

# SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE AND MEDIA STUDIES

ENGL 435 2006, second trimester

## THE ENGLISH BIBLE AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

### COURSE AIMS

This course will concentrate on the literary qualities of the King James Bible (1611), how those qualities have influenced some English writers, and how some writers have used the Bible. Among the biblical topics and books to be considered will be: narrative (Genesis, the story of David, Mark), poetry and poetic form (Psalms, Song of Solomon), prophecy, Job, imagery, the influence of biblical language on the English language, and the history of Bible translation. Texts from English literature will be introduced at various points.

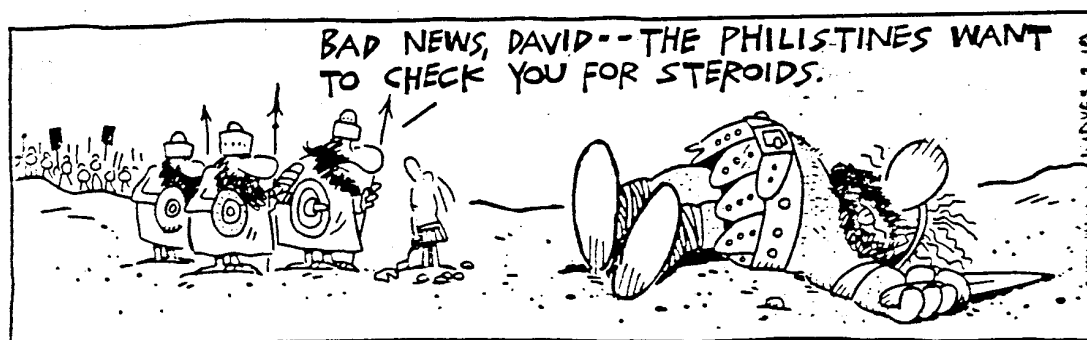
### Workload

Honours courses are designed on the assumption that students will be able to commit an average of 24 hours a week, including seminars, reading, research and writing.

### Class tasks:

The *Times* (23/2/02): 'Nathan may be a familiar Old Testament figure, but New Zealand's most famous batsman of that name tends rather to defy biblical wisdom. Nathan Astle beat England largely off his own bat in the fifth and deciding game of the one-day series yesterday, emphasising in the process that New Zealand are still the better side, yet he remains a prophet without honour except in his own country.'

- 1: Collect examples of the use of the Bible from current media.



- 2: Collect biblical jokes and cartoons.

### PROGRAMME

Classes meet in VZ808, 9.30 a.m., Fridays for approximately two and a half hours.

Reading of the basic biblical and literary texts is the essential work. The background reading, for which suggestions follow, can easily make undue demands on your time. The suggestions are meant to be helpful, not intimidatory.

The programme is open to revision as we see fit. Please feel free to make suggestions: this course is an opportunity for you to explore what interests you most from an enormous subject.

