

R- 2/14/12  
W- 5/15/14

H-76e  
12-13  
13-8

### Undergraduate Distance Education Review Form

(Required for all courses taught by distance education for more than one-third of teaching contact hours.)

#### Existing and Special Topics Course

Course: RLST 250 Understanding the Bible

Instructor(s) of Record: Tawny L. Holm

Phone: 724-357-1360 Email: tholm@iup.edu

#### Step Two: Departmental/Dean Approval

Recommendation:  Positive (The objectives of this course can be met via distance education)

Negative

[Signature]  
Signature of Department Designee

12/8/11  
Date

Endorsed: [Signature]  
Signature of College Dean

12/15/11  
Date

Forward form and supporting materials to Liberal Studies Office for consideration by the University-wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Dual-level courses also require review by the University-wide Graduate Committee for graduate-level section.

#### Step Three: University-wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Approval

Recommendation:  Positive (The objectives of this course can be met via distance education)

Negative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Committee Co-Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Forward form and supporting materials to the Provost within 30 calendar days after received by committee.

#### Step Four: Provost Approval

Approved as distance education course

Rejected as distance education course

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Provost

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Forward form and supporting materials to Associate Provost.

**Received**

**DEC 16 2011**

**Liberal Studies**

11-76c - not approved yet - 12-16-11

LSC Use Only: Proposal No.	UW/UCC Use Only: Proposal No.	Senate Action Date
LSC Action Date	UW/UCC Action Date	

Curriculum Proposal Cover Sheet - University-Wide Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Contact Person(s) <b>Theresa Smith</b>	Email Address <b>tsmith@iup.edu</b>
Proposing Department/Unit <b>Religious Studies</b>	Phone <b>357-1360</b>

Check all appropriate lines and complete all information. Use a separate cover sheet for each course proposal and/or program proposal.

1. Course Proposals (check all that apply)

- New Course                       Course Prefix Change                       Course Deletion  
 Course Revision                       Course Number and/or Title Change                       Catalog Description Change

Current course prefix, number and full title: **RLST 250 Understanding the Bible**

Proposed course prefix, number and full title, if changing:

2. Liberal Studies Course Designations, as appropriate

This course is also proposed as a Liberal Studies Course (please mark the appropriate categories below)

- Learning Skills     Knowledge Area     Global and Multicultural Awareness     Writing Across the Curriculum (W Course)  
 Liberal Studies Elective (please mark the designation(s) that applies - must meet at least one)  
 Global Citizenship     Information Literacy     Oral Communication  
 Quantitative Reasoning     Scientific Literacy     Technological Literacy

3. Other Designations, as appropriate

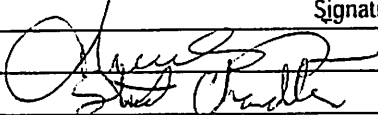
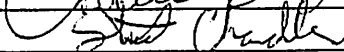
- Honors College Course     Other: (e.g. Women's Studies, Pan African)

4. Program Proposals

- Catalog Description Change     Program Revision     Program Title Change     New Track  
 New Degree Program     New Minor Program     Liberal Studies Requirement Changes     Other

Current program name: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed program name, if changing: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Approvals	Signature	Date
Department Curriculum Committee Chair(s)		10/24/11
Department Chairperson(s)		10/25/11
College Curriculum Committee Chair		
College Dean		
Director of Liberal Studies (as needed)		
Director of Honors College (as needed)		
Provost (as needed)		
Additional signature (with title) as appropriate		
UWUCC Co-Chairs		

# RLST 250 Understanding the Bible

## Syllabus of Record

### I. Catalog Description

RLST 250 Understanding the Bible	3 credits
	3 lecture hours
Prerequisite: None	0 lab hours
	(3c-01-3sh)

An academic introduction to the sacred writings known as the Bible. The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the basic contents and major themes of the books of the Bible (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and New Testament), as well as the goals and methods of the most recent scholarship in biblical studies.

