

Course Information

Course Number: ENGL 365 / RELS 360
Course Title: The Bible as Literature
Section: 500
Time: M/W/F 10:20 am – 11:10 am
Location: SCTS 216
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Dr. Katayoun Torabi
Office: LAAH 436
E-Mail: torabik@tamu.edu
Office Hours: MWF 11:30 am - 12:30 pm and by appointment via Zoom at this link:
<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/95466529318>

Course Description

Narrative, structural, and thematic study of the Jewish and Christian scriptures in English translation.

Special Course Designation

Cross-listed (English/Religious Studies); CORE
Core curriculum course designations may be found at <https://core.tamu.edu/>

Course Learning Outcomes

In this course, because of focused discussions in class, close reading, and extensive writing, students will learn to:

- 1) Identify key motifs and specific literary genres represented in the Hebrew and Greek (Jewish and Christian) scriptures
- 2) Carry out close readings of biblical texts
- 3) Propose and support a thesis based on textual evidence
- 4) Locate, evaluate, and deploy scholarly secondary sources in a formal paper.

Core curriculum objectives:

Critical Thinking Skills (CTS): English 365/RELS 360 enhances critical thinking skills through accurate reading and class discussion of important Biblical ideas.

Communication Skills (CS): This course enhances oral and written communication skills

through group discussion and the composition of a formal paper focused on Biblical ideas, themes, and literary techniques.

Personal Responsibility (PR): This course enhances personal responsibility through engagement with complex ethical and moral ideas from the Bible.

Social Responsibility (SR): This class enhances social responsibility by offering students insight into the cross-cultural forces that have shaped the distinctive literary traditions represented in the Hebrew and Greek (Jewish and Christian) scriptures.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

The English Bible (King James Version): *Old Testament* (Norton)

The English Bible (King James Version): *New Testament and Apocrypha* (Norton)

Additional readings will be available on Canvas

If you wish to use another edition of the King James Version of the Bible please check with me. This is a specific, historic translation and will be used exclusively in the course. It is widely available online.

Grading Policy

Grading (1,000 points total available)

Grading Scale

900-1000 points A

800-899 points B

700-799 points C

600-699 points D

599 points and below

Major Grade Categories/Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Consistent Participation: attendance, in person or in any Zoom events, discussion, minor written exercises and responses to class participation questions.	5%
Midterm Exam	25%
10-page research paper <i>or</i> Creative Project (this grade includes preparatory Assignments--abstract, conference with instructor, submission of drafts as needed.	45%
Final Exam	25%
Total	100%

Late Work Policy

Late work (submitting a deliverable after the established deadline) cannot ordinarily be accepted after the end of the final examination. In the event of illness or other emergency, it may be possible to arrange for later delivery. Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempted from the late work policy. See [Student Rule 7](#).

Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion are assumed. Students will be excused from class due to illness, emergency, or other university recognized events, but should bring in documentation. (See [Student Rule 7](#).) As required by Texas state law, major religious holidays are also excused absences for faculty and students.

Other Course Information

Technology Support:

- Canvas course systems are only offered to officially registered TAMU students (no correspondence students).
- Instructor will post, encourage, and be available for regular office hours.
- Grades can only be made available on a secure (password protected) site such as Canvas, Howdy, or Turnitin.com. **Email mention or discussion of specific grades is not allowed due to FERPA laws.**
- Students must retain their own copies of all assignments in case of any technological failure where resubmission of work might be required. Instructor will maintain her own separate copy of the grades because some Course Management Systems (Canvas, Turnitin.com) regularly purge files, including grades.
- As noted in the TAMU Student Rules (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule61.htm>), it is every student's responsibility to check their Texas A&M University official e-mail account for University-related communications on a frequent and consistent basis. The University recommends checking e-mail at least once per day.
- **Student Responsibility to Backup All Work for the Course:** Students and Instructor should realize that all work stored in Turnitin.com is deleted from student access after each semester ends. As also mentioned above, it is the student's responsibility to backup and retain all work done for the course for the entire semester, in case there is a reason to hand the work in again. Students must keep electronic or hardcopy versions of all work and major projects, complete with instructor comments. The instructor is only responsible for keeping a record of the grade book from each semester.

Professionalism/Respectful Communications

Students should be aware of and employ professionalism in all communications for the course, both in the classroom and in all online situations (including email to the instructor and peers). Students will treat this course as a professional obligation in accordance with the university's Student Rules. In all, students should employ the same polite, respectful behavior with peers and instructor that is expected in a professional situation or workplace. Questions about the assignments should be addressed to the

instructor. Inappropriate behavior (such as, rudeness in any form, spam, baiting, bullying, use of disrespectful language, sharing of materials in inappropriate ways--especially copyrighted materials) in the classroom or in the online environment will be cause for the instructor to take action in removing the offending student and materials without notice, and may result in the student being called in to the Aggie Honor Office for inappropriate behavior, as cited in the university's Student Rules regarding student disruption of class.

