



WSBM 130 INTRO TO BIBLICAL STUDIES

Mark Wessner

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February 10-11

Friday 7 – 9 PM | Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM

Winter 2023

Foundational Course (Condensed)

2 credit hours

Room: **TBD**

WSBM exists to equip Willingdon Church – head, heart and hands – to be more biblically literate and to serve more effectively in church and related ministry.

I. Course Description

The Bible was written in various kinds of writing by different authors over many centuries. This foundational course introduces students to the historical, literary, theological, and confessional value of the Old and New Testaments, with special attention given to the Bible's interpretation and application in the Mennonite Brethren tradition. Students will gain confidence in studying the Bible and come to better know the God who is revealed in its pages.

II. Course Objectives

Upon the successful completion of the course, Credit Students should be able to ...

- Identify and describe the main historical, literary and canonical elements of the Old and New Testaments,
- Describe how Mennonite Brethren interpretations of scripture are applied in the current Canadian context, and
- Effectively interpret each of the various sections and genres of the Bible.

III. **REQUIRED Text**

- Good, Meghan Larissa. *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*. Herald Press. 2018.

IV. **Course Outline**

Friday, February 10, 2023	6:30pm – 9:30pm
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Experience with Scripture • History, Development, and Transmission
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MB Interpretation of Scripture • Translations
Saturday, February 11, 2023	9am – 5pm
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry • Wisdom
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives • Gospels • Parables
Session 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law • Prophecy
Session 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters • Apocalypse • Conclusion and Next Steps

V. **Course Requirements**

- Research Paper: A 10-14 page paper on either a poetic or narrative passage (it must be one of these two genres). You can choose any passage you would like to study, provided that Dr. Wessner has approved both the passage and your draft bibliography prior to writing the paper. At a minimum, the paper will consist of:
 - a. The appropriate identification of the passage (where the passage starts/stops, its placement within the book, its placement within the Bible, etc), giving specific reasons for each of your conclusions (12% of grade),
 - b. An analysis of the literary style and characteristics of the passage (citing specific references) (12%),
 - c. A detailed and thoughtful application of the appropriate interpretive approach taught during the course (50%),
 - d. A concluding section on the modern relevance and/or application of the passage (21%), and
 - e. Specific references from at least three sources in addition to the Required Text (5%).
- All conclusions and opinions must be supported and documented with relevant and appropriate evidence and/or examples.

VI. **Recommended Reading**

- Bird, Michael F. *Seven Things I Wish Christians Knew About The Bible*, Zondervan, 2021.
- Fee, Gordon, and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Zondervan, 2014.
- Dueck, Abe J., Bruce L. Guenther, and Doug Heidebrecht. "Sola Scriptura and the Mennonite Brethren." In *Renewing Identity and Mission: Mennonite Brethren Reflections After 150 Years*, 155-164. Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2011.
- Heidebrecht, Doug, and Mark Wessner. "Interpreting Scripture Today: A Mennonite Brethren Model and Method." *Direction* 49, no. 2 (2020): 115-122.
- Jost, Lynn, Angeline Schellenberg, Jon M. Isaak, Elenore Doerksen, Andrew Dyck, and Connie Faber. "People of the Word." In *Family Matters: Discovering the Mennonite Brethren*, 22-28. Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2017.

VII. Academic Policies

1. Course Attendance

Students are expected to attend all the scheduled classes. If, for some reason, students need to miss classes, they will need to contact the instructor ahead of time. Students will be required to catch up on missed classes by listening to the recording. Students are responsible to obtain any missing materials or notes from other students in the class. Arrangements must be made with the instructor prior to missing an exam.

2. Classroom Etiquette

Students are expected to remember that they are in an academic classroom. It is inappropriate to engage in conversations with classmates during class. Cell phones must be turned off. iPods/Tablets/Smart phones are permitted if Bible software and word-processing programs are being used. Otherwise, please do not surf the net or check emails during class. Only students who have registered for a course are to be in attendance. The only exception is an "approved audit." If the class is conducted via Zoom, students should turn the video on unless there is a good reason not to.

3. Assignment Format (Citation & Style)

The default format for documentation of sources used and format of presentation for all the papers is *MLA Style*. The format guide is available at Willingdon.org/wsbn.

4. Late Assignments

Without the extension that has been granted already by the instructor, late assignments are subject to reduced grades. The work that is submitted late (from the *time* it was due) will receive a 5% reduction in grades. There will be an additional 5% reduction for every 24 hour period that follows (including the weekend).

Assignments submitted one week after their due dates will *not* be accepted (unless, again, extensions have been approved already by the instructor).

5. Extension Policy

The deadline for an assignment is considered to be part of the course requirements. Due to the additional workload for the instructor in grading late papers, and due to the school's intention to be fair to students who,

often with considerable effort, submit their work on time, extensions for course work will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. A written request with reasons for extension should be directed to the instructor. If granted, the extension deadlines will be clearly established and will be final.

Extensions for course work are granted in cases where the student demonstrates there was an unforeseeable and unavoidable emergency. Emergencies considered as grounds for an extension typically include:

- Personal sickness or injury which prevents one from working
- Sickness, injury or death in the family which requires the student's attention
- Emotional or psychological crisis for which the student has sought professional help
- Unexpected increase in job responsibilities

6. Academic Integrity

All students at WSBM are expected to hold to *uncompromised* academic integrity.

Plagiarism, whether intended or accidental, is an academic offense. In academic work, students are certainly expected to refer to and evaluate other people's works. Plagiarism unfortunately occurs when students' assignments fail to give credit to those from whom the students got certain *ideas*. In other words, students submitted the idea of another without reference to him/her (effectively claiming the credit that is due someone else and getting a grade for someone else's effort).

Therefore, whether students (1) *directly quotes* a source (i.e., "word for word" in its entirety or in its part), or (2) *paraphrase in their own words* the idea of another, they must keep track and provide a *clear reference* to the original source that they are indebted to (e.g., via footnotes).

Again, whether it was intended or not, plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Students are therefore expected to develop and exercise *proper citation*, a skill that is truly critical in academic work (please refer to the format guide at Willingdon.org/wsbm).

Using unauthorized aids of any sort in exams or assignments, completing work in unauthorized collaboration with others, or the unauthorized use of class recordings are all breaches of academic integrity.

The penalty for a lack of academic integrity may include a failing grade either in the assignment, examination or course, depending on the severity of the offense.

7. Academic Standards

Students must achieve at least a 60% grade to successfully complete a course. In order to graduate with the Certificate, any course taken and not completed must be repeated. Registration policies and procedures apply.

Students may appeal to the instructor if a course is not successfully completed, and at the discretion of the instructor, students may be granted the opportunity to re-submit a particular assignment.

8. Report Cards

Report cards are issued (usually by email) in a reasonable amount of time following the completion of each course. Due to faculty schedules, there may be delays in the time frame for issuing grade reports.

Students are responsible to appeal any error in grades and to bring to the WSBM Administrative Assistant's attention within one month following the issued report card. Grade changes are allowable for computational recording errors and must be corrected no later than one month after the date the report card was issued.