### II. Course Objectives

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic content and major themes of the Bible, including both Old and New Testaments.
2. Exhibit appropriate knowledge, skills, and appreciation of biblical studies as an academic discipline.
3. Think critically about the Bible by paying careful attention to modern secular methodologies for studying it.
4. Discuss and consider how implicit and explicit beliefs about the Bible impact modern society as well as Judaism, the three branches of Christianity, and, to some extent, Islam.

### III. Course Outline

- I. Introduction (6 hours)
- A. Basic information about the Bible; differences between the Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic/Orthodox Bibles.
  - B. History of composition and canonization of the various parts of the Bible.
  - C. Overview of interdisciplinary methodologies for studying the Bible; views of biblical interpretation.
  - D. The Biblical world - setting in the Ancient Near East and historical overview.
- II. The Hebrew Bible or Old Testament (21 hours)
- A. Major themes in the Law/Pentateuch (*Torah*)
    1. Primordial stories of Genesis

2. The ancestors or patriarchs/matriarchs
3. Exodus and wanderings
4. The Law and law codes
- B. Major themes in the Prophets (*Nevi'im*)
  1. Deuteronomistic History or Former Prophets
    - a. Conquest of Canaan and the judges period
    - b. The United Monarchy
    - c. The Divided Monarchy and the fall of the nation
  2. Prophetic Literature and the Latter Prophets
    - a. Preexilic prophets
    - b. Exilic prophets
    - c. Postexilic prophets

Midterm - 1 hour

- C. Major themes in the Writings (*Ketuvim*)
  1. Psalms and other poetry
  2. Themes in the Wisdom books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)
  3. Short stories (Ruth, Daniel, etc.)
  4. Historical writings of the Persian period (Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles)
  5. Apocalyptic writings
- D. Selected books of the Apocrypha/Deuterocanon (the extra Old Testament books in Catholic and Orthodox Christian Bibles)

III. New Testament (13 hours)

- A. Introduction to the Hellenistic and Roman world
- B. Major themes in the Gospels
  1. Gospel according to Mark
  2. Gospel according to Matthew
  3. Gospel according to Luke
  4. Gospel according to John
  5. The synoptic problem and the non-canonical gospels
  6. The historical Jesus
- C. The beginnings of the early church
  1. Acts of the Apostles
  2. Pauline and pseudo-Pauline letters
  3. Themes in Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles
- D. Revelation of John

IV. Beyond the New Testament into early Christianity (1 hour)

Final exam (2 hours)

#### IV. Evaluation Methods:

The final grade will be determined as follows:

4 pop quizzes, 20 points each	80 points
Midterm exam, 80 points	80 points
Final exam, 100 points	100 points
Short response writing assignment	<u>40 points</u>
Total	300 points

## V. Grading Scale

A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F = below 60%

## VI. Attendance Policy

The university expects all students to attend class. It is important that students keep up with the readings and attend class regularly. While attendance and participation is not mandatory in all classes, experience has shown that both attendance and participation have a direct impact on learning and grade performance. Actual attendance policy will vary from instructor to instructor in compliance with the university attendance policy.

## VII. Required Textbooks and Supplemental Books

### Exemplary textbooks:

Coogan, M. *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. <http://bible.oremus.org>.

Harris, Stephen L. *Understanding the Bible*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011.

Hauer, Christian A., and William A. Young. *Introduction to the Bible*. 8th edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 2011.

### Supplemental books or readings:

The following are examples of possible choices that could be used as supplemental books:

Bellis, A. O. 2007. *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

Ehrman, Bart D. 2009. *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Handy, Lowell K. 1997. *The Educated Person's Thumbnail Introduction to the Bible*. Atlanta: Chalice.

Kugel, James L. 1997. *The Bible as It Was*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

[www.earlychristianwritings.com](http://www.earlychristianwritings.com)

### Bibliography

Barton, John, ed. 2002. *The Biblical World*. 2 vols. New York: Routledge.

