

FACULTY SIGNATURE COURSE SUMMARY REFLECTION

The purpose of this annual review of required/signature courses is to determine the extent of individual course quality and consistency across the academic program. Both full time and adjunct faculty who teach these courses over a three-year period will complete the course summary. Course summaries are then reviewed with program directors and the Vice President of Academic Affairs to inform program improvements.

Course Code: B300 _____ **Course Name:** Introduction to Biblical Studies (IBS) _____

Course Registration Number(s): _____

Students: 6 _____ Class Avg.: 82.71% _____ # Failures: 0 _____

Delivery Mode: Hours/week 3 _____

In Person Hybrid- Online Experiential Learning

Course Delivery Overview:

- What changes (if any) were implemented since the last delivery?
(If it is your first time teaching this course, please provide a general overview.)

IBS was last offered in the Spring 2022 semester. IBS is a skill-building foundational course that is the prerequisite for 400-level bible courses in the Masters-level curriculum.

1. In the Fall 2022 semester, IBS was offered in lieu of I300 – Pilgrimage in Faithfulness, which is typically offered in the fall semester as an introductory course for most incoming Masters-level students. Relatedly, IBS is typically offered in the spring semester after completion of PIF. With IBS standing in for PIF in this inaugural semester for incoming students, some key features of PIF that orients students to life in seminary (including practice in theological reflection) was integrated into IBS. These will be later reinforced when it is expected that the 2022 incoming class will enroll in PIF in the Fall 2023 semester along with the 2023 incoming class. Additionally, there was attentiveness to reinforce and interweave a focus on formation that was emphasized in this year's orientation prior to the start of the Fall 2022 semester.
2. With a smaller incoming class, IBS was taught by a single instructor rather than the typical two instructors (one specializing in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and one specializing in New Testament).
3. IBS shifted back to a fully in-person modality in the Fall 2022 semesters since being offered as a fully remote course since Spring 2021 and partly remote in Spring 2020.*

*IBS is typically taught by rotating pairs of the Bible Field faculty. When needed, a Bible Field faculty teaches with an adjunct faculty. In the Spring 2020 semester (taught by Dr. S. Davidson and C. Ferguson), IBS shifted mid-semester from an in-person to remote modality in response to the pandemic. In the Spring 2021 and 2022 semesters (taught by Dr. S. Tanzer and J. Kang), IBS shifted to a fully on-online course (with the last class session in the Spring 2022 semester held in-person).

What went well? (Please list contributing factors to success)

1. Integrating theological reflection as well as attentiveness to formation (change #1 above) to IBS required an intentional slowing down of the pace of the course to create space for learners to reflect on their own formation as they are introduced to critical ways of reading of the biblical text. This was done through building in weekly reflections both asynchronously as well as during in-person weekly meetings. Typically, each module on Alexandria, learners started with an opening exercise that invited them to share their initial thoughts on a text or topic with the class (e.g. What three words or images come to mind for you when you think about land?) using an interactive platform that was embedded on Alexandria. After engaging with the asynchronous activities in the module, in a closing exercise, the learners were invited to reflect back on what they

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discovered typically in returning to a similar question in the opening exercise (e.g. What new words, insights, or discoveries do you now associate with land after deep listening with 1 Kings 21:1-29 and reading the essay by Vaka'uta this week?) and sharing them with the class. In this way, each module was designed not only to support completion of course assignments (i.e. readings, VoiceThreads, homework assignments), but also as a guided reflection practice as learners documented their own formation and shared in the formation of others in the class as a learning community. In the in-person weekly meetings, learners completed journal entries to continue their reflection on their formation as the class worked towards the intended learning outcomes. In these ways, learners were not only informed of the differences in critical reading practices (methodologies) in biblical studies and more devotional reading practices, but they were able to discover these differences on their own and reflect on their implications for their faith formation as well as reflect on how they can integrate these methodologies in their vocational/ministerial settings. Integrating these practices created space to slow down the course in terms of the pace of (new) content to allow learners to reflect and process together on the disorientation that is a part of discovering different ways of reading when many learners in IBS come with the assumption of a single authoritative reading of the biblical text. Creating space for such reflection allowed for learners to discover pathways towards reorientation. This was evident in their openness and commitment to build practice in the skills of critical reading. As learners were attentive to their own formation as well as the formation of the class, there was a sense of greater patience and energy in the class with the learning process.

