

## ENCOUNTERING THE BIBLE (BIBL 201)

### Summer 2011 (Online Course)

May 30, 2011 - July 22, 2011

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**Messiah College Catalog Description:** This course “equips students to interpret the Old and New Testaments in their historical and literary contexts. This course explores various genres and addresses the origin, transmission, and canonization of the Bible. Students learn to understand and apply biblical texts responsibly through careful reading and analysis.” (Messiah College Catalog, 2010-11).

### Course Objectives

1. Gain a fundamental knowledge of ancient Mediterranean cultural norms, and understand the biblical passages in light of this context.
2. Trace the development of the canon of Scripture and some of the historical processes involved in the transmission of biblical books.
3. Learn how to employ basic research methods and tools used in biblical exegesis.
4. Identify and interpret the various literary genres contained in the Bible.
5. Grapple with the application of biblical teachings to contemporary issues.

### Responsibilities of Students

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Regular Participation in Forums | 4. Online Quizzes             |
| 2. Reading                         | 5. Exams                      |
| 3. Short Written Assignments       | 6. Group Project/Presentation |

### Required Texts

1. Cosby, Michael. *Interpreting Biblical Literature: An Introduction to Biblical Studies* (Grantham, PA: Stony Run Publishing, 2009).
2. *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*. ©1989.

### Messiah College Academic Integrity Policy

[www.messiah.edu/academics/advising\\_handbook/academicpolicies/integrity.pdf](http://www.messiah.edu/academics/advising_handbook/academicpolicies/integrity.pdf)

## **Course Requirements**

### **Assignments (20%)**

**Due Wednesdays and Fridays (usually).** Each assignment is designed to guide and facilitate the student's reading and interaction with the class notes found in the "lectures" (i.e., power point presentations and video recordings) and the readings that accompany each portion of the class. The assignments often include, among other things, questions designed to help students understand important themes, concepts, and issues in the discipline of Encountering the Bible. Many assignments are also "practice" and preparation for the tests.

Part of these assignments will be the writing of two specific short essays on two different passages assigned by the instructor. One of these short essays will also connect directly to the "group" project and the use of "Wiki" (see instructions online). Both essays together will be worth 10% of the final 20% of this segment of the course.

### **Forum Participation (25%)**

Since we are not able to interact in a traditional classroom, the Forums are designed to facilitate conversation that is virtually equivalent to the classroom. The goal of these conversations is to allow us to learn from one another, to ask questions, to seek clarification, and to debate and wrestle with difficult literary, cultural and theological questions related to the Bible.

The forums will often be based upon the assignments, power points, readings, video clips, and other class resources. Each forum will be open from Monday to Wednesday *or* from Thursday to Saturday. Students are required to make several forum contributions between Monday and Wednesday and forum contributions between Thursday and Saturday. For more specific guidelines, see the attachment provided in Week 2. These guidelines will also provide information about the evaluation of forum contributions. You should seek to integrate insights from each assignment. I will create forums and topics and you will respond to existing threads within each topic. If you wish, you are also free to create a new topic and start a thread within that topic. [Your creation of a new topic will count, of course, as one of your contributions for the forum session.]

If your contribution is inadequate, you should expect to hear from the board moderator (me). After the first warning, the student should expect to have his/her evaluation effected as the guidelines indicate.

\*Note: the first and final weeks of class will follow a slightly different format.

#### **Forum Organization and Terminology:**

**Forum:** Each week, the instructor will create two new forums. Within each forum, students will find (and are even permitted to create) several topics. I may create a topic as well for each of the week's two assignments.

**Topics:** Each topic provides the arena within which a particular issue or cluster of issues can be discussed. (If you, the student, wish to discuss an issue related to the assignment/readings/video clip/power point/other resources, you are free to create your own topic and a thread(s) within the topic).

**Threads:** Once a Topic has been created, one must start a thread within that Topic. It is possible for students to respond to existing threads and to create new threads within a Topic.

