



## History of the Bible and Its Interpretation 2020FA\_5423-91

### I. Instructor Information



**Name:** Grant Testut, Ph.D.

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(office)

**Office Hours:** Mon.: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.; 12:40 - 1:40 p.m.;  
2:40 - 3:40 p.m.

Wed./Fri.: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.; 12:40 - 1:40 p.m.

Thurs.: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.; 1:10 - 3:10 p.m.

[Date and Time at OC](#) | [Time Zone Converter](#)

### II. Instructor's Christian Worldview and Teaching Philosophy

As a student in this course, you do not owe me anything. If you want to learn the material and earn a good grade, then you owe it to *yourself* to spend time in and outside of class devoted to your studies. As your professor, I owe you something as well. I am held responsible to educate you to the best of my ability, and to assign you a grade based upon your performance on class assignments. As a professor who is a follower of Christ, I also feel that my duty is not merely to lead you, but to serve you. I cannot make you learn; I can only provide you with the resources for education. But know that I am here to facilitate your learning in any way that I can.

### III. Course Description

A course introducing the student to the composition of the Bible and its various uses throughout history. Key questions to be addressed include: What do we know of the authors of the biblical books and their backgrounds? How were certain books selected for inclusion in the Bible, while others were excluded? How were the texts of scripture preserved and transmitted over the centuries? What do different people mean when they talk about the Bible in terms such as "Word of God," "inspired," "authoritative"? How far back do such treatments of biblical texts go, and what other meaningful lenses are there through which to approach these texts?

### IV. Course Objectives

This course will equip the student with a technical knowledge concerning the history of the Bible's composition, canonization, and transmission. It will also challenge the student to think critically about the impact that the Bible has had upon society, and also about how society has impacted the way in which people approach the Bible. By the end of this course,

the student is expected to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the origins of the various books that make up the Bible.
  - This will be measured by tests and discussions in weeks 1 and 2, and by project 1.
- Discuss the process by which certain books were canonized and others excluded from the canon.
  - This will be measured by tests and discussions in weeks 3 and 4, and project 2.
- Define and detail the nature of source, form, and textual criticism, and the criteria used in each.
  - This will be measured by certain test questions in weeks 1-2 and 5.
- Cite some of the major manuscript traditions responsible for preserving the Old and New Testaments.
  - This will be measured by tests and discussions in weeks 5 and 6.
- Delineate and explain some of the history of significant translations of the Bible; especially concerning the history of the Bible in English.
  - This will be measured by discussion and test in week 6, and by project 3.
- Articulate the influence of the Bible on society, and the influence of society on Bible interpretation.
  - This will be measured by discussion and test in week 8, and by project 4.

To see how these objectives relate to the desired outcomes of the degree program, see [Appendix A](#).

## V. Course Resources

### A. Required

Enns, Peter. *The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014.

Wegner, Paul. *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

Wright, N.T. *Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today*. New York: HarperCollins, 2011.

### B. Recommended

See [Appendix B](#).

## VI. Course Requirements

A. There are a total of 8 tests in this course; **one test per week**. Each test may be taken only once. During the test, the student may consult materials from the class (such as the textbooks or the student's notes). The average of all test grades will

constitute 50% of the student's overall grade in the class.

B. Each week, after completing the assigned reading and video(s), each student is expected to make a minimum of **two posts** to the discussion board relating to that week's topic. One post is to be the student's personal reflections on the material that was read/watched, and another post must engage with what other students have posted. More posts than the minimum are certainly welcome. Keeping in mind that there will likely be differences of opinion on such important topics as we will be discussing, students are encouraged to keep not only a civil but a Christ-like spirit about the way in which they conduct themselves in the discussion boards. Differences of opinion are welcome to be expressed in the discussions, but it is best to avoid language that will be perceived as aggressive or inflammatory. The first post will be due by the end of day (11:59 p.m.) on Thursday of each week, and the response is to be submitted by the end of day (11:59 p.m.) on the Saturday of each week. The average grade for all discussion board posts will constitute 30% of the student's overall grade in the class.

