **Grading Policy**

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class

participation grade will count for no more than twenty percent (20%) of the final grade. A student's research and writing work will count at least fifty percent (50%) of the final grade.

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **BCC Attendance Policy:**

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

#### **Philosophy and Religion Departmental Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may penalize work which is late; however, the instructor's policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified on the student guide.

#### **Attendance Policy in this Course:**

[To be designated by the instructor]

### **Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements [optional but recommended]**

Examples:  
Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty.  
ADA statement.  
Sexual Harassment statement.  
Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology.  
Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.

### **Student and Faculty Support Services [optional but recommended]**

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

**Student and Faculty Support Services**

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 <a href="mailto:psimms@bergen.edu">psimms@bergen.edu</a>
Smarthinking Tutorial Service	On Line at:	<a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx</a>
The Tutoring Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx</a>
The Writing Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx</a>
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room S-131	201-612-5270 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/oss">http://www.bergen.edu/oss</a>
BCC Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

**Special Note on the Tutoring Center**

**The Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center** encompasses the Tutoring Center, the English Language Resource Center, and the Writing Center. The website of the Learning Assistance Center is located at [www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp](http://www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp). Tutoring services are available for this course in the Tutoring Center. I strongly recommend that you make use of those services as we progress through the course. As listed above, the Tutoring Center is located in Room L-125, and its phone number is 201-447-7908.

**Include the following statement on Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club**

**Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club**

Logos usually meets on Tuesdays during the Activities Period, 12:30-1:25 PM, but sometimes also on different days and at different times. I encourage you to join the club. Since you are interested in the study of philosophy, you should find the meetings and other activities of the Philosophy & Religion club very interesting. For further information, check the Philosophy & Religion bulletin board adjacent to Room L-325A or contact LOGOS Advisor, Professor Jennifer Lyden (L-326, 201-493-3540, [jlyden@bergen.edu](mailto:jlyden@bergen.edu)). (LOGOS does not hold regular meetings during the summer.)

**Include a Course Outline and Calendar [can be combined in a single syllabus section]**

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

**Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar**

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Departmental Policy Syllabus

4/26/05; revised, 1/22/14; updated, 2/3/14, 2/6/14

<b>Week(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Topics &amp; Assignments</b>	<b>Learning Objectives</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

See the Sample Course Outline and Calendar below.

**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR**

[with designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic]

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Topic/Activity/Assignments</b>	<b>Learning Objectives</b>
1		The Nature and Basic Principles of Biblical Interpretation Reading: Hand-Out Materials	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
2		The Historical Origins and Development of the Old and New Testaments First Paper Assigned	1 1-6
3		Genesis 1-11: A Biblical Cosmology and Anthropology Reading: Genesis 1-11	1-7
4		The Old Testament History of Ancient Israel Reading: Selections	1-7
5		The Writings of the Old Testament Prophets Reading: Selections – Concentration on Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah	1-7
6		The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament Reading: Selections – Concentration on Proverbs and Job First Paper Due	1-7 1-6
7		Mid-Term Examination	1-4, 6
8		The Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts Reading: Selections – Concentration on Mark Second Paper Assigned	1-7 1-6
9		The Gospel of John	1-7
10		The Gospel of John, continued	1-7
11		The Pauline Epistles Reading: Selections – Concentration on I Corinthians	1-7
12		The Catholic Epistles Reading: Selections	1-7
13		The Book of Revelation Second Paper Due	1-7 1-6
14		Biblical Thought and Scholarship in the Contemporary World Reading: Hand-Out Materials	4-7
15		Final Examination	1-4, 6