- July 14 Introduction: background: what is the Bible? English versions; resources. Genesis: Noah and 'The Stowaway' (handout). Some of the critical issues we will be dealing with.
- July 21 Introduction to English literature and the Bible.  
**Before reading for this class**, write an outline of gospel story through to Jesus's baptism as you remember it.  
 Nativity stories to baptism: Matthew 1-3, Mark 1, Luke 1-3, John 1; poetry handout. Choose one of the poems and come prepared to talk about it as an example of the Bible and literature.  
 Background reading: C.S. Lewis, 'The literary impact of the Authorised Version' (handout).
- July 28 Bible language and presentation. Exercises, distributed on July 21, will form the basis of this class.
- August 4 Poetry. In what ways (if any) do biblical poems appear poetic in the KJB? Psalms (especially 8, 22-4, 69, 114, 127, 137), poetic form and verse adaptations; Song of Solomon; Macpherson and Lawrence (handout).  
 Background reading: Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*; Norton, *A History of the Bible as Literature*, 1: 15, or *A History of the English Bible as Literature*, ch. 6.
- August 11 Translations. Earlier English translations, the KJB, modern translations.  
 Background reading: the preface to the King James Version; Ward Allen, *Translating for King James*, introduction; Gerald Hammond, *The Making of the English Bible*; Norton, *A History of the Bible as Literature*, 1: 6-10, 2: 10, appendices, or *A History of the English Bible as Literature* 1-3, 17.
- August 18 Prophecy. Preparatory work: research the idea of a 'prophet' in the Bible. Key chapters will include Isaiah 40, 42 and 60, Jeremiah 1-4, Ezekiel 37. Eliot, *The Waste Land*.  
 Background reading: George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prose Rhythm* (London: Macmillan, 1912), c. pp. 142 ff; Rudyard Kipling, "'Proofs of Holy Writ'" (handout).
- September 8 The human situation. Job, esp. chs 3, 38-42. 2 Esdras, particularly the dialogues with the angel (the latter part, apocalyptic visions is interesting but not part of this class). Wisdom of Solomon 1-5.  
 Either find a 'Carpe Diem' poem for comparison with relevant parts of the biblical reading; or find something else short from English literature that uses Job or relates in some way to the biblical reading. Please give me in advance a copy of what you have chosen.
- September 15 Narrative 1: Stories of the Patriarchs and Moses (Genesis 10-50, Exodus 1-20).  
 Background reading: Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, ch. 1, Isaac Bashevis Singer, 'Genesis', in David Rosenberg, ed., *Congregation* (handout).
- September 22 Narrative 2: Mark and the Synoptic Gospels.  
 Background reading: Auerbach, *Mimesis*, ch. 2, Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy*.
- September 29 Narrative 3.1: David in the Bible (1 and 2 Samuel).

October 6 Narrative 3.2: David in literature. A choice from Robert Browning, 'Saul', D.H. Lawrence, *David*, Joseph Heller, *God Knows*.

October 13 To be arranged. Perhaps discussion of a selection of literary passages in relation to the Bible.

### MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at the seminars (health permitting, you are expected to attend all the seminars), completion of written work, examination. If you miss a seminar, please check with me for handouts and reading for the next seminar.

### ASSESSMENT

By a combination of written work (60%) and final 3-hour exam (40%), or the exam mark if that is better.

**WRITTEN WORK:** Two 2,500 word essays in the two general areas the course focusses on, 1: the English Bible, especially the King James Bible, in any way that is illuminating for an understanding of the Bible and English literature or language; 2: the Bible and literature.

The first essay is due by August 18, the second by October 13; early submission is encouraged. The essays are of equal value.

1. **The English Bible.** This should focus on a topic such as:
  - discussion of a complete section or short book as it appears in the KJB;
  - a comparative discussion setting the KJB against one or more other versions;
  - the importance of the linguistic qualities of the KJB for a literary appreciation of the Bible;
  - the relationship between form and content in the Bible;
  - analysis of the form of biblical poetry as it appears in the KJB;
  - appraisal of a critic's approach to the KJB.
  - the work of a particular English translator or group of translators, e.g. Tyndale, the KJB translators;
  - discussion of the KJB's approach to a particular issue in translation (e.g. consistency of vocabulary), or to a particular quality in the originals (e.g. parallelism);
  - discussion of John Bois's notes on the work of the translators, or of a section of Allen's collation of the revisions to the Bishops' Bible Gospels;
  - discussion of the historical perception of the language of the KJB (there is an abundance of interesting evidence from the late-Augustans);
2. **The Bible and literature.** This should focus on a topic such as:
  - use of the Bible as the basis for a literary work;
  - an English writer's version of biblical passages such as individual psalms;
  - a 16th or 17th century writer's approach to religious language set against the language of the KJB;
  - influence of the KJB on a writer's style;
  - influence of the KJB on English language;
  - use of biblical allusion in a literary work;
  - comparison of a Bible story with a story from another literature (e.g. Genesis 1-11 and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*).

**These are suggestions only.** You are encouraged to develop your own topics in consultation with me. You may wish to use previous years' exam questions in lieu of inventing your own topics.

## SELECT LIST OF RESOURCES

These works represent a very small selection of available material but are much more than you can reasonably cope with. I have asterisked a few that are of very special usefulness. Some have already been noted as recommended background reading.

Bibles and biblical material can be purchased from (among others), The Salvation Army (202-6 Cuba St), and secondhand bookstores such as Quilters (Lambton Quay).