## **Group Project (10%)**

During one forum, a group of students will be expected to make a virtual “presentation” to the entire class. Each group will utilize the “Wiki” tool to write (and, edit) each other’s work leading up to the actual presentation day. During Week 3, all students will participate in a “Wiki” sample assignment, which will allow all of us to become more familiar with the Wiki tool. In addition to the written segment, each group should provide a video clip (whether one developed by the group or a fitting you-tube clip) that goes along with some element within the presentation. When the project is completed, it will be presented online to the class as part of one forum discussion. Students will, then, be allowed to react accordingly.

## **Quizzes (10%)**

Weekly quizzes

On most weeks, we will take two quizzes directly related to the textbook reading. Generally, quizzes will be objective in format (i.e., multiple choice; true/false, etc.). Quizzes should be a *closed book* assignment. This will be the best way to begin to learn the terms in the glossary at the end of each chapter and some of the major content within the chapters. To encourage a closed book format, the student will be allowed to re-take the quiz **three times**. The goal is to ensure that you have covered some of the basic terminology and concepts in the textbook. Many of these questions will also be useful for the assignments for each week.

## **Tests (35%)**

Two Online Exams (approx. 90 minutes long)

Your best test grade will count as 20% (200 points) of your final grade and your worst test grade will count as 15% (150 points) of your final grade.

- Test One: Due June 20-24th
- Test Two: Due July 18-22nd

The format for the tests is an “open-book” format. You are free to utilize all of the course resources (Power point presentations and assigned readings). However, collaboration with other students on the test **is strictly forbidden** and constitutes academic fraud. The goal of the tests is not memorization, but comprehension. Most of the test questions will challenge your understanding of

course material, ability to display comprehension by applying theories or concepts to particular situations, and engage in analytical and critical thinking. Many of the test questions you will encounter will be “short answer” questions. I will, however, also include longer essay question(s) on each of the exams.

## **Course Policies**

All assignments and tests must be turned in by 11:55 p.m. of the due date for full credit unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been discussed with the Instructor by phone or email and the student has been allowed to turn in assignments at a later date. Time extensions will be granted if there are significant extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control. [It is preferable to contact the instructor than *not* to submit an assignment.]

Forum participation must take place within the forum assignment window (contributions between Monday and Wednesday and contributions between Thursday and Saturday) because the purpose of the forums is interaction with classmates and the Instructor. Late responses to the forums will benefit the overall conversation minimally.

## **Statement on Confidentiality**

Students in online courses will be asked to post written work and to engage in written dialogue with other class members. The student should be aware that although confidentiality within the course environment is encouraged, it is possible that users in and outside the course may have access to course content.”

## **Faculty Availability**

I can be reached at my email address (epowery@messiah.edu), which I check regularly throughout each day.

If there is an emergency, call my cell number: (423) 314-1009

## **Faculty Expectations**

This is an 8-week course. Students should anticipate at least 12-15 hours per week on readings, assignments, and forum participation. Consider the amount of time spent on a normal Fall/Spring semester course. Many of the assignments are regular parts of my in-class Encountering the Bible course. Many of the forums are the types of discussions that we normally have in the in-class version of this course. In addition, preparation for each of the two “online” tests should require approximately 5-6 hours to organize one’s thoughts and materials.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services (Hoffman 101-102). If you have questions, call extension 5382.

## **Minimum Hardware and Software Requirements**

Internet Connection – Broadband suggested (cable/DSL)

Browser

Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher

Mozilla Firefox 2.0 or higher

Operating System Version: Windows XP (recommended), Windows Vista

Desktop Processor (CPU): Pentium 4 at 3.0 Gigahertz or faster

Laptop Processor (CPU): Centrino (or Centrino Duo) 1.5 GHz or faster

Memory (RAM):

Windows® XP: 512 MB or more

Preferred Vista 1024 MB or more

Hard Disk Space; 40 GB or more of free space

CD-ROM CD-RW drive (DVD or combo drive helpful)

MS Office Standard Edition

## **Minimum Computer Skills Requirements**

Students who enroll in an online course must have basic computer skills as described in the course syllabus and on Messiah's portal, MCSquare. You must have access to a computer, the Internet, a web browser (variety, version, and configuration as specified in MCSquare), and other software necessary to complete course requirements.