- Boadt, Lawrence. 1984. *Reading the Old Testament*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist.
- Borg, Marcus J. and John Dominic Crossan. 2008. *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2010.
- . *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary*. San Francisco: HarperOne.
- Brown, Raymond E. 1997. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Crossan, John Dominic. 2009. *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. San Francisco: HarperOne.
- Ehrman, Bart D. 2009. *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2009. *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- . 2003. *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finegan, Jack. 1992. *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*. Rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Freedman, D. N., ed. 1992. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday.
- Handy, Lowell K. 1997. *The Educated Person's Thumbnail Introduction to the Bible*. Atlanta: Chalice.
- Harris, Stephen L. 2008. *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kugel, James L. 1997. *The Bible as It Was*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- . 2002. *The God of Old: Inside the Lost World of the Bible*. New York: The Free Press.
- . 2007. *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now*. New York: The Free Press.
- Mazar, Amihai. 1992. *The Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 B.C.E.* New York: Doubleday.
- Metzger, Bruce M. and Michael D. Coogan, eds. 1993. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Meyers, E. M., ed. 1997. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*. 5 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rofé, Alexander. 2009. *Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible*. Jerusalem: Simor.
- Stanley, Christopher D. 2010. *The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Stern, Ephraim. 2001. *The Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Volume II: The Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods (732-332 B.C.E.)*. New York: Doubleday.
- Trebolle Barrera, Julio. 1997. *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible: An Introduction to the History of the Bible*. Transl. W.G.E. Watson. Leiden: Brill.

## **VIII. Summary of the Proposed Revisions**

- A. Catalog description change.
- B. Revision of course objectives.
- C. Addition and expansion of other items on the syllabus including assessment resources, supplemental books and an updated bibliography.

## **IX. Rationale for proposed revisions**

- A. The changes more clearly indicate the emphasis on the “Western” cultural heritage in global context.
- B. The objectives have been updated to meet the requirements for the Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes.
- C. These revisions reflect changes in the expectation for a syllabus of record and newer academic resources available since the last version of this syllabus.

## Undergraduate Distance Education

Course: RLST 250 Understanding the Bible

Instructor of Record: Tawny Holm

Phone: 724-357-1360

Email: tholm@iup.edu

### Step One: Proposer

A. Provide a brief narrative rationale for each of the items, A1- A5.

1. How is/are the instructor(s) qualified in the distance education delivery method as well as the discipline?

The instructor has offered RLST 250 at IUP for 13 years, ever since she began teaching here in Fall 1999, so she has plenty of experience with this course. She is also fully qualified to teach a course on the Bible, given that her Ph.D. is in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and she reads the original languages and publishes on the Bible and related topics.

The instructor has never offered a fully online or distance education course before, however, in Fall 2011 she offered RLST 250 as a 1/3 online course. She has also offered other courses 1/3 online, such as RLST 110. She regularly uses Moodle for almost all of her courses, and is very familiar with how to use it efficiently. She uses Moodle to offer sample quizzes, post assignments, post Powerpoint presentations, etc. Furthermore, if she has any difficulties, she will contact IT Support, especially Christopher Bennett, as she has done in the past.

Finally, in the courses such as RLST 250 that she has offered 1/3 online, Moodle (or WebCT) has been used to implement that part of the course. For example, students have been directed to websites with translations of world scriptures including the Bible, to appropriate YouTube or other videos with educational impact, to documentaries about the Bible on PBS, and to various websites with religion in the news.

2. How will each objective in the course be met using distance education technologies?

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic content and major themes of the Bible, including both Old and New Testaments.

a. Basic content or major themes will be addressed via readings of Scripture on <http://bible.oremus.org>; use of audio and visual files available on YouTube or elsewhere on the internet; and Powerpoint lessons uploaded on Moodle.