Email Responses

Instructor will make every effort to respond to student emails and discussion questions as soon as possible within 24 hours of receipt of email (excepting weekends and holidays) and within standard business hours (9am-5pm). Please send only one email per request or topic of inquiry—multiple emails risk appearing to be spamming, thus can be reviewed under Student Rules. Students should also keep in mind that instructors are not required to respond to emails during evenings, weekends or holidays. Likewise, students should be aware that the Helpdesk for Canvas primarily operates during the week, Monday-Friday, 9:00-5:00. Answers to queries about IT will be sent during the week, not on the weekend.

University, College, and Department Policies, Procedures, and Resources

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24.](#))

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

“Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

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You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below) Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

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Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.

- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

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Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University’s [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student’s academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Texas A&M College Station

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Statement on Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. I encourage your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course. This course meets the following standards for diversity content and instruction in the following way(s):

1. Course content that includes readings and other materials that address various categories of social difference (gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, age, sexuality, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, ability, linguistic background, etc.) on the course topic.
2. Tying current events and local histories centered on the production of social difference into classroom activities.

Territorial Acknowledgements foreground our connections to Indigenous dispossession

We, the Department of English, acknowledge that Texas A&M University (College Station) is situated on the land of multiple Native nations, past and present. These original homelands are the territory of Indigenous peoples who were largely dispossessed and removed. We specifically acknowledge the traditional stewardship of this land by the Tonkawa, Tawakoni, Hueco, Sana, Wichita, and Coahuiltecan peoples. We pledge to support and advocate for the histories, cultures, languages, and territorial rights of historic Indigenous peoples of Texas and those of the Indigenous peoples who live here now. This statement affirms continuous Indigenous presence and rights, acknowledges the ongoing effects of settler colonization, and supports Indigenous struggles for political, legal, and cultural sovereignty. However, acknowledgements and statements are insufficient without action behind their words, as Summer Wilkie argues in "So You Want to Acknowledge the Land" (**High Country News** 22 April 2021: <https://www.hcn.org/issues/53.5/indigenous-affairs-perspective-so-you-want-to-acknowledge-the-land>).

We encourage you to learn more about affiliated groups of Native nations and tribes in your community and to support the Native American and Indigenous Student Organization at Texas A&M (https://maroonlink.tamu.edu/organization/american_indian_student_assoc). The College of Liberal Arts also offers coursework in Native and Indigenous history and culture, including ANTH 301: Indians of North America, HIST 258: American Indian History, and ENGL 357: Native American Rhetorics and Literatures.

To learn more about the over 10.7 million acres of Indigenous land and territory used by the United States government as land-grant university endowments, including for Texas A&M, review **High Country News**'s study on the Morrill Act of 1862 (<https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>).

To further understand the importance of land and territorial acknowledgments, consult additional resources, such as <http://landacknowledgements.org/>.

Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records by limiting access to these records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Currently enrolled students wishing to withhold any or all directory information items may do so by going to howdy.tamu.edu and clicking on the "Directory Hold Information" link in the Student Records channel on the MyRecord tab. The complete [FERPA Notice to Students](#) and the student records policy is available on the Office of the Registrar webpage.

Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPR or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class.

Directory items include name, UIN, local address, permanent address, email address, local telephone number, permanent telephone number, dates of attendance, program of study (college, major, campus), classification, previous institutions attended, degrees honors and awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, medical residence location and medical residence specialization.

Technology Support

Texas A&M University at Qatar students can also direct their technical questions to servicedesk@qatar.tamu.edu

University Writing Center

The mission of the University Writing Center (UWC) is to help you develop and refine the communication skills vital to success in college and beyond. You can choose to work with a trained UWC peer consultant in person or via web conference or email. Consultants can help with everything from lab reports to application essays and at any stage of your process, from brainstorming to reviewing the final draft. You can also get help with public speaking, presentations, and group projects. The UWC's main location is on the second floor of Evans Library; there's also a walk-in location on the second floor of the Business Library & Collaboration Commons. To schedule an appointment or view our helpful handouts and videos, visit writingcenter.tamu.edu. Or call 979-458-1455.

COVID-19 Statement

To help protect Aggieland and stop the spread of COVID-19, Texas A&M University urges students to be vaccinated and to wear masks in classrooms and all other academic facilities on campus, including labs. Doing so exemplifies the Aggie Core Values of respect, leadership, integrity, and selfless service by putting community concerns above individual preferences. COVID-19 vaccines and masking — regardless of vaccination status — have been shown to be safe and effective at reducing spread to others, infection, hospitalization, and death.

