

I. COURSE DETAILS

<i>Instructor</i>	Frederick S. Tappenden, Ph.D.
<i>Email</i>	frederick.tappenden@kingsu.ca
<i>Office</i>	N-246
<i>Office Hours</i>	Thursdays, 11.00 AM – 12.30 PM, or by appointment
<i>Course Webpage</i>	Moodle, moodle.kingsu.ca
<i>Course Weight</i>	3 Credit Hours
<i>Location</i>	N-102
<i>Time</i>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9.30–10.50 AM
<i>Prerequisites</i>	None

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

According to the King's University course description, THEO 250 is described as follows:

An exploration of the genres, storylines, themes, and theological patterns within the Bible. We shall engage the biblical text both as ancient literature and as Christian scripture which reveals the truth of God, the world, and humanity.

In fulfilment of this course description, at the completion of the Winter 2018 offering of THEO 250E, students will achieve the following objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify and trace major narrative patterns and turns within the biblical canon, to trace those patterns across the various voices within the canon, and to connect those narrative themes with issues of contemporary society and faith.
2. Through the “Integration Thinking Pieces,” students will have spent significant time writing and thinking about how the Bible intersects with a number of intellectual, societal, environmental, and theological/religious issues.
3. Students will be able to make critical and faithful judgments concerning the interpretation of sacred texts, particularly as interpretation concerns attention to both the historical horizon of the text and the contemporary horizon of the reading community. Students will be able to consider questions of social location, personal and collective commitments, and the uses to which scriptural texts are put in ancient and modern communities.
4. Students will be able to identify the various forms of biblical thought and community evident within the canon. This includes the ability to distinguish and demarcate theological variety within the biblical canon, to articulate various understandings of God and Jesus, and to identify religious developments within both ancient Israelite and early Christian religion.

5. Students will have a firm grasp of the modern academic study of the Bible, including awareness of a variety of critical issues, interpretive methods/strategies, and scholarly perspectives.
6. Students will have gained an understanding of the various genres within the canon, and be able to read those genres informatively. Students will have read closely a selection of biblical texts, with special emphasis placed on their literary, socio-cultural, historical, and theological dimensions.
7. Students will have developed skills in: (i) research methods (through tutorials at the library), (ii) responsible research reporting (through in-class assignments), (iii) exegetical skills in working closely with texts and making informed interpretive decisions (through in-class and written assignments), and (iv) critical reading, thinking, and writing (through in-class discussions, written assignments, assigned readings, and exams).

III. REQUIRED TEXTS

The following books are **required** for this course. They can be purchased at the King's University Bookstore, or through online book distributors. Many of these texts (though not all) are either reference works or on reserve at the King's Library. Some of these books are also available online.

1. A copy of the Bible; here are some *recommended* editions (note: you need only one)
 - a. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books with Concordance*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge et al. Fully Revised and Updated. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006.
 - b. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Edited by Walter J. Harrelson. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
 - c. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Edited by Michael D. Coogan. Fully Revised 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

A Brief Note on Translations and Accessibility:

Choosing a translation can be difficult due to the plethora of options. The recommended translation for THEO 250 is the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Dynamic translations (e.g. New Living Translation), idiomatic or periphrastic translations (e.g. The Message), and classical translations (e.g. King James Version) are not acceptable for class use.

Many Bible translations can be accessed online. You can access the NRSV at the following web address: biblia.com/books/nrsv (along with a few other translations that you can study in parallel). Other helpful sites are www.ntgateway.com, www.earlychristianwritings.com, and www.sbl-site.org/educational/sitesofinterest.aspx; each of these can direct you to all kinds of online resources. Such online resources should always be used critically. *Though online access is convenient, it is not a substitute for the physical manuscript—students are expected to possess a print Bible and bring it to each class period.*

2. Kaminsky, Joel S., Joel N. Lohr, and Mark Reasoner. *The Abingdon Introduction to the Bible: Understanding Jewish and Christian Scriptures*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014.

The Kaminski, Lohr, and Reasoner text is also available as an eBook—free for King’s students!—through the King’s University Library: <http://bit.ly/2wuv6az> (library login required).

