THEO 1301/3301: Intro to Sacred Scripture  
Spring 2017

Sections: E - MW 3:10PM - 4:25PM – Library 009

Instructor: Mikail Whitfield  
Department of Theology  
Office Location: 217 Hughes House  
Email: whitfim@stthom.edu  
Phone: 713-525-3840

Office Hours:  
MW: 11:00am – 12:15 p.m.  
TuTh: 11:00am – 12:15 p.m. & 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
Or by appointment.

Course Description

Introduction to contemporary biblical studies, including: 1) the Catholic approach to scripture in light of Dei Verbum (e.g., inspiration, revelation, canon, hermeneutical principles and methods of critical analysis, relationships of Old and New Testaments); 2) a survey of the Old Testament in its historical setting, with emphasis on major themes (e.g., covenant, exile, Davidic dynasty, wisdom literature, and messianic prophecies); and 3) a survey of the New Testament in its historical setting (e.g., Christianity’s Jewish and Hellenistic roots, gospel formation, the gospels, Acts, letters, Revelation).  
Prerequisites: PHIL 1311 or 1315/3315.

Required Course Texts

(1) The principle text for this course is The Bible, because translations can vary greatly and at times will have a significant impact on the deeper theological meaning of the text, students are required to have specifically the Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition). Your Bible is to be brought to each class.

*Other supplemental readings will be provided by the instructor mostly in the form of electronic “handouts” made available on Blackboard. These handouts are abbreviated in the Course Calendar as “HO.” It is the responsibility of the student to access and read these handouts as part of the required reading. On the rare occasion that a handout is distributed in hardcopy form in class, students are responsible for obtaining a copy of the handout even if they are absent.

Student Outcomes and Assessment Strategies
1. Knowledge - Appropriate a penetrating knowledge of scripture that would be characterized by an ability to see the ultimate principles and highest causes, the kind of knowledge that is properly called sapientia or wisdom.

2. Habits - Grow a fuller, habitual knowledge exhibiting a mastery of theological truths and central points presented in the Catholic tradition, and implications of these points.

3. Writing - Students will understand Catholic doctrines (or the connections between particular Catholic doctrines) at a genuinely theological level, and express their understanding in clear and effective analytical writing.

4. Skills – Develop the ability to articulate the foundational elements of theology both orally and in writing. Students will also recognize classic formulations of orthodox Catholic doctrine and distinguish them from heterodox formulations.

Course Policies

*Academic Integrity as Outlined in the University Catalog.* Every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching–learning process for which the University exists, and such offenses will be dealt with expeditiously. Any instance of plagiarism or any violation of the UST Policy on Academic Integrity is grossly incompatible with the standards and expectations of the Theology Department and the University community. Violations of these standards may result in failure of the course.

**Definition**

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

1. Cheating on an examination or test; for example, by copying from another’s work or using unauthorized materials before or during the test, including the use of electronic devices;

2. Plagiarism, which represents as one’s own, the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source;

3. Participation in the academic dishonesty of another student, even though one’s own work is not directly affected;

4. Any conduct which would be recognized as dishonest in an academic setting.

The professor reserves the right to require, at his discretion, an oral exam based on any written work or exam submitted for course credit. This oral exam, evidencing the student’s actual knowledge of written work submitted for a grade, will be used to evaluate any suspected plagiarism or cheating and to modify the assignment grade accordingly.

**In-Class Rules and Etiquette**

1. Please arrive for class prepared and on time. Three unexcused late appearances (defined as arriving after class has begun) will equal an absence.

2. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices. The use of cell phones during class time will result in the student being marked absent for that class period. No headphones may be worn during class at any time.
3. Studies have shown that students remember more and have longer retention when taking handwritten notes. Therefore this class does not permit electronic means for note taking. This is in part because laptops/tablets/etc. provide a very real temptation for students to cruise around the internet during class (e.g., checking email, Facebook, websites, etc.). This reduces the student’s learning and engagement in class and is a distraction for other students nearby. Therefore students are not permitted to use laptops or tablets in class.

Exams and Quizzes

4. Keep your eyes on your own work during exams and quizzes. If a student is caught with a cheat sheet or looking at another student’s exam or quiz (or if a student is caught displaying his or her exam or quiz in a conspicuous way), the exam or quiz will be given an automatic grade of “zero” and you may fail the course.

5. Absolutely no talking during exams and quizzes. If a student is caught talking during an exam or quiz in order to cheat, that student’s exam or quiz will be given an automatic grade of “zero” and you may fail the course.

6. All bags and purses must be zipped and placed under the desk or to the side away from the student during exams and quizzes.

Course Requirements & Assignments

Class Attendance

Class Attendance Policy. Students are expected to attend class. Missing classes will make it very difficult to do well on exams and quizzes. More than a week’s worth of unexcused absences totaled throughout the semester (3 classes for a MWF course, 2 classes for a TuTh course, etc.) without a valid, verified excuse, will adversely affect the student’s final grade. Further absences may significantly reduce one’s ability to pass the class.

