



Nipawin Bible College
GE2113 Biblical Backgrounds
Dr. Paul Smith
Fall 2020
3 Credits
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will equip students to better understand both the original (human) author and the original audience of the biblical text by introducing the geographical, political, and cultural background of the Bible and by assisting them in applying that knowledge to their study of the Bible.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Price, J. Randall and H. Wayne House. *Zondervan Handbook of Biblical Archaeology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.

Rasmussen, Carl. *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course students will be able to...

- 1) Express a greater confidence in the reliability of the Bible.
- 2) Identify some key elements of Ancient Near Eastern religion, geography, culture, and history.
- 3) Identify some key elements of Greco-Roman and Jewish religion, geography, culture, and history.
- 4) Judge how to properly use non-biblical information in their understanding and interpretation of the biblical text.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Rasmussen Quizzes - 20%

- Quizzes will normally consist of 10 multiple choice questions covering the Rasmussen reading. Quizzes will not cover dates, unless the professor specifically says to remember a particular date. They are NOT open book.
- Quizzes measure how well the students meet Course Objectives 2 and 3.

DUE: See the course schedule

Class Presentation - 25%

- On October 1, each student will be randomly assigned a topic from the list given in Appendix 1. *Student preferences will be taken into account at the professor's discretion if the student communicates their preference via email before September 30.*
- The student will produce a minimum 5-page paper on their assigned topic. The paper will be assessed on the following criteria:
 - A description of the artifact(s)
 - Understanding of any controversies connected to the artifact(s)
 - An argument for how the artifact(s) impacts or influences one's view, understanding, or interpretation of the Bible or a biblical passage. The argument must demonstrate specificity, evidence of deep thinking, and a proper understanding of both the importance and limits of archaeological finds in biblical interpretation
 - Proper paper standards including, proper grammar, spelling, clarity, and proper use of sources. For this assignment, acceptable sources are books and journal, magazine, and newspaper articles. Blogs and Wikipedia are never acceptable sources.
- The students will then summarize their findings in a class presentation of 5-7 minutes on either November 16 or 19.
- *Class Presentation will help students meet Course Objective 1 and will assess how well students meet either Course Objective 2 or 3 as well as Course Objective 4.*

DUE: All Papers: November 16;

OT Presentations: November 16;

NT Presentations: November 19

Price and House Reflection - 30%

- Students will write a minimum of one-page reflection on each select Price and House chapters.
- The reflection consists of a minimum of half-page summary of the chapter's content and a minimum of half-page on how the content of the chapter shapes your understanding of a specific verse, chapter, or narrative from the Bible.
- The chapters that the student will write a reflection on are chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, and 14.
- *Price and House Reflection will assess how well students meet all Course Objectives.*

DUE: Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5: October 26;

Chapters 12, 13, and 14: December 7

Exam - 25%

- The exam will cover in-class material only.
- *The Exam will assess students on how well they meet Class Objectives 2-3.*

DUE: Exam Week

NOTE: All written assignments are to be typed in accordance to the guidelines in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018) for papers. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, and spelling.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook 2020/2021

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook 2020/2021

Reading: 272 pages of Price and House, 150 pages of Rasmussen

Writing: 7 pages of Price and House Reflection, 5 pages of Class Presentation

COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

Date	Session Topic	Assignment Due
Sept 28	Introduction	
Oct 1	Old Testament Rasmussen Quiz Chapters 1-5 Old Testament Interpretation Lab	Rasmussen Chapters 1-5
Oct 5	Old Testament Old Testament Interpretation Lab	Price and House Chapters 1-2
Oct 8	Old Testament Rasmussen Quiz Chapters 6-8 Old Testament Interpretation Lab	Rasmussen Chapters 6-8
Oct 15	Old Testament Rasmussen Quiz Chapters 9-11 Old Testament Interpretation Lab	Rasmussen Chapters 9-11
Oct 19	Old Testament Old Testament Interpretation Lab	Price and House Chapter 3
Oct 22	Old Testament Rasmussen Quiz Chapters 12-14 Old Testament Interpretation Lab	Rasmussen Chapters 12-14

Oct 26	Between Testament	Price and House Chapters 4-5 Price and House Old Testament Reflections
Oct 29	Between Testaments Rasmussen Quiz Chapters 15-17	Rasmussen Chapters 15-17
Nov 2	Between Testaments	Price and House Chapters 7-10
Nov 5	Between Testaments	
Nov 16	Old Testament Presentations	Class Presentation Papers
Nov 19	New Testament Presentations	
Nov 23	New Testament New Testament Interpretation Lab	Price and House Chapters 11-12
Nov 26	New Testament Rasmussen Quiz Chapter 18-19 New Testament Interpretation Lab	Rasmussen Chapters 18-19
Nov 30	New Testament New Testament Interpretation Lab	Price and House Chapter 13
Dec 3	New Testament Rasmussen Quiz Chapters 20-21 New Testament Interpretation Lab	Rasmussen Chapters 20-21
Dec 7	New Testament New Testament Interpretation Lab	Price and House Chapter 14 Price and House New Testament Reflections
Dec 10	New Testament Rasmussen Quiz Chapter 22 New Testament Interpretation Lab	Rasmussen Chapter 22
	Exam	

Appendix 1: Class Presentation Topics

Old Testament Topics

- 1) Epic of Gilgamesh
- 2) Merneptah Stele
- 3) Mesha Stele [Moabite Stone]
- 4) Tel Dan Stele [Tel Dan Inscription]
- 5) Sennacherib's Prism [Taylor's Prism]
- 6) Hezekiah's Seal [Hezekiah's Bulla]
- 7) Isaiah's Seal [Isaiah Bulla]
- 8) Kuntillet Ajrud Pithos
- 9) Cyrus Cylinder
- 10) Ketef Hinnom Scrolls [KH1 and KH2]

New Testament Topics

- 11) Dead Sea Scrolls
- 12) Temple Warning Inscription
- 13) Pool of Siloam
- 14) Pilate Stone
- 15) Jehohanan Tomb at Givat HaMivtar
- 16) Nazareth Decree
- 17) Ancient Galilee Boat [Jesus Boat]
- 18) Magdala Synagogue [Migdal Synagogue]
- 19) Delphi Inscription
- 20) James Ossuary

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Apocrypha.

ESV Archaeology Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

Fleming, Daniel and James Pritchard. *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity.* 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.

Keener, Craig. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament.* 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Walton, John, Matthews, Victor, and Mark Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.