3. The following readings are required for the second week of class. They are available on Moodle (no purchase required):
 - a. A selection of early Christian canon lists (available online at Michael D. Marlowe, “Bible Research: The Canon of Scripture,” n.p.: <http://bit.ly/2i76pMc>)
 - b. Excerpts of the Babylonian creation myth, *Enuma Elish* (pages 11–21 in *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*; ed. V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin; New York: Paulist Press, 1991).
 - c. Ehrman, Bart D., trans. “The Acts of Thecla.” Pages 113–121 in *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make it Into the New Testament*. Edited by Bart D. Ehrman. Oxford: OUP, 2003.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be graded on the following requirements:

1. **Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism (10%):** Students are expected to attend all class sessions regularly and to participate in class discussion when appropriate. All assigned readings are to be completed *prior* to the class periods in which they are listed (see Course Outline below). This includes both the Bible (primary source) and textbook (secondary source) readings. Please bring your Bible to class with you. Professionalism relates to the following: (a) conduct in class, (b) correspondences with the professor, and (c) conduct towards one’s peers. Class attendance and participation will be assessed weekly; professionalism will be assessed throughout the term.
2. **Integration Thinking Pieces (10% [= 1% x 10]):** Throughout the semester, students are required to complete a series of short (250 word) reflection pieces in which they respond to the questions listed in the course outline below. There are a total of 18 questions listed below; of these 18, students are to complete ten (Thinking Pieces 1 and 18 are required for all students; students are free to pick any eight of the remaining options). These are considered low-stakes assignments—grammar, syntax, spelling, and formatting will not be marked, nor are students required to have a formal argument, thesis, or to conduct research. Instead, students will be rewarded for the honesty, depth, and creativity of their thinking.

Purpose: These short pieces are called “Integration Thinking Pieces” because they are designed to help students explore ways that the content of THEO 250 intersects with a number of intellectual, societal, environmental, and theological/religious issues. Topics covered include violence, memory, personhood/well-being, urbanization/technology, sexuality, social justice, wealth, politics, ecology, social resistance through the arts, science and religion, intra-religious dialogue, and religious devotion. The purpose of these Thinking Pieces is to help students think critically and creatively about the primary sources, to facilitate cross-disciplinary integration, and to develop the habit of writing regularly.

Assessment: I am looking for evidence of careful and thoughtful engagement with each question and with the relevant readings. When grading, I will look for: (a) did you address the question; (b) did you engage the question critically; and (c) did you stay within the word limit. Pat or cliché answers are not acceptable and will result in a zero grade. All Thinking Pieces are due within a two-week window, each of which follows the Course Outline below. Unlike other assignments, late Thinking Pieces will not be accepted.

3. **Midterm Exam (20%):** There will be one midterm examination, which will test the content of Part I in the course outline (including textbook readings). The midterm will be on 6 March 2018. The midterm will be handwritten and will likely consist of three sections: definitions, short answer, and one essay question (note: the essay question will be given in advance).
4. **Group Website Project (40% [= 30% + 2% + 2% + 2% + 4%]):** Students will work together in groups of 5 or 6 to create an academic website that examines a recurrent theme/topic that cuts across the biblical canon. Each group is to produce an *academic* website that is well researched and which conveys a central message with clarity and coherence. As an *academic website*, all content must be presented in a way that is consistent with the online medium—that is, students are encouraged to embed images, link to online databases, link to online resources, embed audio and/or video files, and the like.

The purposes of this assignment are as follows: (i) to allow students an opportunity to examine in greater and more extended detail a specific topic/theme in its various manifestations and developments across the canon; (ii) to draw connections between expressions of religious devotion in both the ancient and contemporary worlds, and (iii) to develop students' skills in textual exegesis/interpretation, research, writing, and presentation. Students' work will be graded both collectively and individually.

Websites should include three main components: (i) an essay or series of short essays that provide a general overview of the theme/topic within the biblical canon (group component, approx. 900 words); (ii) 5–6 individual essays (one per student) that focus each on a specific biblical text that exemplifies the theme/topic (individual component, approx. 1,200 words per student); and (iii) an essay or series of short essays that connect(s) the biblical and historical materials examined in Components 1 and 2 to related issues of contemporary religious expression (group component, approx. 900 words).