2. Exhibit appropriate knowledge, skills, and appreciation of biblical studies as an academic discipline.

a. The course will be structured with an emphasis on the Bible as a collection of ancient written documents with a complex developmental history of composition, canonization, and translation.

b. Students will be required to read and develop critical responses to biblical passages and to various academic writings about those passages.

3. Think critically about the Bible by paying careful attention to modern secular methodologies for studying it.



a. Each of the lessons will introduce modern academic methods, as will the textbook.

4. Discuss and consider how implicit and explicit beliefs about the Bible impact modern society as well as Judaism, the three branches of Christianity, and, to some extent, Islam.

a. Students will be required to respond via the News or other Forums on Moodle to news or other articles on modern interpretations or news events that utilize beliefs about the Bible.

3. How will instructor-student and student-student, if applicable, interaction take place?

Moodle's various chat and other forums (including News), as well as individual email exchanges, will be used. If necessary, students will also be allowed to phone the professor at a set time each day.

4. How will student achievement be evaluated?

Students will be given two major tests and a series of quizzes. They will also be evaluated on their contributions to the "Chat" assignments open for classroom dialogue.

5. How will academic honesty for tests and assignments be addressed?

Quizzes, exams, and submission requirements will be given with time and date limitations. Student messages and contributions to the message board dialogues will be monitored for plagiarism. The instructor will design quizzes and tests with "open book, open notes" assessment. Moodle allows the instructor to randomly generate quizzes and tests for each student as well as randomize quiz or test questions.

RLST 250 Understanding the Bible  
Online Course  
Tawny L. Holm, Ph.D.  
449 Sutton Hall  
724-357-1360  
Office hour: To be announced

## **I. Catalog Description**

An academic introduction to the sacred writings known as the Bible. The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the basic contents and major themes of the books of the Bible (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and New Testament), as well as the goals and methods of the most recent scholarship in biblical studies.

## **II. Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic content and major themes of the Bible, including both Old and New Testaments.
2. Exhibit appropriate knowledge, skills, and appreciation of biblical studies as an academic discipline.
3. Think critically about the Bible by paying careful attention to modern secular methodologies for studying it.
4. Discuss and consider how implicit and explicit beliefs about the Bible impact modern society as well as Judaism, the three branches of Christianity, and, to some extent, Islam.

This is a basic, introductory course on the Bible. No previous knowledge or course work is required. Anyone interested in studying the Bible in greater depth and detail, or in studying related topics in religious studies, is encouraged to take advanced or other courses offered by the Department of Religious Studies at IUP.

## **III. Distance Learning Section**

This is an online (distance learning) section of RLST 250 Understanding the Bible. The course is designed to teach students the same content as they would find in a traditional classroom with the convenience of being able to do most of the course off campus. The course requirements have been adjusted to meet the online format, but have the same level and quality of instruction one finds on campus.

### **A. What is Distance Learning?**

The distance learning process is designed to allow students to take courses without needing to attend class on IUP's campus. It makes education more convenient by allowing students to pursue their studies while more easily maintaining obligations to work and family and avoid the increasingly high cost of commuting.

## B. Succeeding in a Distance Learning Course

In some ways, success in online courses depends more on discipline and initiative in taking personal responsibility for one's own education. Still, a student must use computer-based technology to interact well with the instructor and other students. For some this will come rather naturally. For others it will take some adjustment.

In order to be successful in this course, a student must:

- Take the time to learn to use Moodle effectively.
- Schedule enough time to complete assignments when due.
- Interact with other students through distance learning media.

## C. Technological Software

- An IUP email account.
- Access to Moodle ([moodle/iup.edu](http://moodle/iup.edu))
- A compatible browser such as a recent version of Firefox, Chrome, or MS Internet Explorer (see Moodle support)
- MS Word or compatible word processor
- MS Office Powerpoint
- A computer capable of downloading and playing YouTube and other online media.
- Basic audio capabilities on one's personal computer.

