

Summer 2019

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Venetian Art and the Bible

ENGL S-36v

Course description

William Blake called the Bible “the great code of art.” Nowhere was this statement truer than in the famous Italian centers of art, Rome, Florence, and Venice. But the biblical culture of Venice was special because of her rich contacts with the East: with Islam, with the Greek culture of the Eastern Mediterranean, and with the Holy Land itself. The great cathedral of Venice, Saint Mark’s, is named for the city’s patron, who wrote the oldest and most venerable of the Christian gospels. The Bible provided the artists of Venice with a rich fund of subjects for painting and sculpture. This course proposes to give students an outline of the contents and structure of the Bible similar to what most people in Venice would have had during the period when its greatest art was produced. The aim is for students to be able to look at a work of Venetian art and “read” not only its biblical subject but also its biblical thinking, especially the subterranean connections between episodes. We will also consider how extra-biblical subjects—e.g., saints’ legends and episodes from the apocrypha—are themselves extensions of biblical reading. Meeting times will be about equally divided between classroom discussion and field trips to sites around Venice. Among the more important of these are Saint Mark’s cathedral, the Doge Palace, the Basilica dei Frari, the Scuola di San Rocco (with its amazing Tintoretto), the Basilica di Santi Giovanni e Paolo, the Basilica della Salute (with Titian’s biblical paintings in the sacristy), and the Accademia gallery, with its great hall containing Veronese’s gigantic and exuberant “Feast in the House of Levi” and Titian’s large but intimate “Pietà,” with its subtle biblical meanings adopted to personal expression. The course’s final class will conclude in this room, in front of these contrasting visions of the meaning of life, seen through the lens of the Bible.

Required readings

The Bible, Authorized King James Version, with Apocrypha, Oxford World’s Classics. Introduction and notes by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997

Recommended Resources

The English Bible, King James Version. Volume 1, The Old Testament. Ed. Herbert Marks. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2012.

The English Bible, King James Version. Volume 2, The New Testament and Apocrypha. Ed. Gerald Hammond. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2012.

Field Trip Guidelines

Please bear in mind the following in advance of field trips (marked on course schedule):

- 1) Prepare for the late morning sun! Dehydration is a real danger during summers in Venice, so please keep water with you at all time and stay hydrated.
- 2) Prepare for site- (& often gender-) specific dress codes. In the case of trousers, dresses, skirts, etc., be sure they are at least knee-length. Some churches might provide disposable paper for cover, but only

unpredictably; if you do not meet the dress code requirements, you may not be allowed to enter with the class, so please prepare accordingly.

3) Pack light! Many of the churches we'll be visiting enforce strict bag-checks, especially of student backpacks. To avoid the hassle of having to check your bag, consider packing only what you need (water, Bible, notebook, writing instruments) in a smaller, perhaps shoulder-style bag. The smaller the bag = the more likely you'll be able to bring it in with you.

Grading

The following percentages are approximate weightings for determining final grades:

Class attendance:	40%
Section attendance & discussion:	20%
Test:	10%
Memorization of six verses from the psalms:	10%
Final Essay (3000 words):	20%

Course Requirements

All requirements must be fulfilled. If possible, please notify the instructor in advance of an absence. You are expected to do the assigned readings before each class and to come to class with an index card of points for discussion. The memorization exercise may be repeated if you didn't get a perfect score the first time.

The final essay is due Wednesday, August 1st, in class.

Accessibility

If you have an accessibility issue, please contact Harvard's Accessibility Services accessibility@dcemail.harvard.edu or 617-998-9640. Accommodation will be made according to the instructions from the Accessibility Services.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for reviewing the Summer School policies on Student Responsibilities—<http://www.summer.harvard.edu/policies/student-responsibilities>—and also the Harvard Guide to Using Sources, prepared by the Harvard College Writing Program: <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu>. To summarize: You must not present under your name any work that was not done by you. You must give your sources for unusual facts and original thoughts that are not your own. You must not cite others' work verbatim without quotation marks around the cited passages and proper citation of your source. Any collaborative work you do on an assignment must be approved by the instructor. Also, you must not present work for this course which you have already presented in another course.