## **Helpful Links at Messiah College**

**Ask a Librarian:** [http://www.messiah.edu/murraylibrary/reference table.html](http://www.messiah.edu/murraylibrary/reference%20table.html)

**Student Computer Services:** <http://www.messiah.edu/offices/its/student/>

# How do I get IT support?

## Students

Help is available between the hours of **8 A M and 11 PM Eastern Time (7days a week)**.  
***Please leave a message providing your name, number, and a brief description of the issue you are experiencing. You will receive a call back as soon as possible.***

**Weekdays** - 8 AM to 5 PM Mon. to Fri.  
Phone (717) 796-1800 Ext. 5901 **or** (717) 796-5039  
Instant Messaging SCS5901 through AIM  
Email bthompso@messiah.edu or ResNet@Messiah.edu

**Evenings and Weekends** 5PM-11PM Mon. to Fri. -**AND-** 8 AM to 11 PM Sat. and Sun.  
Phone 717-796-1800 Ext 3333

## Course Dates

May 30, 2011- July 22, 2011

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### *Topic Reading Assignments*

<i>Week 1</i>	Introduction to Course	Cosby, 1-15	2-Page Reflection
Part I	Sample "Encounter" Session		
Part II	Culture & Social Setting of the Bible	Cosby, 16-39	<b><i>Sample Quiz (ch. 2)</i></b>
<i>Week 2</i>	History & Geography of the Bible	Cosby, 40-57	<b><i>Quiz 2 (ch. 3)</i></b>
Part I			
Part II	From Manuscripts ... to Scripture & Formation of Canon	Cosby, 58-80 <i>skim</i> 81-104 <i>skim</i> 411-429	<b><i>Quiz 3 (ch. 4)</i></b>
<i>Week 3</i>	Reading the Bible as Literature	Cosby, 105-127	<b><i>Quiz 4 (ch. 6)</i></b>
Part I	<i>Jonah &amp; Ruth</i>		
Part II	Wisdom Literature	Cosby, 128-153 <i>skim</i> 154-172 <i>Prov</i> 1-9; <i>Job</i> 1-2; 38-42	<b><i>Quiz 5 (ch. 7)</i></b> <b><i>Sample Wiki Project:</i></b> <i>Ecclesiastes</i> <i>[Papers Due]</i>
<i>Week 4</i>	Genesis & the ANE	Cosby, 173-194	<b><i>Quiz 6 (ch. 9)</i></b>
Part I		<i>Genesis</i> 1-11	
Part II	<b><i>Exam #1: The Week of June 20th</i></b>		

<i>Week 5</i> Part I	Israel's Laws & Sacrifices	Cosby, 211-235	<b><i>Quiz 7 (ch. 11)</i></b> <b><i>Wiki Project I:</i></b> <i>Deut 12-26</i>
Part II	Historical Narratives	Cosby, 236-257	<b><i>Quiz 8 (ch. 12)</i></b>
<i>Week 6</i> Part I	The Gospels	Cosby, 283-318	<b><i>Quiz 9 (ch. 14)</i></b> <b><i>Wiki Project II:</i></b> <i>Luke 14-19</i>
Part II	Jesus' Parables	Cosby, 319-343	<b><i>Quiz 10 (ch. 15)</i></b>
<i>Week 7</i> Part I	Acts of the Apostles	Cosby, 344-359	<b><i>Quiz 11 (ch. 16)</i></b> <i>Acts 10-15</i>
Part II	Pauline Literature	Cosby, 360-380	<b><i>Quiz 12 (ch. 17)</i></b> <b><i>Wiki Project III:</i></b> <i>1 Cor 5-10</i>
<i>Week 8</i> Part I	Apocalyptic Literature	Cosby, 381-410	Final Reflection Due
Part II	<b>Final Examination: <i>The Week of July 18th</i></b>		