

# REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE W-DESIGNATION

LSC # 232  
Action \_\_\_\_\_

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

## TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- (X) Professor Tawny L. Holm  
(X) Phone 7-2310 Email tholm@iup.edu  
(X) Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when? IUP May 19-20, 2003)  
(X) Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)  
(X) Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

## TYPE II. DEPARTMENT COURSE

- ( ) Department Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Course Number/Title \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Statement concerning departmental responsibility  
( ) Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

## TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- ( ) Professor(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Course Number/Title \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

## SIGNATURES:

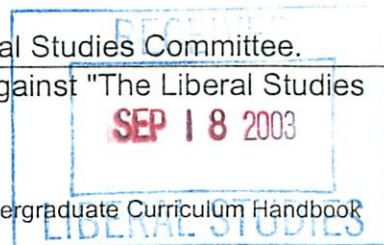
Professor(s) Tawny L. Holm  
Department Chairperson Paul D. Meehan  
College Dean Andy  
Director of Liberal Studies Andy Slavin 10/03

## COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

- I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade. (See Summary Chart for Writing Assignments.)
- II. Copy of the course syllabus.
- III. Provide samples of writing assignments that are given to students that include instructions and evaluation criteria. (Single copies of longer items, if essential to the proposal, may be submitted to be passed among LSC members and returned to you.)

**Please number all pages.** Provide one copy to Liberal Studies Committee.

**Before you submit:** Have you double-checked your proposal against "The Liberal Studies Committee's Most Frequently Asked Questions"?



WRITING SUMMARY  
“Understanding the Bible” (RLST 250W)

1. Distinctive characteristics of the course content or students:

This course is designed to introduce students to the basic content of the Bible (Old and New Testaments, as well as the Deuterocanon/Apocrypha), and to the goals and methodologies used in Biblical studies currently. The essay assignments will introduce students to academic expression and method in their own writing about this ancient document which happens to also be a sacred text, while their journal writing will allow them to express their more personal responses to the course readings, topics, and discussions.

2. List and explain the types of writing activities:

Journals Students will be asked to keep a journal of notes, responses to course materials and class discussion, and of their own reflections about the course. Sometimes the professor will ask them to consider specific topics. The journals will be collected to check if they are being kept, to add comments or suggestions where appropriate, and will be graded pass/fail based on quantity and quality of ideas but not basic style (not grammar and spelling, etc.). It is expected that students will have an average of at least 3 or more entries per week of approximately 75 or more words each. The journal will be worth 15% of the final course grade.

Three 5-page essay assignments

The three essays will be on: one Old Testament character or concept, one New Testament character or concept, and a response to two non-canonical gospels that did not make it into the Bible. The first two papers will require students to use the course materials as well as at least 3 sources from the library or elsewhere, and the third paper will be based on readings on-line as well as regular course materials. Students will have two weeks to write each essay and an abstract of it after it has been assigned, followed by a discussion and evaluation by fellow students in small groups, and the opportunity to rewrite the essay during the next week based on student and professor comments. (Each assignment will thus take approximately 3-4 weeks.) These assignments have the following goals: to introduce students to minor research and major reflection on certain topics in Biblical Studies, to introduce students to the purpose of and how to write an abstract, to encourage students to learn academic writing skills in conjunction with their peers, to enable students to critique and respond to others' writing, and to learn valuable strategies for editing their own essays. In the case of the third essay, students will learn something about the process of canonization by examining pieces of early Christian writing that did not make it into the canon, and asking themselves why. The essays will be graded on the use of academic language and methodologies, basic summary of the character or topic as well as the main issues involved in interpretation, quality of expression in terms of the

student's own views based on the evidence, use of sources and citations, and quality of writing style. Each essay will be worth 10% of the final course grade.

Final exam (half essay)

The final exam will consist of at least six essay questions taken from class discussion and reading throughout the course. The pool of possible questions will be announced in advance. Each essay should be approximately two paragraphs in length, or about 200 words. There is no opportunity for revision, and the essay will be graded on content and style. The purpose for this portion of the exam is to test basic knowledge, as well as basic essay-writing skills. As the final exam will in total be worth 30% of the final course grade, the essay portion will be worth 15% of the final course grade.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS  
**Understanding the Bible**  
**RLST 250W**

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an academic introduction into the sacred writings known as the Bible (from Greek *biblia* “little books”). The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the content of the books of the Bible, as well as the goals and methods of the most recent scholarship in biblical studies. By books of the Bible, we mean the Hebrew Bible (that which is called the Old Testament by Christians), the Deuterocanonical/Apocryphal Writings, and the New Testament.