More information on this assignment will be handed out in class, including examples of similar student websites and information on webhosting. Some class time will be allocated for students to work on this project, but the bulk of work will need to be done outside of class periods. A shortlist of topics will be provided by the professor; groups will be determined in the opening weeks of the semester. Each group is to meet certain benchmark requirements, including submission of (i) a group list and chosen topic due on **30 January 2018** (group component, worth 1%), (ii) a research proposal due on **15 February 2018** (group component, worth 3%), (iii) research consultation with a King's librarian **between 15 February and 7 March 2018** (group component, worth 2%), and (iv) completion of a research quality assignment **due in class on 8 March 2018** (individual component, worth 4%). The final website is due on **10 April 2018** (group and individual components, worth 30%).

5. **Final Examination (20%):** There will be one final examination, which will test the content of Part II in the course outline (including textbook readings) with some cumulative examination of major course themes/topics. Information pertaining to the final examination will be handed out in class. The date of the final examination is determined by the University and will be announced during the term. A supplemental examination will be available for this course.

Grade Breakdown:

Attendance, Participation, Professionalism	10%
Integration Thinking Pieces (x 10)	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Group Website	40%
Final Examination	20%

Total	100%

V. ASSIGNMENT FORMAT, SUBMISSION, AND GRADING

Writing Format and Style: All work should be written in good academic prose. Written submissions should be double-spaced, paginated, and typewritten in 12 pt. Times New Roman font; margins set at 1-inch (sides) and 1½ (top and bottom).

Citation Style: Students must use a bibliographic style when citing primary and secondary literature. All sources—both primary and secondary literature—are to be cited clearly and consistently within the conventions of a major bibliographic style. Students for THEO 250 are free to use the style that is most common within their major field (e.g., APA for Psychology, MLA for Literature, Chicago for History). Useful guides to various styles can be found at the Concordia University Library website: library.concordia.ab.ca/citation-guides/.

Assignment Submission and Due Dates: All assignments are due in accordance with the Course Outline. Any extensions of these deadlines must be arranged beforehand (barring unforeseen circumstances). For convenience, I summarise the information here:

Integration Thinking Pieces: due according to the table below (see also the Course Outline)

Website Topic and Group: finalised by class on 30 January 2018

Website Research Proposal: due no later than 11.59 PM on 15 February 2018

Website Library Consultation: to be arranged independently between 15 Feb to 7 Mar 2018

Midterm Exam: in class on 6 March 2018

Website Research Quality Assignment: due in class on 8 March 2018

Website Submission: due no later than 11.59 PM on 10 April 2018

Final Exam: Date TBD

Integration Thinking Pieces: Schedule of Submissions		
<i>Thinking Piece #</i>	<i>Due Between</i>	<i>Interdisciplinary Intersections</i>
1 (required)	Jan 9–23	General Interdisciplinary Question
2	Jan 11–25	Computer Science; History; Communication Arts; Sociology
3	Jan 18 – Feb 1	Literary Studies; Natural Sciences; Communication Arts
4	Jan 25 – Feb 8	General Interdisciplinary Question
5	Feb 1–15	Philosophy; Sociology
6	Feb 6–20	History; Political Science
7	Feb 8–22	History; Literary Studies; Psychology; Sociology; Philosophy
8	Feb 15 – Mar 1	Political Science; Economics; Business; Sociology; Psychology
9	Feb 27 – Mar 13	Fine Arts/Music; Communication Arts; Literary Studies; Political Science; Sociology; History; Education
10	Mar 1–15	Literary Studies; Psychology; Sociology
11	Mar 13–27	Psychology; Sociology; Kinesiology; Political Science; History; Philosophy
12	Mar 22 – Apr 5	Literary Studies
13	Mar 27 – Apr 10	Literary Studies; Business; Economics; Sociology; Political Science; History
14	Apr 3–17	Environmental Studies; Geology
15	Apr 5–19	Natural Sciences; Philosophy
16	Apr 10–24	Sociology; Communication Arts; Political Science; Education
17	Apr 12–26	Computer Science; Environmental Studies; Political Science; History; Philosophy
18 (required)	Apr 17–26	General Interdisciplinary Question

