

Assessment: Portfolio

The assessment portfolio consists of four tasks: two on the Hebrew Bible and two on the New Testament.

HEBREW BIBLE

Assessment 1: Book Review (maximum of 1500 words)

The first assessment is designed to enable you to engage critically with recent developments in Hebrew Bible scholarship. An example of a book review has been included on the Moodle page to give you a sense of the scope and content of an academic book review at Master's level. You will also find it helpful to search the online library for examples of book reviews in peer-reviewed journals, including for the book you have selected for your own assignment.

Assessment 2: Textual Analysis – Hebrew Bible (maximum of 1500 words)

The second assessment is designed to test your knowledge and understanding of the biblical text, including the ways in which it is being interpreted in secondary literature (including commentaries, monographs, journal articles). Guidelines on how to write a textual (or exegetical) analysis have been placed on the Moodle page for the module. You can choose to write on one of the three following passages:

- a) Genesis 17:1-8
- b) 1 Kings 16:25-35
- c) Isaiah 40:1-11

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate that you can contextualise the biblical passage within the editorial arrangement of the wider literary context of the book(s). Thus, for example, if you choose Genesis 17, you will be expected to show how this key passage anticipates the themes that will dominate the rest of the Pentateuch. If you opt for 1 Kings 16, you will be expected to show how this passage acts as an editorial assessment of the kings discussed, a topic dear to the heart of the Deuteronomistic Historian. If you select Isaiah 40 you will be expected to interpret this passage as a kind of prologue to Isaiah 40-55 (or 'Second Isaiah') as well as how it evokes themes found in the work of its predecessor, Isaiah 1-39 (or 'First Isaiah').

Assessment Criteria for Assignment 2

- The ability to demonstrate the relevance of this passage to the wider context (literary and historical);
- The ability to link this passage to other biblical passages or themes (by biblical reference and not biblical quotation);

- Your ability to locate other relevant biblical passages (including through concordance use);
- Your ability to comment on the distinctive style or remarkable literary features of the passage.
- You must keep within the limit of 1500 words.

NEW TESTAMENT

Assessment 3: Textual Analysis – New Testament (maximum of 1500 words)

As with Assignment 2, this assessment is designed to test your knowledge and understanding of a New Testament passage. The selection of passages is drawn from various literary genres, including a gospel, letter, and an apocalypse:

- a) **Luke 1:26-38**
- b) **Galatians 2:15-21**
- c) **Revelation 13:1-10**

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate that you can contextualise the biblical passage within its wider literary and theological context. Thus, for example, if you choose Luke 1:26-38 you will be expected to show how this key passage from the Lukan infancy narrative anticipates the themes that will dominate the rest of the Gospel of Luke. If you select the passage from Paul's letter to the Galatians you will be expected to comment on how it relates to the letter's focus on Paul's defence of his 'gospel' and what it discloses about Paul's theology (including in relation to similar sentiments expressed in other Pauline letters). If you opt to examine Revelation 13:1-10, you will be expected to analyse the origin and significance of its symbolic language (including its possible historical context) and its contribution to our understanding of Revelation as an apocalyptic text (material will be provided on the function of Revelation as an 'apocalypse').

Assessment Criteria for Assignment 3

- The ability to demonstrate the relevance of this passage to the wider context;
- The ability to link this passage to other biblical passages or themes (by biblical reference and not biblical quotation);
- Your ability to locate other relevant passages in non-canonical or extra-biblical texts (this is especially relevant with reference to Revelation 13:1-10);
- Your ability to comment on the distinctive style or remarkable literary features of the passage.
- You must keep within the limit of 1500 words.

Assessment 4: Essay – New Testament (maximum of 3000 words)

You can choose one of the following two topics:

TOPIC 1

‘The presentation of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark has been profoundly influenced by the author’s reflections on the Jewish Scriptures’. Discuss.

- To prepare for this assignment you must have read through the Gospel of Mark, paying particular attention to its use of scriptural quotations and clear allusions to scriptural themes and motifs.
- Please note that the overall topic for the essay – the reception of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament – is examined in Unit 7. You are encouraged to familiarise yourselves with the general debate (as outlined in the reading material) before embarking on a close study of the Gospel of Mark.
- Note that you are asked to focus on the Markan presentation of Jesus (i.e. its christology) not generally on the use of the Jewish Scriptures in the Gospel of Mark.
- As well as a number of specific studies on the topic under consideration (listed in the reading list), you are encouraged to consult key commentaries on the Gospel of Mark once you have identified the passages upon which you wish to focus.
- In your essay you will be expected to provide the names, key publications and, where appropriate, precise biblical references. You should note that your bibliography is **additional** to the 3000 words.

Criteria

- A good understanding of scholarly works on the use of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament.
- A thorough knowledge of the debate about the use of Scripture in the Gospel of Mark.
- The ability to structure a coherent argument based on the most salient Christological motifs in the Gospel of Mark, keeping within the word limit of 3000 words.

TOPIC 2

Critically evaluate recent scholarly debates as to whether the four canonical gospels were written for a particular community or (also) for wider audiences. You may support your arguments with reference to the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of John.

- To prepare for this assignment you must familiarise yourself with the arguments and counter-arguments for interpreting the gospels as written ‘for all Christians’

(Richard Bauckham). Please note that the overall topic for the essay is examined in Unit 9.

- Note that you are asked to illustrate your arguments with reference to either the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of John. These are the texts which have received most scholarly attention with reference to this issue.
- As well as a number of specific studies on the topic under consideration (listed in the reading list), you are encouraged to consult key commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of John once you have identified the passages upon which you wish to focus.
- In your essay you will be expected to provide the names, key publications and, where appropriate, precise biblical references. You should note that your bibliography is **additional** to the 3000 words.

Criteria

- A good understanding of the debate about the evangelists' aims when composing their gospel texts and the audience(s) for whom those texts were likely to have been written.
- The ability to structure a coherent argument based on the most salient arguments, keeping within the word limit of 3000 words.

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