The Harvard College Honor Code (required on Harvard College Syllabuses):

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams

or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

MANDATORY: Please cut, paste, and attach a signed and dated copy of the Honor Code to your final essay.

Week 1

Class 1: 9:45 San Basilio
 Introduction: The Bible, The Gospels, Saint Mark and Venice
 A Walk to Saint Mark's Square: the Facade of the Cathedral

Class 2: **9:00 meet at St. Mark's Tower *****
 Primitive Times (Adam to Noah)
 Saint Mark's Cathedral: Byzantine Art

Week 2

Class 3: 9:45 San Basilio
 The Time of Faith (Genesis: Abraham to Joseph)
 Tintoretto and the Scuola di San Rocco

Class 4: 9:45 San Basilio
 The Time of Law (Moses to Samson)
 Accademia Gallery: Introduction. Development of Venetian Religious Painting.

Week 3

Class 5: 9:45 San Basilio
 The Time of the Kingdom (Saul, David, Solomon)

Class 6: **9:15 AM START TIME: meet Saint Mark's Tower *****
 The Two Kingdoms (Kings Hezekiah and Ahab. Queen Jezebel. Jehu. The prophets Elijah and Elisha)
 Tintoretto and the Doge's Palace

Week 4

Class 7: 9:45 San Basilio
 Wisdom (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs)
 Giovanni Bellini and Titian: Basilica dei Frari

Class 8: **9:15 AM START TIME: meet at Basilica di Santi Giovanni e Paulo *****
 The Time of the Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel)
 Alvise Vivarini and Christ: Basilica di Santi Giovanni e Paulo
 7/19: Memorization in section

Week 5

Class 9: 9:45 San Basilio
 Jesus and Mary in the Gospels
TEST

Class 10: **9:15AM start time, meet at the Museo Ebraico *****
 The Time of Christian Faith (Acts, Romans, Hebrews)
 Museo Ebraico di Venezia (Campo di Ghetto Nuovo)

Week 6

Class 11: 9:45 San Basilio
The Church at the End of the World (Revelation)
Chiesa di San Sebastiano

Class 12: **9:15AM start time**
San Basilio.
Accademia.
Paper Due in Class

Schedule of Bible Readings by Chapter for Each Class

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|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Genesis 1-4 | Hosea 14 |
| 2. Genesis 5-10 | Joel 3 |
| 3. Genesis 40-50 | Amos 5-9 |
| 4. Exodus 1-10 | Jonah (entire) |
| Leviticus 7 | Micah 4 |
| Numbers 20-25 | Habakkuk 3 |
| Deuteronomy 31:24-30 | Zephaniah 1 |
| Joshua 1-8 | Zechariah 14 |
| Judges 2, 4-7 | Malachai 3, 4 |
| Ruth (entire book) | 9. Matthew 1-8, 21-23, 25-27 |
| 5. First Samuel 1-6, 31 | Mark 1, 12, 14, 15, 16 |
| Second Samuel 1-2, 16-18, 24 | Luke 1-4, 21-24 |
| First Kings 1, 3, 6, 21-22 | John 1-3, 10-15, 19, 21 |
| 6. Second Kings 1-2, 25 | 10. Acts 1, 2, 7-10 |
| Esther (entire) | Romans 1, 4-6, 10 |
| 7. Job 1-2, 38-42 | First Corinthians 13, 15 |
| Proverbs 7-10, 18, 31 | Galatians 3, 5 |
| Ecclesiastes 1-3 | Ephesians 2 |
| 8. Isaiah 1-7, 66 | Philippians 3 |
| Jeremiah 1-3, 37-40, 50-52 | Hebrews 1-2, 8-11 |
| Lamentations (entire) | First John 5 |
| Ezekiel 1, 2, 6, 10, 37, 40 | 11. Revelation (entire) |
| Daniel 1-7 | |