The course format will include lectures, discussions, audio-visual media (slides, instructional documentary videos, and film clips), and writing in and outside of class. Readings are mostly from the major textbook *Understanding the Bible*, and from selected portions of the Bible. Students are expected to complete readings prior to the class period for which they are assigned, and to participate in class discussions. In addition, students will: keep a journal, write three essay assignments, have 12 pop quizzes (the lowest two scores of which will not count), and a final exam.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- A. Know the basic content and parts of the Bible, including the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, Deuterocanon/Apocrypha, and New Testament.
- B. Understand and be able to explain some of the basic goals and methodologies of modern biblical scholarship.
- C. Write clear, grammatical prose in essay assignments that reflect the norms of academic scholarship of the Bible.
- D. Create and foster an open and courteous atmosphere in which all students are encouraged to articulate their opinions and critically and sensitively discuss the issues behind the course subject matter.

III. COURSE OUTLINE

- A. Introduction (2 weeks)
  - 1. What is the Bible and how did it get to us? (Composition, Canonization, Translation and Transmission)
  - 2. Methodology
  - 3. Bible lands and history
- B. The Tanakh/Old Testament (7 weeks)
  - 1. The Torah/Law

- Creation, Flood, Ancestors/Patriarchs, Exodus and Law at Sinai
- 2. The Former and Latter Prophets
  - The Conquest of Canaan, Judges Period, United Monarchy of Israel, Divided Monarchy of Israel, the Writing Prophets
- 3. The Writings
  - Psalms, Wisdom Literature, Festival Scrolls, Re-interpreting the History of Israel, Daniel and apocalyptic
- C. The Deuterocanon/Apocrypha (1 week)
  - Short stories, psalms, Wisdom, history, prophetic literature
- D. The New Testament (4 weeks)
  - 1. The Gospels
    - Synoptic gospels and John
  - 2. The Acts of the Apostles
    - 1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE history of the early church, the apostles and Paul
  - 3. The Letters of the Elders
    - Paul's authentic and disputed letters, Hebrews and the catholic letters, the Revelation of John
  - 4. Beyond the New Testament and into early Christianity
    - Early councils, Constantine the Great and Christianity as a State religion

#### IV. EVALUATION METHODS

- 15% Journals. Students will be asked to keep a journal of responses to course materials and class discussion, and of their own reflections about the course. Sometimes the professor will ask them to consider specific topics. The journals will be collected to check if they are being kept, to add comments or suggestions where appropriate, and will be graded pass/fail based on quantity and quality but not style (grammar and spelling, etc.). It is expected that students will have an average of at least 3 or more entries per week, of approximately 75 words or more each.
- 30% Three 5-page essay assignments. The three essays will be on: one Old Testament character or concept, one New Testament character or concept, and a response to two non-canonical gospels that did not make it into the Bible. The first two papers will require students to use the course materials as well as at least 3 sources from the library or elsewhere, and the third paper will be based on readings on-line as well as regular course materials. Students will have two weeks to write each assignment and an abstract of it, followed by a discussion and evaluation by fellow students in small groups, and the opportunity to rewrite the assignment based on student and professor comments during the next week. These assignments have the following goals: to introduce students to minor research and major reflection on certain important topics in Biblical Studies, to introduce students to the purpose of and how to write an abstract, to encourage students to learn writing skills in conjunction with their peers, to enable students to critique and

respond to others' writing, and to learn valuable strategies for editing their own essays. The essays will be graded on the use of academic language and methodologies, basic summary of the character or topic as well as the main issues involved in interpretation, quality of expression in terms of the student's own views based on the evidence, use of sources and citations, and quality of writing style.

25% 12 pop quizzes on terms. The worst two quiz scores will not count toward the grade. The terms for the course will be passed out at the beginning of the course.

30% Final. The final will be half objective questions based on the terms, half essay questions based on course material and class discussion. The pool of possible essay questions will be announced in advance.

#### V. REQUIRED READINGS

--A Bible.---- A critical edition of the complete Christian Bible (Old and New Testament, plus Deuterocanonical writings/Apocrypha), such as *The HarperCollins Study Bible* (HarperCollins, 1993) is best, but any edition of the Bible that is basically more of a literal translation rather than a paraphrase (NRSV, NEB, NIV, etc.) is acceptable.

--Harris, Stephen L. *Understanding the Bible*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Mayfield, 2002.

#### VI. SPECIAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

--website for third essay assignment: <http://www.earlygospels.net/>

-films:

*Who Wrote the Bible?* pts. 1-2, A&E

*From Jesus to Christ* pts. 1-2, PBS

Assorted film clips (*The Prince of Egypt, the Ten Commandments, The Seventh Seal, The Last Temptation of Christ, etc.*)

## Summary Chart for Writing Assignments\*

<b>A. Writing Assignments</b>					
Assignment Title	# of Assignments	# of total pages	Graded (Yes/No)	Opportunity for Revision (Yes/No)	Written Assignment represents what % of final course grade
Journal	at least 42 entries	3 entries per week	P/F	No	15%
3 essay assignments	3	15	Y	Y	30%
<b>Totals</b>			NA	NA	

<b>B. Examinations (Complete only if you intend to use essay exams/short answers as part of the required number of pages of writing.)</b>			
Exams	Approx.% of exam that is essay or short answer	Anticipated # of pages for essay or short answer, or approx. word count	Exam constitutes what % of final course grade
1. Final	50%	1200 words	30%
2.			
3.			
<b>Totals</b>			

*\*Total writing assignments should contain at least 5000 words (approximately 15-20 typed pages) in two or more separate assignments; written assignments should be a major part of the final grade—at least 50% or more.*

Sample Writing Assignment 1

## Essay 3: Non-Canonical Gospel assignment

This assignment involves reading two ancient Christian gospels which did not make it into the canon of the New Testament, and comparing them to the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are in the N.T. For background on non-canonical gospels in general, you should begin by reading Harris pp. 476-488 before proceeding to the following web site. On the web site, you should also click on and read the “frequently asked questions” section.

