

challenge your own perspective with a plurality of perspectives, and negotiate your own meaning with a multiplicity of meanings.

This course is also approved by the Women's and Gender Studies Program. It is counted as part of the WGST major and the Arts and Sciences core requirement in ethnic/gender studies.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- interpret the Bible in its original historical context
- explain and evaluate how the Bible is used in later contexts
- articulate your own position on the value of the Bible in public discourse

Texts and Course Materials:

Required:

Regina M. Schwartz. *The Curse of Cain: the Violent Legacy of Monotheism*. The University of Chicago Press, 1997 [ISBN 0-226-74199-0]

Delores S. Williams. *Sisters in the Wilderness: the Challenge of Womanist God-talk*. Orbis Books, 1993. [ISBN 1-57075-026-2]

David M. Carr. *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible*. Oxford University Press, 2003. [ISBN 13-978-0-19-515652-2]

**Please bring a Bible to every class.*

Class Structure and How to Prepare

Essential Questions:

This class will be driven by the following essential questions, to which there are no easy answers:

- To what extent has the Bible advanced or hindered human progress?
- To what extent should the Bible guide your own progress as a human being?
- Why has our society used the Bible as an authoritative document and should we continue to do so?

You also will have input in developing more essential questions about the Bible and its role in our decisions about War, Racial Equality, and Sexuality.

In-class Structure

In order to answer these questions, our class meetings will be divided into three parts:

- For the first part of each class (30-40 min), we will discuss the readings from the required books (see calendar below). These reading will help us reflect on how the Bible has been used in the areas of War, Race, and Sexuality.
- For the second part of each class (30-40 min), we will discuss quotes from American History and current events, quotes that employ the Bible to support contested positions. We will also watch and discuss documentaries, read political tracts, and listen to political speeches.
- For the third part of many of the classes (30 min), we will prepare for our class collaborate project. This project involves (1) choosing a partner, (2) finding a political organization that employs the Bible to support a position, (3) developing questions (from our class essential questions) to ask this organization, (4) interviewing and researching the organization, and (5) presenting your findings to the class via a multi-media presentation on the last day.

Assignments and How to Prepare

- There will be three unannounced quizzes on the readings. The quizzes will be open notes, but not open book. Each quiz is worth 35 points. Each quiz will ask for the main point of the book (10 points), the main point of the chapter, (10 points), and three details/examples the author uses to support the chapter’s main point (5 points each). I suggest you prepare each reading in this manner.
- There will be three position papers (about two pages), one for each part of the course (e.g., one for the Bible and War, one for the Bible and Race, and one for the Bible and Sexuality). For each paper, you will answer an essential question (e.g. “To what extent has the Bible helped or hindered racial equality?”) using quotes that we have discussed in class and our readings.
- There will be a collaborative project, in which you take the questions we are asking in class out to “the real world.” You will research and interview a political organization and present your findings on the last day of class.

How You Will Be Assessed

Grading Scale

93-100	A	77-79	C+	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	73-76	C	63-66	D
87-89	B+	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
83-86	B				
80-82	B-				

Grade Components

Class Participation	15%	
Quizzes	15%	(5% each)
Position Papers	30%	(10 % each)
Final Project	40%	

Policies

Attendance

If you are sick or an emergency comes up, please notify me in advance. You are not doing yourself or anyone else any favors if you come to class sick. Notifying me means that the absence is excused; it's unexcused and counts against your grade if you don't let me know. After the first excused absence, and for all unexcused absences, your attendance and class participation grades will be affected. After two or more unexcused absences, your entire grade for the course begins to drop. Four unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. Daily roll will be taken. Attendance is part of your participation grade.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to collaborate to share ideas, resources, and questions. This sharing becomes cheating or plagiarism when you present as original the insights or work of another. Your position papers are expected to be original to you. That does not mean that every idea and insight you write about will be your own. What it does mean is that your assignments should be guided by your insights and, when you do rely on an authority other than yourself, you note that reliance through standard footnotes and bibliography. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing on a required assignment, you will receive an "F" on the assignment and in the course, and the matter may also be forwarded for further action to the Office of Student Leadership and Integrity.

Disability Accommodation Policy

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources at the outset of the quarter. The Disability Resources Office is located in Benson Center, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445.

Course Schedule and Readings:

The course is divided into three parts: the Bible and War, the Bible and Race, and the Bible and Sexuality.

**Readings and assignments are due on the dates listed below.*

Wk	Date	Topic/Discussion	Readings/Assignments
<u>The Bible and War:</u>			
1	07/27	Class Overview Essential Questions The Bible: the Iraq War Class Project	

	07/28	Rebuilding Babel The Bible: Revolutionary War Project Prep	<i>Curse of Cain</i> (pp. 1-13)

	07/30	This Land Is MY Land The Bible: the Civil War <i>Jesus Camp</i>	<i>Curse of Cain</i> (pp. 39-76) Find Project Partner and Topic

2	08/03	Dividing Identities and War The Bible: the World Wars <i>Jesus Camp</i>	<i>Curse of Cain</i> (pp. 120-42)

	08/04	Inscribing Identity/Memory The Bible: Vietnam and the Cold War Project Prep	<i>Curse of Cain</i> (pp. 143-76) Project Update

<u>The Bible and Race:</u>			
	08/06	Sisters in the Wilderness	<i>Sisters in the Wilderness</i> (pp. 1-33)

The Bible: Slavery

Position Paper #1 Due

Amistad

3 08/10 National Arrogance and Race *Sisters in the Wilderness* (pp. 84-102)

The Bible: Civil Rights

Project Prep

08/11 Womanist God-talk *Sisters in the Wilderness* (pp. 143-77)

The Bible: MLK and Malcolm X

Project Prep

08/13 Womanist-Feminist Dialogue *Sisters in the Wilderness* (pp. 178-203)

The Bible: Veggie Tales

Veggie Tales

4 08/17 The Black Church *Sisters in the Wilderness* (pp. 204-40)

The Bible: Barack Obama

Obama and McCain at Saddleback

The Bible and Sexuality:

08/18 The Bible and Eros *The Erotic Word* (pp. 1-17)

The Bible: Ancient Sexuality Position Paper #2 Due

Obama and McCain at Saddleback

08/20 The Eden Garden *The Erotic Word* (pp. 17-56)

The Bible: "Puritanism"

Project Prep

Project Update

5 08/24 Divine-Human Sexuality *The Erotic Word* (pp. 59-87)
 The Bible: Same-Sex Sexuality
 Project Prep

08/25 The Bible's Erotic Love Poetry *The Erotic Word* (pp. 91-138)
 The Bible: Proposition 8
 Proposition 8 Ads

08/27 The Erotic and the Mystical *The Erotic Word* (pp. 139-78)
 Project Presentations Project Due

6 08/31 Final (Third Position Paper) Position Paper #3 Due