## IV. Course Texts

Course Textbook: Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011.

Bible - New Revised Standard Version found at <http://bible.oremus.org>, or else you may use another modern translation of your choice.

Website: [www.earlychristianwritings.com](http://www.earlychristianwritings.com)

## V. Course Costs

- All computer equipment
- One textbook

## VI. Course Deadlines

Tests and quizzes must be taken during the assigned time span and on specific dates. These deadlines will be posted. Exceptions will be made only for medical emergencies.

## VII. Course Misconduct

Students who cheat, plagiarize, or in some way violate academic policies of IUP will face disciplinary action that could result in failing the course or being expelled from the university. For more information, please consult the section on "Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures" in the Undergraduate Catalog.

## VIII. Email Contact and Office Hours

We will hold scheduled conferences over email, telephone, or if convenient, face-to-face meetings. Students will be given clear parameters for such meetings, including schedules and response times. The instructor will also post messages on Moodle and send messages through email class distribution list or News Forum.

## IX. Course Schedule

This is a basic outline of the topics, readings, and internet assignments for each week. It is subject to change, and students must check with the course page on Moodle for announcements, updates, and test dates.

Week One: Introduction to the study of the Bible on the internet

Assignments:

Log on to Moodle.

Become familiar with the software.

Pick up textbook.

Textbook pp. 1-34

Powerpoint lecture/s: Basic information about the Bible; differences between the Bibles. History of composition and canonization of the various parts of the Bible. Overview of interdisciplinary methodologies for studying the Bible; views of biblical interpretation.

Week Two: Major themes in the Torah: Genesis stories

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 86-108

Genesis chs. 1-3 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Nova documentary, part 1:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

Powerpoint lecture/s: The Biblical world - setting in the Ancient Near East and historical overview. Primordial stories of Genesis.

Week Three: Major themes in the Torah: Exodus and Law

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 108-133

Exodus chs. 1-14 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Nova documentary, part 2:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

Powerpoints lecture/s: The ancestors or patriarchs/matriarchs, Exodus and Law

Week Four: Major Themes in the Prophets: The land

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 146-173

Joshua chs. 1-5; Judges 1-5 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Powerpoint lecture/s: Conquest of Canaan and the judges period, united monarchy.

Week Five: Major themes in the Prophets: Loss of the land

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 174-197

1 Kings 22 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Powerpoint lecture/s: The Divided Monarchy and the fall of the nation, intro to Prophetic literature of Israel

Week Six: Major themes in the Prophets: Prophetic Literature and the Prophetic Commission

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 202-206, 210-221

Isaiah chs. 5, 40, 52-53 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Powerpoint lecture/s: The call of the prophet (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel)

Week Seven: Major themes in the Writings: Psalms and Wisdom

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 231-260

Psalms 23, 100, 121 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Psalms as performance:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjipxh456Kk>

Powerpoint lecture: Wisdom themes in Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

**Midterm**

Week Eight: Major themes in the Writings: Who are we without kings and land? (Short stories, historical writings, apocalyptic writings)

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 260-283

Ruth chs. 1-4; Song of Songs 1-4 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Powerpoint lecture/s: Ruth; Song of Songs; Apocalypse

Week Nine: Selected themes in the Apocrypha

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 284-298

Judith chs. 8-16 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Love and Sex in the Bible documentary:

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3392928972618311501>

Powerpoint lecture/s: Overview of Apocrypha; Judith

Week Ten: Begin New Testament

Assignments:

Textbook pp. 308-336

Jesus to Christ documentary, First Christians:

<http://video.pbs.org/video/1365214164/>

Jesus Many Faces: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/>  
Powerpoint lecture/s: Jesus in the Hellenistic and Roman world