C. Students will be required to complete **four projects** for this course, which will come due at the end of weeks two, four, six, and eight. Each project will invite the student to spend time diving deeper into one of the four main subject areas of the course: Composition, Canon, Transmission, and Scripture Impact. Students are not to rely solely on data from their textbooks for these projects, but are expected to consult at least three outside scholarly sources in their projects. A scholarly source means a book, article, or essay that has been made available by a credible publisher in the field of biblical studies. Videos and podcasts may also be used as scholarly sources, so long as they can be connected with credentialed scholars in the field of biblical studies.

For all assignments, including projects, students are advised to make sure that: (1) all words that are not their own are put in quotation marks; (2) all words and ideas that are not their own are properly cited; (3) a bibliography is included at the end of each project. Failure to give due credit when using the words and/or ideas of others constitutes plagiarism, which is a form of stealing (see OC's policy on plagiarism below). The format for any papers in this class – including all footnotes and citations – is to follow the guidelines of the Turabian style. The averaged grade for the projects will constitute 20% of the student's overall grade in the class.

## VII. Grading/Marking Scale

Letter	Range
A	93–100%
B	84–92%
C	75–83%
F	below 75%

### VIII. Tentative Course Schedule

As per policy (see below), all due dates and times referenced in this syllabus are U.S. Central Standard/Daylight time (i.e., the time at OC's campus). If you would like to convert dates and times to your time zone, you may use the time zone converter [located here](#).

Week 1 – Oct. 25-31	<b>Topic: The Composition of the Hebrew Bible</b> Learning Activities Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Wegner 21-50; Enns 3-70</li><li>• Watch videos</li><li>• Discussion board</li><li>• Test 1</li></ul>
Week 2 – Nov. 1-7	<b>Topic: The Composition of the New Testament</b> Learning Activities Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Wegner 51-72</li><li>• Watch videos</li><li>• Discussion board</li><li>• Test 2</li><li>• Project 1</li></ul>
Week 3 – Nov. 8-14	<b>Topic: The Canonization of the Hebrew Bible</b> Learning Activities Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Wegner 101-130; Enns 73-164</li><li>• Watch videos</li><li>• Discussion board</li><li>• Test 3</li></ul>
Week 4 – Nov. 15-21	<b>Topic: The Canonization of the New Testament</b> Learning Activities Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Wegner 131-162; Enns 167-227</li><li>• Watch videos</li><li>• Discussion board</li><li>• Test 4</li><li>• Project 2</li></ul>
Week 5 – Nov. 22-28	<b>Topic: The Transmission of Texts by Hand</b> Learning Activities Due:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Wegner 75-100, 165-240</li> <li>• Watch videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> <li>• Test 5</li> </ul>
Week 6 – Nov. 29-Dec. 5	<p>Topic: <b>The Bible in Translation</b></p> <p>Learning Activities Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Wegner 243-261, 273-336, (341-403)</li> <li>• Watch videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> <li>• Test 6</li> <li>• Project 3</li> </ul>
Week 7 – Dec. 6-12	<p>Topic: <b>The Printing Press and the Reformation</b></p> <p>Learning Activities Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Wegner 263-270; Wright 1-105</li> <li>• Watch videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> <li>• Test 7</li> </ul>
Week 8 – Dec. 13-20	<p>Topic: <b>The Shifting Faces of the Bible over Time</b></p> <p>Learning Activities Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Wright 107-195</li> <li>• Watch videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> <li>• Test 8</li> <li>• Project 4</li> </ul>

## IX. Policies

### *Legal Jurisdiction*

By enrolling at Oklahoma Christian University students agree to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue of Oklahoma County District Court, or the Federal Western District Court of Oklahoma, in Oklahoma City, for all claims and controversies related to or derived from services provided by Oklahoma Christian University.