All assignments can be submitted either as a hardcopy to the instructor during class periods, during office hours at the Instructor’s office, or as a softcopy via the Moodle website. When submitting a hardcopy, please be sure the time, date, and signature of the receiver are noted on the submission. When submitting electronically, be sure that you receive confirmation of your submission via the Moodle system (this feature can be turned on at: *My Profile settings* → *Messaging*). Please note that, barring exceptional circumstances, appeals to technical difficulties experienced while trying to submit an assignment electronically is not a valid excuse for handing something in late.

Late Policy: Assignments are considered late if they are submitted after the prescribed times outlined in the *Assignment Submission and Due Dates* section above. Late assignments will be penalised one grade point per day (e.g., from B to B- for one late day; from B to C+ for two late days, etc.) up to a maximum of 3 grade points in accordance with the King’s University Grading Scale (e.g., from B to C; or C- to F). Exceptions will only be made for unusual circumstances such as illness or by prior arrangement (or at the discretion of the instructor).

Grading Scale: In keeping with the grading system at The King’s University, THEO 250 will be graded on the following scale. Note: The percentage scale used for THEO 250 is unofficial and may differ from those used in other courses at King’s.

Grade	GPA	%	Interpretation
A+	4.0	90–100	Excellent
A	4.0	86–89	
A-	3.7	82–85	
B+	3.3	78–81	Good
B	3.0	74–77	
B-	2.7	70–73	
C+	2.3	66–69	Satisfactory
C	2.0	62–65	
C-	1.7	58–61	
D+	1.3	54–57	Poor
D	1.0	50–53	Minimal Pass
F	0	0–49	Fail

Academic Integrity: Honesty and integrity are essential to the academic enterprise and the university community. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences and are grounds for failure, suspension, or expulsion. Plagiarism is (i) the representation of another’s work, in whole or in part, as one’s own in an exam or paper, (ii) knowingly including a false statement or reference as if it were true, or (iii) submission by a student of work prepared for a different course without the express consent of the instructor. Students guilty of cheating or plagiarism will be penalised in accordance with the King’s Academic Calendar (registry.kingsu.ca/Calendar). All cases of academic misconduct will be brought to the attention of the University’s Academic Discipline Committee. Students should review the Academic Calendar for a full description of academic offences and consequences.

VI. RELATED COURSE INFORMATION

Electronic Devices in the Classroom: Mobile computing and communications devices are permitted in class insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Use of Facebook, Messaging Apps, and other social media is prohibited. Students are permitted to record lectures only with the instructor’s permission.

Disabilities: If you have a disability and feel the instructor should be informed, please contact the instructor to arrange a meeting. It would be helpful if you also contact the Student Success Coordinator at accessibility@kingsu.ca or (780) 465–3500 (ext. 8037). We will make every effort to create a learning environment oriented toward successful learning. Such matters will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

General Policy: My intent and desire is to assist and guide you in the learning of the material of this course, as well as to stimulate your own thinking. Should you have any questions and/or concerns with the course content, readings, assignments, etc., *please do not hesitate* to contact me by email or in person during office hours. I am also happy to listen to suggestions about how we use class time, the texts, and the assignments. If you need help at any point in the course, please ask. During office hours I hold an open-door policy and look forward to hearing any questions and/or concerns that you may have.

Your responsibility is to come to class prepared, especially in terms of familiarity with primary sources for discussion, and to be willing to explore ideas. I ask that you be willing to take risks, venture new ideas, ask questions, critique your preconceptions, and respect the perspectives, questions, and statements of your colleagues.

VII. COURSE OUTLINE: LECTURE TOPICS, READINGS, AND DUE-DATES

AIB = Kaminsky, Lohr, and Reasoner, *The Abingdon Introduction to the Bible*.