#### Week Eleven: Themes in the Gospels

##### Assignments:

Textbook pp. 343-373, 429-445

Matthew chs. 1-2, 5-7, Mark chs. 14-16 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Jesus to Christ documentary, Paul: <http://video.pbs.org/video/1365214164/>

Powerpoint lecture/s: Jesus and the Gospels

#### Week Twelve: Themes in Acts and Paul's letters

##### Assignments:

Textbook pp. 448-475

1 Thessalonians chs. 1-5 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Explore maps of New Testament activities:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/>

#### Week Thirteen: Themes in the letters of the elders (Deutero-Pauline Letters or Pseudo-Pauline letters)

##### Assignments:

Textbook pp. 495-504

1 Timothy chs. 1-6 (<http://bible.oremus.org>)

Powerpoint lecture/s: Themes in the late N.T. letters

#### Week Fourteen: The last letters and Revelation; Christianity Beyond the New Testament

##### Assignments:

Textbook pp. 505-532

Why did Christianity succeed:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/why/>

Powerpoint lecture/s: Revelation and Christianity beyond the N.T.

#### Week Fifteen:

Final exam

## **X. Course Grading**

### **A. Grading Requirements:**

The final grade will be determined as follows:

4 quizzes	5% each	20% total
2 exams	25% each	50% total
3 Postings on Forums	10% each	30% total

### **B. Grading Scale**

A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F = below 60%

**XI Sample Lesson: See attached.**

## Lesson: Creation stories in Genesis

- Prerequisites (assigned readings):
  - Read Harris pp. 103-108
  - Read Genesis chs. 1-3 in the Bible

## Creation in Genesis – 2 stories

- The P or Priestly story: Genesis 1-2:4a (chapter 1 through chapter 2 verse 4a)
- The J or Yahwist story: Genesis 2:4b-25 (chapter 2 verse 4b through verse 25)

BTW, literalist readings of these stories are fairly new – Jews and Christians have historically read these stories as analogies or metaphors, etc., not as historical events, although that is a popular interpretation since the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. On the other hand, readers of all kinds (not just modern scholars) have always noticed that there were 2 different stories here, not just a single story of creation.

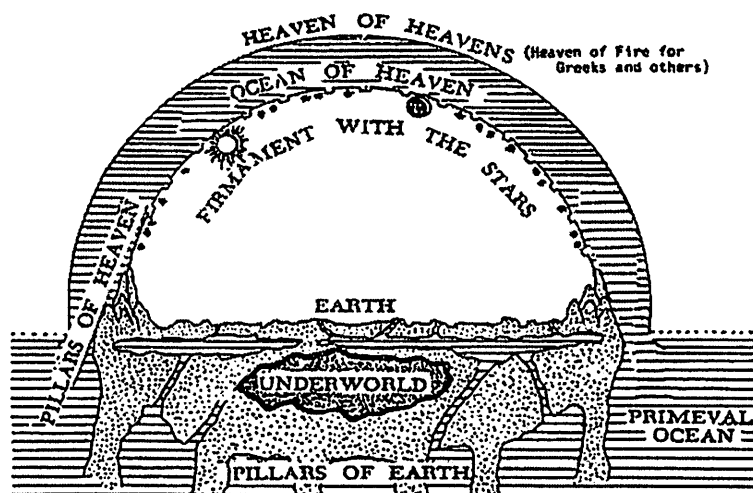


## Outline of Priestly (P) story

- God is *Elohim* (translated as “God” in English), very distanced. In a dramatic performance of Genesis 1, God would be a voice off-stage.
- Creation of cosmos in 6 days, very structured (day 4 fulfills day 1, day 5 fulfills day 2, day 6 fulfills day 3):
 

1: night and day	4: sun, moon, stars
2: watery sky and water	5: birds and fish
3: dry land and veg	6: animals and humans
7: Sabbath or rest day	

## Universe – what is it perceived to look like by ancient Israelites?



Note that the earth does not go around the sun, but the sun crosses the earth!!!