### *Respectful and Gender-Fair Language Policy*

Students are required to maintain a high standard of conduct in all correspondences. All of our online courses and programs have a “zero tolerance” policy for “flaming” (i.e., inappropriate language) of any kind. Violations of this policy will result in immediate

removal from any on-going course(s) and possible exclusion from future courses. All exchanges with other students, faculty, and OC personnel must be professional and cordial.

In all assignments, students are expected to use gender-fair language when referring to human beings (e.g., use "humankind" rather than "mankind" or "man"). The NRSV and NIV 2011 are examples of English Bible versions that use inclusive language for human beings. See the guidelines posted by the [National Council for Teachers of English](#) for more details.

#### *Dates and Times*

All dates and times, including assignment due dates, referenced in this course refer to U.S. Central Standard/Daylight time (i.e., the time at OC's campus), which is where the campus of Oklahoma Christian University is located. If you would like to convert dates and times to your time zone, you may use the time zone converter [located here](#). The local time at Oklahoma Christian University is always available in every Blackboard course shell, by clicking the "Local Time @ OC" link in the "Help" section of the course menu.

#### *Late Work and Extensions*

Two significant features of this program impinge on late work and extensions: (1) the program operates on a cohort model and (2) all of the courses are 8-week intensive courses. In the event that a student misses an assignment or activity deadline (i.e., a "due date") for an excused reason (where "excused" is determined by the professor), she or he will have 72 hours to complete the assignment/activity at a 10% grade reduction per 24 hour period that the assignment is late. If the assignment is not submitted in 72 hours after its original due date, then it will not be accepted. If the instructor and/or GST chair determine that the student has missed an assignment/activity deadline due to negligence (i.e., "unexcused"), the work will not be accepted. In the event that a student is granted an extension on an assignment/activity beyond the end date of the course, such an extension will not be longer than one week (7 days).

#### *Emergencies and Inclement Weather Policy*

In case of an emergency, faculty and students who have supplied their mobile phone numbers to OC will be notified by text as well as email. Emergency notices are also posted to the OC public web site (<http://oc.edu>) and OC's Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/okchristian>). If the emergency occurs disrupts the online course in any way, the instructor will inform students of appropriate procedures.

Even though this course is online, if OC closes the university campus or if campus systems fail (e.g., power outage) due to inclement weather, the instructor will notify students as soon as possible via Blackboard announcement and/or email how the missed content, activities, and/or exams will be made up.

#### *Communication & Office Policies*

*Telephone and Texting.* All telephone calls

*Email.* The best and most reliable way to contact me is by email. Whenever possible,

I will respond to you in some manner within 24 hours of receiving a message from you. Do not wait until the “last minute” (e.g., just before an assignment is due) to send an email and then expect an immediate answer or that I even received and read the message. Please include a meaningful, yet succinct subject line.

*Blackboard (Bb).* Bb is the primary hub for all course information, content, and communication. All information and communication will be located and/or linked to from within Bb. It is a good idea to check Bb several times per day for course announcements and other communications from me to you.

*Q & A Discussion Board.* Every course in the M.A. in Christianity and Culture program has enabled a “Q & A” (Question and Answer) discussion board. Please be sure to “subscribe” to that forum. If you have a question related to the course content or a course activity, please post it to the Q & A board. If your question is in regards to personal or private matters (e.g., a question about a grade on an assignment, a complaint, etc.), then please use email to send the question to your instructor.

### *Academic Honesty*

**Cheating.** Cheating on an examination or an assignment undermines the ethics of the academy and the specific Christian purposes of Oklahoma Christian University. Accordingly, students who cheat on exams or assignments will face serious consequences as outlined below.

**Plagiarism.** One particular form of cheating is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the transmission of another's ideas, words, or materials (including translations) as one's own and/or the failure to credit accurately the ideas, words, or materials of another. Plagiarism also includes passing off another's work (a friend, a parent, a Website) as one's own. Plagiarism undermines the ethics of the academy and the specific Christian purposes of Oklahoma Christian University. Accordingly, students who cheat on exams or assignments will face serious consequences, as described below. For more on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the resources listed on the Writing Center's Website.