* *Note: When a reading from the Bible lacks chapter and verse, the entire book is to be read.*

** *Note: All due dates will remain fixed, but lecture topics may expand or contract as necessary.*

Jan. 4 **Course Introduction**

Topics: General Introduction: The Critical Study of Scripture; Overview of Syllabus

Jan. 9, 11 **Introductory Issues**

Topics: Hermeneutical Complexity; Shape and Development of Bible Canons; Textual History of the Bible; Bible Translations; Biblical Worlds and their Social Contexts; Coming to Grips with our own W.E.I.R.D.ness

Read: AIB, pp. 1–49; explore the “Canon of Scripture” website, focusing specifically on the folder titled “Ancient Canon Lists Quoted in Full,” and the pages titled “New Testament Canon,” “Old Testament Canon,” and the “Disputed Books” pages for both the New Testament and the Old Testament (<http://bit.ly/2i76pMc>)

Thinking Piece 1 (due between Jan 9–23): Considering your chosen major, discuss the question: How does the Bible intersect with my field of study? If you have not yet declared your major, discuss the question: How does the Bible intersect with my educational pursuits/interests?

Thinking Piece 2 (due between Jan 11–25): As discussed in class, the Bible would not exist if it were not for an ancient advancement in technology: namely, the development of the "codex" as a means for disseminating texts and ideas. Discuss the relationship between religious faith and technology. Are they friends, foes, indifferent to one another, or inextricably connected? Can you think of other connections between religious faith and technological advancements/revolution?

Part 1: The Hebrew Bible

- Jan. 16, 18, 23 **Creation, Exile, and Re-Creation in the Primeval History**
Topics: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Layout, Dates, and Historical Context); Introduction to the Torah: Sources and Cultural History; Primeval History and Mesopotamian Creation and Flood Accounts; Creation as Commentary on Socio-Political Exile
Read: 2 Kings 24.8–25.30; Ezra; Nehemiah; Genesis 1–11; Excerpts from the Babylonian creation myth, *Enuma Elish* (posted to Moodle), *AIB*, pp. 52–63
Thinking Piece 3 (due between Jan 18 – Feb 1): The creation account of Genesis 1 is written in the genre of a poem. How does the knowledge of this genre alter our expectations of this text? How does this knowledge alter what and how this text conveys meaning?
- Jan. 25 **No Class (IS Conference)**
Thinking Piece 4 (due between Jan 25 – Feb 8): As you attend the IS Conference, consider the following question: How do the various conference speakers interact with the Bible, and to what uses is the Bible put by each speaker?
- Jan. 30 **Ancestral History: Divine Favour and the Promise of Rest/oration**
Topics: Memory, History, and Narrative in the Ancestral Story; The Family Drama of Rivalry and Chosenness among Abram’s Descendants
Read: Genesis 12–50
Due Jan. 30: Website Group and Topic must be Finalised
- Feb. 1 **Law and Life: From Wilderness to Rest in the Land**
Topics: Covenant and Law; The Oneness of God; Covenantal Faithfulness
Read: Exodus 1–24, 32–34; Leviticus 19; Deuteronomy 4–9; *AIB*, pp. 64–93
Thinking Piece 5 (due between Feb 1–15): What does it mean to be a faithful person or a faithful community according to our reading from the Torah? (Note: if “faithful” seems to you like the wrong adjective, try “observant” or “religious.”)

Feb.
6, 8

How the Israelites Told their Story: Land, Monarchs, and Communal Memory

Topics: Overview of the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles/Ezra-Nehemiah; Framing the Story: From Dust to Dust (aka, Conquest/Land to Conquest/Exile); Themes in the Deuteronomistic History; Themes in Chronicles/Ezra-Nehemiah

Read: Joshua 1–6; 10.16–43; 1 Samuel 8–17; 2 Samuel 5–12; 1 Kings 1–12; 1 Chronicles 9–17; 2 Chronicles 1–9; Ezra 1–6; Nehemiah 8; *AIB*, pp. 94–130, 231–241

Thinking Piece 6 (due between Feb 6–20): To our modern sensibilities, the book of Joshua includes many disturbing descriptions of violence and conquest. Passages such as Joshua 10.36–43 might justifiably be called “texts of terror.” As modern readers of scripture, how are we to read and interpret passages like these? In what ways can such violent texts function as sacred scripture in the contemporary world?