Course Schedule

Topic	Dates	Readings and Assignments
In the Beginning	Monday, 8/30	Introduction to the Course
	Wednesday, 9/1	<i>Genesis</i>
	Friday, 9/3	<i>Genesis</i>
	Monday, 9/6	<i>Genesis</i>
	Wednesday, 9/8	Reading Day (no class meeting)
	Friday, 9/10	<i>Genesis</i>
A Covenant in the Wilderness	Monday, 9/14	<i>Exodus</i> 1-20; 32-34
	Wednesday, 9/15	<i>Deuteronomy</i>
	Friday, 9/17	<i>Deuteronomy</i>

The Prophets (Nevi'im) The Deuteronomistic History	Monday, 9/20	<i>Joshua</i> 1:11; <i>Judges</i> 1-5; 13-14
	Wednesday, 9/22	Reading Day (no class meeting)
	Friday, 9/24	Library Instruction Day via Zoom
Review	Monday, 9/27	Review of reading schedule <i>Ruth</i>
	Wednesday, 9/29	Reading Day (no class meeting)
	Friday, 10/1	Review material covered to date <i>Esther</i>
The Kethuvim, Books of Poetry, Wisdom, and Sacred History	Monday, 10/4	Review for Midterm Exam
	Wednesday, 10/6	Midterm Exam (Bring Blue Books)
	Friday, 10/8	<i>After the Exile, Wisdom Literature: Job</i> Harris (on Canvas)
The Kethuvim, Books of Poetry, Wisdom, and Sacred History	Monday, 10/11	<i>Reinterpreting Israel's history for the post-exilic world: Ruth</i> (continued) Harris (on Canvas)
	Wednesday, 10/13	<i>Reinterpreting Israel's history for the post-exilic world: Esther</i> (continued) Harris (on Canvas)
	Friday, 10/15	<i>Reinterpreting Israel's history for the post-exilic world: Ezra</i> Harris (on Canvas)
The Jewish Apocrypha	Monday, 10/18	<i>Introduction to the Jewish Apocrypha and themes in post-exilic literature:</i> Harris (on Canvas)
	Wednesday, 10/20	<i>Tobit</i>
	Friday, 10/22	<i>Judith</i>
Old Testament Apocalyptic Literature	Monday, 10/25	<i>Apocalyptic literature in the Book of Daniel: Daniel</i> Harris (on Canvas)
	Wednesday 10/27	<i>Other apocalyptic literature: Ezekiel</i> Harris (on Canvas)

	Friday, 10/29	Other apocalyptic literature: <i>4 Ezra</i> PAPER TOPICS DUE
Between Two Testaments	Monday, 11/1	Introducing the New Testament: Harris (on Canvas)
	Wednesday, 11/3	Literary Categories in the New Testament, the Four Gospels: Harris (on Canvas)
The Story Arc of Jesus in the New Testament	Friday, 11/5	Jesus, Son of Man: <i>Mark 1-8</i> Harris (on Canvas)
	Monday, 11/8	Jesus, Suffering Servant: <i>Mark 9-16</i> Harris (on Canvas)
	Wednesday, 11/10	Jesus, Storyteller: <i>Matthew 13:1-23; Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 15:11-32</i> Ryken, "The Parables" (Canvas)
	Friday, 11/12	Jesus, Orator: <i>Matthew, 5-7</i> Harris (on Canvas)
	Monday, 11/15	Jesus, Orator, continued
Pauline Epistles	Wednesday, 11/17	Paul, Gospeller: Harris (on Canvas)
	Friday, 11/19	Paul, Interpreter: <i>Romans 1-4</i> Harris (on Canvas)
The Apocalypse in the New Testament	Monday, 11/22	Visions of End Time: <i>Ezekiel</i> (review)
	Wednesday, 11/24	Thanksgiving Holiday
	Friday, 11/26	Thanksgiving Holiday
	Monday, 11/29	Visions of End Time: <i>Revelation</i>

The Apocalypse in the New Testament		Harris (on Canvas)
	Wednesday, 12/1	Visions of End Time: <i>The Apocalypse of Peter</i>
		Harris (on Canvas)
	Friday, 12/3	ROUGH DRAFT AND GROUP PEER REVIEW (Failure to participate in Peer-Review will result in a significant drop in your paper's final grade)
Papers and Projects Due	Monday, 12/6	FINAL PAPER OR PROJECT DUE BEFORE CLASS ON 12/6
	Wednesday, 12/8	Final Exam Review
Final Exam	Tuesday, 12/14	FINAL EXAM 8 AM TO 10 AM