2. With a relatively smaller class (change #2 above), this allowed for conversations to unfold. In the weekly in-person meetings, in particular, each learner could have a chance to not only express, but also for their expressions to be noticed and responded to by the class. Additionally, each week included working in pairs or for each learner to share their discoveries for feedback from the class. By the end of the semester, learners were attentive to the developing questions of others in the class and were able to reference back to previous comments/reflections that other learners shared in the class. These unfolding conversations created a deeper sense of learning community in this class.
3. Similarly moving to an in-person modality (change #3 above), is well-suited to a course like IBS. Especially in a semester in which PIF was not offered, meeting in-person oriented incoming students to a sense of place on-campus as well as developing a sense of a learning community as they begin their seminary journey.

What did not go well? (Please list contributing factors to difficulties)

As mentioned above, the pace of IBS was relatively slowed down to be attentive to this being an introduction course for this year's incoming class (in lieu of PIF). As such, the first part of IBS (Readers Matter) in which learners are oriented to their embedded theologies about the biblical text and authority of scripture was expanded. In this semester, learners developed skills in Key Theme to Claim/Thesis (specific skill that is an essential part of IBS) and could benefit from practices more specific to modules in the second and third parts of the course (e.g. formation of the Pentateuch and Gospels, social contexts of HB and NT that are covered in the Text Matters and Contexts Matters, the second and third parts of IBS).

How were the program/course learning outcomes assessed? (List PSLO's/CLO's and assessments)

Course Learning Outcome	Assignment
1. Assess biblical texts and evaluate secondary literature	Class Discussions Homework, and Essays #2 & 3

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2. Understand the variety of biblical texts and construct cross-culturally engaged interpretations	Class Discussions, Homework, and Essays
3. Construct relevant interpretations of biblical texts	Asynchronous Activities, Essays
4. Formulate interpretations that demonstrate just and transformative leadership	Class Discussions, Homework

Links with Degree Learning Outcomes:

The course learning outcomes fulfill the following degree learning outcomes:

- *Think Critically* by becoming close readers of biblical texts, by evaluating secondary literature on the Bible, and by assessing the significance of biblical ideas for contemporary contexts (CLO #1 and #2).
- *Construct theological meaning using Christian tradition* by paying close attention to the details of the biblical texts as the starting point for biblical study and interpretation (CLO #3).
- *Exhibit cross-cultural competence* by listening for different voices whether that be from biblical texts or contemporary cultures and developing a voice that speaks graciously to different audiences (CLO #2)
- *Exhibit pastoral imagination through* relevant and careful interpretive work to support teaching, preaching, and activism through biblical texts (CLO #3)
- *Lead just and sustainable communities* by exploring how good biblical interpretation contributes to just and sustainable communities (CLO #4)

How did the course assessment methods and weights align to the level of the course? (Semester 1, 2, 3, etc.)?

- Would you recommend any changes to the level of rigor/depth of knowledge taught and assessed?

Not at this time.

Outline the resources and facilities used for this course including course texts, labs, etc.

- Do you have recommendations or requests for changes?

No recommendations or requests for changes to course resources at this time.

IBS currently requires that students have access to and use two (2) different translations of the Bible:

- A copy of the translation you and/or your community already use, whether it is a study bible or not *and*
- A second, different translation in a **STUDY BIBLE** edition for comparison.

All required course material (e.g. readings, VoiceThreads) are available on Alexandria.

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Analysis of Student Feedback:

- What was the course evaluation response rate? 67_%
- What were the common themes?

Expressions of desire for “longer” exposure to the course to allow for more practice and varied ways of engaging with the course.

Recommendations for course revisions (if any):

- Please indicate if change is in response to student feedback (S), instructor feedback (IF), and/or changes in industry practices (IP).
- Identify if the recommendations may impact the curriculum/PSLO/Formation map for the program (Summer 2022).

(S and IF) The Bible Field may need to convene to evaluate and strategize together on how IBS functions to prepare students not only for 400-level bible courses, but also how IBS will be a part of an integrated course curriculum in which building skills in biblical studies can inform formation. In this way, we can be responsive to learners for a desire for deeper engagement with the course.

Identify any teaching dimension support desired (PD, Assessment, LMS Design, Development of Blended Learning material).

See above