Thinking Piece 7 (due between Feb 8–22): While reading from the historical books, discuss the implications of the following statement: “The act of telling history is always an act of remembrance; if the events of the past are told and retold, they are done in ways that address the needs of the present.”

Feb.
13, 15

Voicing Injustice and Inconstancy: The Hebrew Prophets

Topics: Overview of the Prophetic Literature; Prophetic Voices in each stage of Israelite History: Isaiah as a Case Study; The Prophetic Voices of Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Haggai

Read: Amos; Isaiah 1–11, 40–43, 55; Jeremiah 1–4, 27–33; Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–39; *AIB*, pp. 131–168

Thinking Piece 8 (due between Feb 15 – Mar 1): Many of the Hebrew prophets are advocates for the poor, the oppressed, the alien, and other marginalised peoples. What does this say about the nature and character of divine judgment within these texts?

Due Feb. 15: Website Research Proposal

Feb.
20, 22

No Classes (Winter Reading Week)

- Feb. 27, **Responding to God through Poetry, Wisdom, and Story**
 Mar. 1
Topics: Overview of the Poetry and Post-Exilic Narratives; Poetry and Hebrew Religious Life; Types of Psalms and their Themes; Wisdom and Responses in Daily Life; Short Stories in the Hebrew Bible
Read: Psalms 1–2, 7, 32, 65, 100, 109, 137; The Song of Songs; Jonah; Daniel 1–6; *AIB*, pp. 169–230
Thinking Piece 9 (due between Feb 27 – Mar 13): Read Psalm 137 and consider the question, If I were to set this psalm to music, what kind of music would I choose? After considering that question, listen to The Melodians’ 1970 song, “Rivers of Babylon” (https://youtu.be/o-5E6_qtXAw). Does the tune fit the poetry? Consider and compare the lyrics of Psalm 137 to those of The Melodians’ tune; where have changes been made (lyrics: <http://bit.ly/2evo9Qm>)? When the lyrics of Psalm 137 are set within the groovy Rocksteady genre, how does the message of the psalm change?
Thinking Piece 10 (due between Mar 1–15): The Song of Songs is sometimes referred to as “erotic poetry.” As you read this text, consider the following: What view of sex and sexuality is found in this poem?
- Mar. 6 **Midterm Exam (In Class)**
Topics: The Midterm will cover the textbook and all the content discussed in Part I of the course (namely, The Hebrew Bible)
- Mar. 8 **In-Class Website Day (Web Design and Technical Questions)**
Topics: Mid-Semester Review for Website Project (Note: no submission required, but come ready to work in your groups on design and technical matters)
Due Mar. 8: Research Quality Assignment

Part 2: The New Testament

- Mar. 13, 15 **Seeking Renewal: Apocalyptic and Apocryphal Literature**
Topics: Overview of Apocalyptic and Apocryphal Literature; Second Temple Judeans within the Hellenistic World; Persecution, Martyrdom, and Apocalyptic
Read: 1 Maccabees 1–2; 2 Maccabees 4.7–9.29; Daniel 7–12; *AIB*, pp. 228–230, 244–251
Thinking Piece 11 (due between Mar 13–27): As human beings, our personal and communal identities are wrapped up in our bodily experiences. In many ways, what makes me, “me,” and you, “you” are the bodies we each have and the experience we’ve gained through those bodies. Texts such as 1 Maccabees 7.1–42, 12.43–45, and perhaps Daniel 12.1–4 look ahead to the future *bodily resurrection* of those who are

faithful to the God of Israel. What implications follow from this focus on *bodily redemption*? How does the somatic focus of God's redemption impact the ways we think of personhood and health/well-being?

