

The Bible in Literature (7,5 ECTS credits)

Level: 1st cycle

Discipline: THEOLOGY (Theological Studies in Culture and Society)

Course ID: 0403

Admission requirements

General admission requirements for university studies. Students taking part in the course as a part of their Bachelor's degree program must have completed Course A, Introduction in Philosophy and Theology (30 ECTS credits). Students taking part in the course as a freestanding course are expected to have corresponding prior knowledge.

Educational goals

After having completed the course the students are expected to:

- Appreciate and detail hypotheses on the literary qualities of the Bible.
- Consider the importance of orality within a written tradition.
- Recognize the value of narrative transmission and the cultural model provided by biblical narratives within Classical, Jewish and Christian worldviews.
- Understand concepts such as metaphor, parable, rewritten and respoken Bible, and be able to recognize their application in literature across the ages.
- Develop skills for the analysis of literary texts and be able to account for the narrative technique of different biblical episodes.

Course content

The Bible, composed of different narrative strands and genres, competed with and eventually overtook Homeric epics as basic inspiration for the shape and expression of Western culture. By approaching the intertextual role of the Bible in literature through several different works and from different theoretical perspectives, this course offers a deeper understanding both of biblical narrative and of the culture it has informed. Though the course is basically in English, readings (where applicable) and assignments can be done in Swedish.

Teaching and examination

Preparation for the two on-site seminars is done through the Moodle platform where readings and topics are divided in weekly assignments; there will be two shorter marked assignments counting for 20% of the final mark. Active participation in discussion at the on-site seminars is obligatory and counts for 30% of the final mark. One longer PM (7-8, A-4 sides) on a topic chosen in collaboration with the teacher and sent through the Urkund at the end of the course will count for the remaining 50%.

Bibliography

The items marked with asterisk are the students' responsibility; the editions mentioned are indicative, and works can be read in the original language or translations into other languages; other items will be provided as PDF on Moodle.

Literature

The Book of Esther.*

Mark Twain (1835-1910). *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* (New York: Warbler Classics, 2022).*

Gregory of Nyssa. *The Life of Moses* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978) // Gregorios av Nyssa. *Mose liv*. i översättning och med inledning och kommentar av Sten Hidal (Skellefteå: Artos, 2011).*

Marilynne Robinson, *Jack* (London: Virago Press, 2020).

Selma Lagerlöf, "Saint Veronika's Kerchief", in *Easter Stories. Classic Tales for the Holy Season*, compiled by Miriam LeBlanc, New York: Plough Publishing House, 2015), pp. 55-106.*

Lew Wallace, "The Way to the Cross", in *Easter Stories. Classic Tales for the Holy Season*, compiled by Miriam LeBlanc, New York: Plough Publishing House, 2015), pp. 107-128.*

Ernst Hemingway, "Today is Friday", in *The Complete Short Stories*, Toronto: Scribner, 1987, pp. 271-273. Available at:

<https://www.hemingwaysociety.org/larry-grimes-today-friday>

Criticism

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982).*
Articles on Moodles provided as PDF.

Reference Works

Boxall, Ian & Gregory, Bradley C. (ed.). *The New Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

Dormeyer, Detlev. *The New Testament among the Writings of Antiquity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

Eagleton, Terry. *How to Read Literature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014).

Frye, Northrop. *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).

Jack, Alison M. *The Bible and Literature* (London: SCM Press, 2012).

Jack, Alison M. *The Prodigal Son in English and American Literature: Five Hundred Years of Literary Homecomings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Kaźmierczak, P. & Rzegocka, J. (ed.). *Moral Upbringing through the Arts and Literature* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018).

Niditch, Susan. *Underdogs and Tricksters. A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

Pache, Corinne Ondine (ed.). *The Cambridge Guide to Homer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Young, Frances M. *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Wollenberg, Rebecca Scharbach. *The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (not) to Read the Bible* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023).

See also "Kursplaner: allmänna bestämmelser" (Course plans: General rules)

Finalised 2025-03-04

Valid as 2025-03-15