### Bibliographies

Gottcent, John H. *The Bible as Literature: a selective bibliography*. Boston, 1979. Z7770 G685 B.  
Darlow, T.H., and H.F. Moule. *Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of the English Bible, 1525-1961*. Revised and expanded from the edition of 1903 by A.S. Herbert. London, 1968. Z7771 E5 H536 B.

### Bibles

*The English Hexapla*. London, 1841. NT: Greek, Wyclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, Geneva, Rheims, KJB. BS125 E5.

*The New Testament Octapla*. NY, n.d. Tyndale, Great, Geneva, Bishops', Rheims, KJB, RV, RSV. BS2025 1962 W419. This is the easiest resource for comparing versions.

Tyndale, William. *Tyndale's Old Testament*. Ed. David Daniell. New Haven and London, 1992. Modern spelling edition of 1534 Pentateuch and some other books from 1537. BS140 1992.

*Tyndale's New Testament*. Ed. David Daniell. New Haven and London, 1989. Modern spelling edition of 1530 edition. BS140 1989.

Coverdale, Myles. *The Bible*. 1535. Reprinted London, 1838. aBS145 1838 (stackroom).

*The New Testament*. Geneva, 1557. Facsimile London, 1842. BS2070 1842.

*The Bible*. Geneva, 1560. 1585 Barker, London, edition held by Beaglehole Room.

*The Geneva Bible. A facsimile of the 1599 edition with undated Sternhold & Hopkins Psalms*. Intro.: Michael H. Brown. Buena Park, Calif.: The Geneva Publishing Company, 1990. \*BS170 G328 (Big Book).

*The Holy Bible*. 1611. Facsimile, ed. A.W. Pollard. Oxford, 1911. BS185 1911.

*The Bible Designed to be Read as [Living] Literature*. Ed. E.S. Bates. 1936 etc. BS391 B329 B (stackroom). Often to be found secondhand.

### Electronic Bibles

*The Bible in English* CD-ROM, Chadwyck-Healey, available electronically from the library; see under Databases. Texts of all major English translations through to the KJB, plus some more recent versions.

Electronic texts of the KJB are commonly available from religious bookshops and computer shops. Bible texts are also readily available on the internet, but are less easily searched than CD versions.

### Concordances

For most purposes electronic Bibles have made concordances obsolete.

Cruden, Alexander. *Complete Concordance*. 1737 etc. r BS425 C955 C.

Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 1894. This is the best of many available but not held by VUW library.

Young, Robert. *Analytical Concordance*. Edinburgh, 1879. r BS425 Y75 A.

## Background to translations

- Wyclif *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*. Ed. Anne Hudson. Cambridge, 1978. BX4900 S464.
- Tyndale *Doctrinal Treatises*. Ed. Henry Walter. Cambridge, 1849. BX5133 A1 P (vol. 32).  
*Expositions of Scripture and the Practice of Prelates*. Ed. Henry Walter. Cambridge, 1849. BX5133 A1 P (vol. 37).  
\* Daniell, David. *William Tyndale: a Biography*. New Haven & London, 1994. BR350 T8 D185 W.
- KJB \* *Translating for King James*. Ed. Ward Allen. Nashville, 1969. BS186 B682 T. Facsimile and transcription of notes made by the translators while revising the Epistles.  
\* *The Coming of the King James Gospels: a collation of the translators' work-in-progress*. Ed. Ward S. Allen and Edward C. Jacobs. Fayetteville, 1995. BS2555.2 A432 C. A transcript of the translators' handwritten revisions of parts of the Bishops' Bible Gospels.  
\* Nicolson, Adam. *Power and Glory: Jacobean England and the Making of the King James Bible*. London : HarperCollins, 2003. BR757 N653 P.  
Norton, David. *A Textual History of the King James Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. BS186 N883 T.  
Opfell, Olga S. *The King James Bible Translators*. London, 1982. BS186 O61 K.  
Pollard, A.W. *Records of the English Bible*. Oxford, 1911. BS455 P771 R. Documents relating to English Bible translations through to the KJB.  
Schwarz, W. *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation*. Cambridge, 1955. BS450 S411 P.

