COMMON COURSE OUTLINE: Course discipline/number/title: ENGL 2978: The Bible as Literature: Honors

A. CATALOG DESCRIPTION
1. Credits: 3
2. Hours/Week: 3
3. Prerequisites (Course discipline/number): ENGL 1117
4. Co-requisites (Course discipline/number): None

This course will focus on literary interpretation of the Bible with discussions about tradition, history, culture, politics and religion. Students will study both Old and New Testament books and their many genres. The course may also include some or all of the following: sections of the Koran, Greek mythology and non-canonical, ancient, religious texts, and some works from contemporary popular culture. Students will also be introduced to literary theory and criticism and analyze the texts through political, philosophical and theoretical frameworks. Students will get a chance to examine the incredible influence these texts have had both throughout history and still currently in American culture.

B. DATE LAST REVISED (Month, year): February, 2011

C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS:
1. The Bible and History
2. The formation of the Pentateuch
3. The canonization of the texts
4. Translating the Bible
5. A look at Non-biblical Texts: An introduction to other ancient texts (the Koran, Greek mythology, non-canonical scriptures, and others)
6. The social world and context of the Bible
7. The Bible as Literature: An examination of the various literary forms of the Bible with close readings of multiple books
8. Ways of Approaching the Bible such as: An historical-critical approach, a post-structuralist approach, or a feminist approach
9. Political readings of the Bible
10. The Bible and Pop Culture

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (GENERAL): The student will be able to:
1. Gain an historical, political, and cultural understanding of the impact these ancient Jewish and Christian Scriptures have had and continue to have.
2. Acquire a deeper understanding and respect of how these texts form a basic foundation for different religious traditions.
3. Think critically and analyze the literary forms.
4. Interpret the literature through a variety of approaches.
5. Become better equipped to recognize and analyze the influence of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures in contemporary culture.
6. Analyze, synthesize and evaluate course materials through intensive reading and writing.
7. Achieve a higher level of thinking by interacting with more challenging material.
8. Engage in inquiry-based, scholarly projects as they analyze and interpret the literature and its influence.
9. Assume significant leadership responsibility in classroom discussion and activities.

E. LEARNING OUTCOMES (MNTC):
Goal 2/Critical Thinking: The student will be able to:
1. Gather factual information and apply it to a given problem in a manner that is relevant, clear, comprehensive, and conscious of possible bias in the information selected.” This skill will be crucial when students are studying the canonization of the scriptures and the various translations of those scriptures.
2. Imagine and seek out a variety of possible goals, assumptions, interpretations, or perspectives, which can give alternative meanings or solutions to given situations or problems.” Students will analyze particular portions of the Bible and interpret them from various perspectives ranging from social and political commentary to numerous literary approaches.
E. LEARNING OUTCOMES (MNTC): Continued.

4. Recognize and articulate the value assumptions, which underlie and affect decisions, interpretations, analyses, and evaluations made by ourselves and others.” Students will evaluate ways in which the Bible (in various forms) has influenced society and culture (both historical and contemporary).

Goal 6/The Humanities—the Arts, Literature, and Philosophy: The student will be able to:
1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.” Students will analyze the many literary forms that are represented in the Bible (Treaties, Law, Poetry, etc.).
2. “Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within a historical and social context.” Students will evaluate portions of the Bible from a literary critic’s standpoint. They will work to interpret the motivations of each author. They will also critique artistic work motivated by the Bible whether it be film, music, fiction, graphics, etc.
3. “Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance.” Students will often complete creative projects of their own in response to the course material. These assignments may include writing an interpretive essay about a portion of the Bible, or they may include imitating a certain genre of the Bible or acting out a scene from an original interpretation, or any number of creative assignments.
4. “Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.” Students will have a knowledge of Bible history, society, culture and literary genres and will be able to respond to artistic work related to this subject.

Goal 8/Global Perspectives: The student will be able to:
1. Describe and analyze political, economic, and cultural elements, which influence relations of states and societies in their historical and contemporary dimensions.” Students will study biblical history, the social and cultural world of the Bible, and they will also examine the impact of the Bible on modern societies.
2. “Demonstrate knowledge of cultural, social, religious and linguistic differences.” Students will be introduced to the languages of ancient texts (Hebrew, Greek and Arabic), and they will also become aware of the various modern English translations.
3. Understand the role of a world citizen and the responsibility world citizen’s share for their common global future.” Students will become familiar with some of the common threads between three major religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) by studying portions each religions’ scriptures.

F. METHODS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:
1. Exams
2. Essays or written responses
3. Research papers/projects
4. Creative projects
5. Presentations
6. Group work

G. RCTC CORE OUTCOME(S) ADDRESSED:

- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Global Awareness/Diversity
- Civic Responsibility
- Personal/Professional Accountability
- Aesthetic Response

H. SPECIAL INFORMATION (if any): None