## Some notes about Genesis 1

- **Day 1** – Does God create the universe “out of nothing” or is there a watery something which God uses as his basic building material? The answer lies in how you translate.
- The NRSV translation of the Bible begins, “When God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void....” Other translations begin, “God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was a formless void....”
- Is one of these more correct than the other? Possibly not – the Hebrew allows both translations, but they are very different in their implications.

## Notes cont.

- **Day 5** – Did you notice that water monsters are created on this day along with the fish? What do you think that means?

A good explanation from the ancient Near Eastern setting is found in comparing Gen. 1 to *Enuma Elish*, the Babylonian creation story that begins with water deities (Apsu and Tiamat) who are responsible for creating everything that exists:

– <http://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/enuma.htm>

Note that the ancient Israelite author of Genesis 1, knowing *Enuma Elish*, was trying to show that water monsters aren't the gods you think they are – they are just fish that were created by the Israelite God on day 5!

## Notes, cont.

- **Day 6** - Male and female of humans are created together on day 6, in the “image of God.” What do you think that means?
  - BTW, I’ve got no easy answer for you (the Hebrew of “image” here is a word that often means “statue” but I’m not sure the ancient author of Genesis 1 thought human literally were statues of God that physically looked like God), and am open to your suggestions.

## Genesis 1 as a “Priestly” story

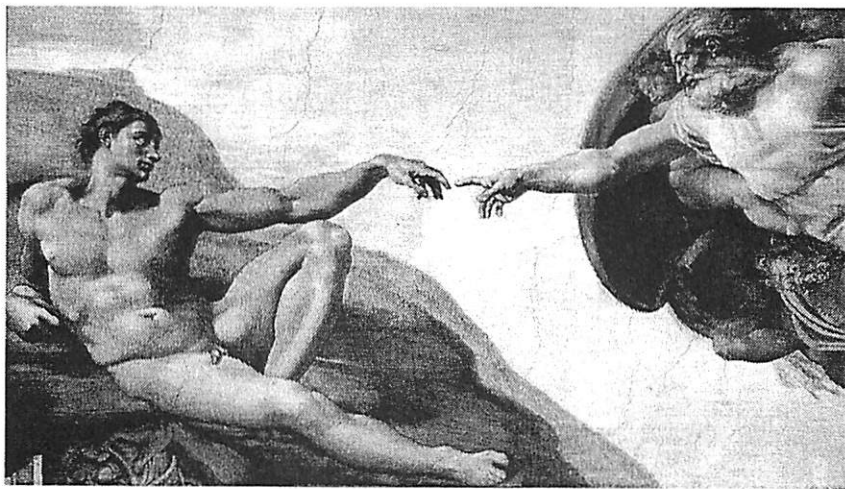
(Remember what you read about the documentary hypothesis and the JEPD authors.)

- Genesis 1 is:
  - highly structured and methodical showing Priestly concerns
  - stresses the week as a basic unit of time which concludes in the day of rest (Sabbath – a religious prohibition against doing work that the priests of ancient Israel would have enforced)
  - uses the name “Elohim” for God
  - Shows precise knowledge of *Enuma Elish* from Babylon
  - Probably dates to the 500’s BCE when the Jews were living in Babylon during the Babylonian exile

## Outline of Yahwist (J) story

- God is called here *Yahweh Elohim* (the “LORD God” in English), and is portrayed as very personal and anthropomorphic (human-like): Yahweh *molds* clay to create humans, *breathes* into Adam’s nostrils, *walks and talks* with the humans, etc. Note that the name “Yahweh” is the most sacred and personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible.
- Creation of cosmos is assumed (no new creation story of the heavens is given), because the focus is on the Garden of Eden where Yahweh interacts with humans.
- Order of creation (not structured in days):
  - Man or *adam* in Hebrew, who is created from *adamah* or ground (and he is told not to eat from the tree of knowledge)
  - Garden of Eden with vegetation
  - animals
  - woman (named Eve in ch. 3)