### Part One

Go to the web site <http://www.earlygospels.net/> , and read two non-canonical gospels from the titles listed on the left-hand side of the page.

### Part Two

After reading the two gospels, you are to write and turn in a **5 page double-spaced typed essay** (with no wider than 1-inch margins and using no larger than 12 cpi font), **that addresses the following questions:**

- 1–Give a brief description of the two gospels. What do they contain? (If a story, give the outline of the story and important incidents. If a series of sayings, then give an overview with samples)
- 2–How do these two gospels seem to compare to the four gospels that are in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? Please be specific. Cite and/or quote appropriate passages from the NT gospels and the non-canonical gospels at least 3-5 times, or you will be docked points. When you quote directly, use quotation marks.  
Hint: don't read or describe all four NT gospels, just look to the parts that can be compared to the 2 non-canonical gospels you read on-line. If a non-canonical gospel you read was about the birth of Jesus, only chs. 1-2 of both Matthew and Luke can be directly compared to that gospel. If a non-canonical gospel you read is about the death of Jesus, only the last few chapters of all 4 gospels can be directly compared. More indirect comparisons (tone, style, vocabulary, stories of Jesus healing, etc.) can and should be included too, but the direct comparisons are the most important. See Harris.
- 3–In your opinion, why didn't these two gospels make it into the New Testament? (There are some clues in their date and content that you should include as well as your own observations. See the Harris reading.)

Consider your audience to be educated and somewhat familiar with the content of the Bible, but



not scholars in the field: your fellow students.

### **Citation of References:**

Please do not plagiarize or copy someone else's words without giving them credit. If you quote someone or use their ideas, you must give the name and place of your source, with page numbers. If it is a direct quote, the words quoted should be between quotation marks. In this informal essay, if the source is Harris or the web page, you can put the name and pages in parentheses right in the middle of your paper at the end of a sentence (don't use footnotes); for example: (Harris p. 22). For the gospels, you should put the chapter and/or verse in parentheses too, for example: (John 1:1) or (Mary 2:2).

### **Grading: Your paper will be graded on content and style.**

#### **Content:**

- did you somehow respond to the three parts of the essay as outlined above?
- did you give a concise summary of each gospel?
- have you quoted some portion of each using it as evidence for a statement you've made?
- have you made enough specific comparisons between the non-canonical gospel and the four canonical ones?

#### **Style:**

- did you proofread for typos and bad grammar?
- have you cited your sources when you used an idea or quoted someone else, whether a scholar (Harris) or the primary source (a particular gospel)?
- is your essay well-organized, with introductory, explanatory, or connecting statements to guide your reader through it?

## Sample Writing Assignment 2

### Journal Instructions

#### Purpose:

This journal is intended to be a **personal space** for you to keep track of your **reactions** to the course, to write down any **notes** you wish to keep, **responses to discussions**, etc. It is not meant to be formal writing, or research writing, or anything written in an academic tone unless you wish it. The only other person who will read it is the professor, unless you wish to read from it or communicate something of your thinking to others in class (but this last is not a requirement for the course). **The professor will collect it periodically** in order to see whether you are keeping up with it, and will sometimes write comments.

#### Grading:

Since the purpose of a journal is to provide you with a freer avenue for personal writing and reflection, **it will not be evaluated on style, grammar, incomplete sentences, or spelling**, but merely **graded pass/fail based on the quantity and quality** of ideas or comments. It is expected that the number of entries per week should be **at least 3 or more**, and they may vary greatly in length from one sentence to a paragraph or more if you wish. This journal is worth 15% of your final course grade, and you will receive all of that if your journal is rated a pass.

#### What should you include?

- Reactions to class conversation and discussion.
- Reactions to specific questions the professor has asked you to ponder in your journal.
- Reactions to and notes from the readings.
- Thoughts that come to you when discussing the Bible with others outside of class.
- Reactions to others' responses to your course essays.
- Reactions to films or documentaries in class.
- Thoughts that come to you about the class when you are doing other things.

#### Hints for remembering to write:

- Write after you have done some assigned reading for the course.
- Write in the evening after the class has met, remembering what struck you from others' conversations, the professor's comments or lecture.
- Write after you have watched a film clip or a documentary in class.
- Write after you have received some response from other students or the professor to your essays.
- Write after you have discussed the Bible or a related topic with others outside of class.