Changes or clarifications of assignments may be announced orally in class. Students not present are still responsible for anything announced in class, it is the student’s responsibility to get all pertinent information that may have been missed while not in class.

Participation and Preparedness (25%)

Being properly prepared for, and engaged in, class sessions is vital to a student’s success.

Battery of Quizzes (15%) Students should complete the assigned reading before each class. There will be regular reading quizzes on Blackboard that will need to be completed prior to their corresponding class sessions. Quizzes will be available on Blackboard approximately 2 days before the class for which the readings are assigned. It is the student’s responsibility to log onto
Blackboard and take the timed quiz no later than 9am of the day of class. **Make up quizzes will not be offered.** Quizzes will cover content from the day’s readings. Additional quizzes on class content and/or in class pop quizzes may also be given at the instructor’s discretion.

**In Class Discussion and Attendance (10%)** Classroom discussion is paramount to engaging the course content and reaching higher levels of learning. One of the tenants of the Christian faith is helping each other on the road to truth. Therefore, students are expected to engage in collaborative discussion both for their own learning, and to help foster a learning environment for their peers. All students will be expected to regularly and actively participate in class discussions. Both the quality and quantity of a student’s discussion will be considered as a factor for the participation grade. While attendance is factored into this grade, it in no way suffices on its own for a satisfactory level of participation.

**Paper (20%)**

**Paper.** Papers will be accepted only via turnitin.com. Students who do not yet have an account will need to make an account. All students will need to add themselves to this course. For help in how to use turnitin, click here. To add yourself to the course you will need the following information:

Class ID: 14487175
Enrollment password: Whitfield

For papers to be considered on time they must be uploaded no later than 11:59pm the day they are due. No extensions will be granted to individuals for full credit (unless you provide proof of a valid, serious, and verified excuse, such as a serious medical problem/hospitalization, family emergency, auto accident, etc.). A late paper may be turned in up to 48 hours after the paper due date, but the grade will automatically be reduced commensurately.

We live in a modern age with many free programs that will save work to a local device (computer) and simultaneously back them up to the cloud (internet). These are invaluable for students to ensure work is not lost due to a computer crash, lost USB drive, or other such problem. **Find one you like and use it!** I do not accept computer issues as a valid reason for failing to turn in a paper on time. Personally I use Dropbox Basic* as I find it simple and just right for academic work. But Google, Apple, and other programs. also offer good options. *Just fyi, if you choose Dropbox, signing up with a referral link will get you additional free space. Have a friend send you a referral, or you are welcome to use my referral link: https://db.tt/MdH56m6f

In accord with department policies all papers should adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style. See sample paper’s on Blackboard for additional guidance.

**Before being submitted, the final draft of the paper should have been read over critically by both the student, and another person of the student’s choosing (tutor, classmate, etc.) to ensure that it is sufficiently polished as a final product. This requires the student to**
complete the paper early enough that after being read by someone else there is still time for further revisions if necessary.

All papers must have: (1) a clear title; (2) a clear and coherent introduction and conclusion; (3) a highlighted thesis statement contained on first page of the paper; (4) a well-organized argument in the main body of the paper that supports the thesis statement; and (5) accurate and proper citations. Papers should contain at a minimum three academic sources, which may include readings assigned in this course.

**Paper (20%)** This paper will be an argumentative essay on showing how a text from the Old Testament foreshadows and is fulfilled in a New Testament text. This paper will be required to be 5-6 pages in length. Further details will be given in class and on Blackboard.

**Exams (55%)**

**Exam 1 (15%)** will cover all the material covered in class and in the readings up to the exam date.

**Exam 2 (15%)** will cover all the material covered in class and in the readings from the first exam up to the date of the second exam.

**Final Exam (25%)** will cover the material of the whole semester.

**Extra Credit**

There will be no extra credit offered in this course. The way to merit the grade one desires is to fulfill the expectations outlined here and in course assignments.

**Grading Scale and Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100%-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92%-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89%-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86%-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82%-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79%-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76%-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72%-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69%-67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66%-63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>62% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- Class Participation: 10%
- Reading Quizzes: 15%
- Paper: 20%
- Exam #1: 15%
- Exam #2: 15%
- Final Exam: 25%
Course Calendar & Schedule of Assignments

The calendar for course assignments and readings is found on Blackboard.

Academic Assistance

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Tutorial Services provided by the Mendenhall Achievement Center. Tutorial Services provides university tutors to assist students in specific study areas. Tutorial Services are found on the second floor of the Crooker Center.

Special Needs/Accommodations: Students with documented learning disabilities who are in need of special accommodation should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

N.B. Change Notice: The instructor reserves the right to change or modify this course and the syllabus for justifiable reasons, subject to appropriate and timely notice given to the students either orally or in writing.