## Michelangelo’s Creation of Adam (Sistine chapel)



Genesis 3 (J story cont.):  
Tricked by a snake into eating from the  
tree of knowledge

- Smart talking snake converses with woman, persuades her to eat forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge
- Woman gives fruit to husband, he eats
- Both ashamed, wear fig leaves
- God comes looking for them, questions humans about why they disobeyed, then pronounces curses against them (and snake) and expels them from the Garden Eden
- Cherubim guard the way into Eden so no one can return

Peter Paul Rubens'  
Adam and Eve



## Notes on the J story

- The man is created in advance of the woman, and God creates the animals first to find a partner for the man. It doesn't work (none of the animals seem to be suitable partners), so God takes a rib from the man in order to create the first woman.

## Notes, cont.

- The man is "with" the woman as she's talking to the snake. So why doesn't the snake talk to them both?
- Note also that the snake in this story is never identified with Satan (this is a later Christian interpretation that understands Satan as the evil opponent of God and humans who caused the downfall of all humans by tempting them into disobeying).

## Notes, cont.

- Think about the snake's conversation with the woman. Did he lie to her in order to successfully tempt her? (No – read carefully, and you will see that he tells her correctly what God will say as he kicks them out of the Garden in 3:22.)

## Genesis 2-3 as a Yahwist story

- Stress on God as personal and anthropomorphic
- Use of the name “Yahweh” for God
- Is probably the earlier story, maybe as early as 800 or 900 BCE

## As ancient Israelite stories, both P and J share similarities with other ancient Near Eastern Traditions

- Genesis 1 shares similarities with especially *Enuma Elish*
  - Both start with water, and include water monsters/deities
  - Both stress the number 6 (6 generations or days in each)
  
- Genesis 2 shares similarities with other ancient Near Eastern stories too:
  - Creation of human using clay
  - Loss of eternal life due to a snake (*Epic of Gilgamesh* tablet 11; see the end: <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/tab11.htm>)

## But they differ from ancient Near Eastern Traditions as well!

- The main goal in Genesis is to tell the old creation stories with an Israelite spin – the God of Israel is the creator God (not water monsters who mingled their waters), and he (!) has no history, no wife, no family.
  
- The J story is especially an origin story with a series of *etiologies*, explaining how human beings came to do certain things. For example: why people dislike snakes, why humans wear clothes, why men and women leave their birth families and live together, why it is hard to work the soil, why humans must die, etc. **Can you think of any more?**



## Lastly – compare the differences in the creation of male and female humans

- Genesis 1 – male and female created together in image of God
- Genesis 2 – man first, God searches for partner for man by creating animals, then woman created out of man's rib

Genesis 1 is open to a feminist or woman-friendly interpretation of an ideal equality between the sexes. Is such an interpretation justified in your opinion? **Are the sexes equal in Genesis 1?**

## Genesis 2-3 has been open to less woman-friendly interpretations:

- Woman was created last, not because she's the best of creation, but because she is a knock-off from the male prototype (Woman is secondary or tertiary, thus inferior).
- The snake chose Eve, not because she is the most articulate or the best representative of the couple, but because she is gullible and stupid, the easiest to trick.
- The woman can be most or solely blamed for sin in the post-Eden world, since she was the one who was deceived, whereas Adam was just taking food offered to him by his wife.

**In your opinion, are these somewhat misogynistic interpretations of Genesis 2-3 justified? If not, why not?**

Please feel free to comment on these stories in the Chat Forum.

- I look forward to seeing your observations and ideas!

Conclusion, What you should have learned:

- The main differences between the P and J story in terms of the order of creation and portrayal of God and humans (male and female).
- Reasons scholars give for why the P story is considered "Priestly" and why the J story is "Yahwistic."
- J story as an "origin" story or series of etiologies.
- Translations and interpretations matter.