**Penalties for Academic Dishonesty.** On the first offense, the student will receive a 0 for the exam or assignment. The professor will send documentation of the first offense to the appropriate chair, the dean of the appropriate college, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Students. On the second offense, the student will receive an "F" in the course. As with the first offense, the professor will send documentation of the second offense to the appropriate chair, the dean of the appropriate college, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Students. If the student receives an "F" in two courses for academic dishonesty, s/he will be suspended from the university.

### *ADA/504 Statement*

If you have a diagnosed disability, please notify Ms. Katy Roybal ([katy.roybal@oc.edu](mailto:katy.roybal@oc.edu); 405-425-1876 [office]) before or immediately after your first scheduled class meeting (even

virtual classes). After your disability has been verified, I will work with you, Ms. Roybal, and the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform in the course.

### **Sexual Misconduct Policy (Title IX)**

Oklahoma Christian University is a Christian community unequivocally committed to ensuring a working and learning environment in which the dignity of every individual is respected and providing a campus environment that is free of unlawful discrimination, which includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, or sexual misconduct. OC's Sexual Misconduct Policy (see the OC Student Handbook) is compliant with Title IX, which states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Sexual harassment is a breach of community, which expresses disrespect, exploits and undermines relationships based on trusts, and interferes with learning and productive work.

Students are encouraged to immediately seek available assistance and report incidents of sexual misconduct as defined by the Sexual Misconduct Policy to the Title IX:

Title IX Coordinator	Mrs. Lisa Herndon	405.425.1820	<a href="mailto:lisa.herndon@oc.edu">lisa.herndon@oc.edu</a>
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Students have access to confidential services through the Counseling Center.

OC Counseling Center	405.425.5250	located on OC campus
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## Appendix A

The purpose of the M.A. in Christianity and Culture is to form biblical knowledge, theological aptitude, and cultural awareness among church leaders and volunteers, so that they are able both to articulate and to practice Christian values they engage in meaningful ways with the church and contemporary society. This program has six desired learning outcomes that each course aims to fulfill. The matrix below shows how the objectives of this course (left column) relate to the desired learning outcomes (across the top).

	Summarize historical and socio-cultural significance of the Bible	Compare and contrast major paradigms in contemporary biblical interpretation	Explore biblical and theological themes that define the Kingdom of God, its core values, and what it means to live under the reign of God.	Describe significant features / characteristics / ideologies / values of contemporary cultures	Describe significant features / characteristics / ideologies / values of the sociocultural world of the Bible	Develop biblically and theologically informed, practical strategies to help the church address contemporary social / cultural issues
Demonstrate knowledge of the origins of the various books that make up the Bible.	X					
Discuss the process by which certain books were canonized and others excluded from the canon.	X					
Define and detail the nature of source, form, and textual criticism, and the criteria used in each.		X				
Cite some of the major manuscript traditions responsible for preserving	X					

the Old and New Testaments.						
Delineate and explain some of the history of significant translations of the Bible; especially concerning the history of the Bible in English.	X					
Articulate the influence of the Bible on society, and the influence of society on Bible interpretation.				X	X	

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## Appendix B

### Select Bibliography

- Aland, Kurt and Barbara Aland. *The Text of the New Testament*. Trans. Erroll F. Rhodes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Bobrick, Benson. *Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution it Inspired*. New York: Penguin, 2002.
- Bruce, F.F., J.I. Packer, Philip Comfort, and Carl F.H. Henry. *The Origin of the Bible*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2003.
- Enns, Peter. *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Hauer, Christian E. and William A. Young. *An Introduction to the Bible: A Journey into Three Worlds*. Boston: Pearson, 2008.
- Kelley, Page et al. *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Lightfoot, Neil R. *How We Got the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003.
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- Metzger, Bruce M. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Romer, John. *Testament: The Bible and History*. Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky, 1988.
- Swete, H.B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1900.
- Yeivin, Israel. *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*. Translated and edited by E.J. Revell. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1980.