## Histories of the Bible

- Bruce, F.F. *History of the English Bible*. Oxford, 1978. BS455 B886 H 3ed.
- Daniell, David. *The Bible in English: its history and influence*. New Haven and London, 2003. BS455 D185 B.
- The Cambridge History of the Bible*. 3 vols. Cambridge, 1963-70. BS475.2 C178.
- \* Hammond, Gerald. *The Making of the English Bible*. Manchester, 1982. BS455 H226 M.
- Partridge, A.C. *English Biblical Translation*. London, 1973. BS455 P275 E.
- Robinson, H.W., ed. *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions*. Oxford, 1940. BS445 R661 B.

## Bible as Literature

- \* Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. NY, 1981. BS1171.2 A466 A.  
*The Art of Biblical Poetry*. NY, 1985. BS1405.2 A466 A.  
*The World of Biblical Literature*. New York, 1992. BS 535 A466 W.
- \* Alter, Robert and Frank Kermode, eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge, Mass., 1987. BS535 L776.
- Bloom, Harold, interp., David Rosenberg trans. *The Book of J*. NY, 1991. BS1223 1991.
- Frye, Northrop. *The Great Code*. London, 1982. PN56 B5 F948 G.  
*Words with Power*. San Diego, 1990. PN56 B5 F948 W.
- Josipovici, Gabriel. *The Book of God*. New Haven, 1988. BS535 J83 B.
- \* Kermode, Frank. *The Genesis of Secresy*. Cambridge, Mass., 1979. PN81 K39 G.
- Kugel, James L. *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*. New Haven, 1981. BS1405.2 K95 I.
- Leach, Edmund. *'Genesis as Myth' and other essays*. London, 1969. BS1235.2 L434 G.
- Jasper, David, and Stephen Prickett, *The Bible and Literature: a Reader*. Oxford, 1999. BS535 B582 A.

- Josipovici, Gabriel. *The Book of God*. New Haven, 1988. BS535 J83 B.
- Lawrence, D.H. *Apocalypse*. 1931. PR6023 A93 A66 1980 (or 1972).
- \* Lewis, C.S. 'The literary impact of the Authorised Version'. In *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper. London, 1969. PR6023 E926 A16 H788. Or *They Asked for a Paper*. London, 1962. PR6023 E926 T5.
- Lowes, John Livingston. 'The noblest monument of English prose'. In *Essays in Appreciation*. Boston 1936. PR99 L917.
- Lowth, Robert. *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*. (1753), 1787. Excerpts in Scott Elledge, ed., *Eighteenth Century Critical Essays*. 2 vols. Ithaca, NY, 1961. PR74 E45 E.
- \* Moulton, R.G. *The Literary Study of the Bible*. 2nd ed. Boston, 1899. a BS535 M927 L 2ed.
- Norton, David. *A History of the Bible as Literature*. 2 volumes. Cambridge, 1993. BS585 N883 H.  
*A History of the English Bible as Literature*. Cambridge, 2000. BS585 N883 2000.
- O'Sullivan, Orlaith, ed. *The Bible as Book: The Reformation*. London, 2000. BS454 B582.
- PN Review 13: Crisis for Cranmer and King James*. Ed. David Martin. 6: 5 (1979). o PN6101 P745.
- Preminger, Alex, and Edward L. Greenstein, eds. *The Hebrew Bible in Literary Criticism*. NY, 1986. BS1172.2 H446.
- Quiller-Couch, Arthur. *On the Art of Reading*. Cambridge, 1920. PE1408 Q6 O.
- Rosenberg, David, ed. *Congregation*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987.
- Ryken, Leland, ed. *The New Testament in Literary Criticism*. NY, 1984. BS2361.2 N532.
- Sugirtharajah, R.S. *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*. Cambridge, 2001. BS476 S947 B.
- Willey, Basil. 'On translating the Bible into modern English'. *Essays and Studies*, new series (1970), 23: 1-17. p PR5 E58 E7.

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## GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at [www.vuw.ac.nz](http://www.vuw.ac.nz).

### Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct)

### Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances)

### Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

*The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.*

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

*Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.*

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html)

### **Students with Impairments** (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: [disability@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:disability@vuw.ac.nz)

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

### **Student Support**

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: [student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz)) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/)

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at [education@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz)) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.