Mar. 20, 22, 27 **Remembering Jesus: The Gospels and Johannine Literature**

Topics: Introduction to the New Testament (Layout, Dates, Historical Context); The Genre of the Gospels; The Synoptics and John; The Synoptic Problem; Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel in each of the Synoptic Gospels

Read: Mark; Matthew 1–7; Luke 4.14–14.24; John 1–11, 20–21; *AIB*, pp. 254–291, 356–358

Thinking Piece 12 (due between Mar 22 – Apr 5): Read Mark 11.1–25. Question: Why do you think Jesus cursed the fig tree?

Thinking Piece 13 (due between Mar 27 – Apr 10): Read Luke 6.20–26 and 12.13–34. What attitudes toward wealth and status are reflected in these texts?

Mar. 29, Apr. 3 **Paul and the Rhetoric of Oneness, Renewal, and Reconciliation**

Topics: Paul and his Communities; Paul's Jewishness and his Christ-Devotion; Major Themes in the Pauline Letters; Renewal and Reconciliation in Paul's Writings

Read: Galatians; 1 Corinthians; *AIB*, pp. 297–337

Thinking Piece 14 (due between Apr 3–17): The apocalyptic message of Romans 8.18–25 is concerned not with destruction but with restoration. Paul speaks in this passage about creation longing for its redemption, which will come in the near future: Christ will return and the created world will no longer be subject to decay. In what ways might we see creation's present decay / future restoration intersecting with contemporary discussions of the environment and climate change?

Apr. 5 **Domesticating Christ-Devotion for Life in the Empire: The Deutero-Paulines and Acts**

Topics: Remembering the Apostle: Authorship and Pseudonymity; Major Themes in the Deutero-Paulines; The Image of Paul in Acts

Read: Colossians; 1 Timothy; *Acts of Thecla* (posted to Moodle), Acts 1–15, 28; *AIB*, pp. 292–296

Thinking Piece 15 (due between Apr 5–19): In Colossians 1.15–20 we find an early Christian hymn that makes certain theological assertions about creation. In some ways these theological assertions differ from the message of Genesis 1–2, and they also have important differences from modern scientific understandings of the origins of the cosmos. Question: What does it mean to speak theologically about nature? What does it mean to speak scientifically about creation? How might these two discourses fit together?

Apr. 10 **Globalising Christ-Devotion: The Catholic Epistles of James and Peter**

Topics: Overview of Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles; James, Peter, and Paul: Friends of Foes? James and Paul on Abraham; Embedded Jesus Traditions in James; Peter and Paul and Co-Workers

Read: James; 1 Peter; *AIB*, pp. 338–355

Thinking Piece 16 (due between Apr 10–24): As we have seen in class, early Christian groups were quite diverse and they did not always get along with each other. This is not unlike what we see in the modern world: Catholic and Protestant Christians do not always play well with each other, nor do divergent branches of the Islamic or Jewish faiths. How might the diversity of early Christian voices—particularly those voices that are canonical bound together—inform intra-religious dialogue in the modern world? (Note: “intra-religious” means “between groups within the same religion (e.g., Baptists and Catholics).”)

Due Apr. 10: Website Project

Apr. 12 **Renewal and Restoration in the Apocalypse of John**

Topics: Restoration and Reversal in the Apocalyptic Tradition; Christian Responses to the Imperial Order; Violence and Symbolism in the Apocalypse of John

Read: Revelation; *AIB*, pp. 359–364

Thinking Piece 17 (due between Apr 12–26): The past century has seen incredible increases in both urbanization and technological advancement. With this in mind, it is curious to note that the narrative arc of scripture begins in a garden (Genesis 1–2) but ends in a city (Revelation 21–22). Consider the following questions: How is salvation intertwined with urbanization and technological advancement? Is the end goal of redemption an urban and technological goal?

Apr. 17 **Course Conclusion**

Topics: Reflections on a Biblical Hermeneutic: The Gospel of Matthew; Overview of Course Content and Major Themes; Final Exam Preparation

Thinking Piece 18 (due between Apr 17–26): After having studied the Bible all term, reconsider the first Thinking Piece question: How does the Bible intersect with my field of study? Again, if you have not yet declared your major, discuss the question: How does the Bible intersect with my educational pursuits/interests?

Due TBD: Final Exam