Essential Information
Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information
Professor: Derek Leigh Davis, MA(TS)  Email: dldavis@nts.edu
Home Office: (816) 268-5424
Please do not call between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Central Time

Catalog Description
An exploration of the historical, geographical, literary, and theological foundations for reading the Bible missionally in both faith and academic contexts. Passing a Bible Content Exam is required for successful completion of this course.

Course Narrative & Rationale
Reading the Scriptures is one of the most formative and fundamental practices of the Christian faith. The strategies that guide our reading represent some of the most important decisions we make before the Biblical text. This course asks what the Bible is by considering the history of its development and issues of its literary structure. The course asks from where the Bible comes in terms of its historical and geographical contexts. The course asks what the Bible says in terms of its content and theological themes. The course will reflect on the differences and commonalities of reading the Bible in the life of the Church and reading it in the context of the Academy. The purpose of the course is for the student to be more aware of and equipped for reading the Bible with strategies that include literary and historical perspectives. Certainly the full Bible curriculum at NTS
is designed to accomplish the same thing. In that regard this course is introductory to matters that will be further developed in other courses in the curriculum, though the degree of development will vary.

**Degree Objectives**

BIB515, Reading the Biblical Story, is intended to assist students in accomplishing the following NTS Degree Program Objectives:

- MDiv Objective 2, “Articulation of the knowledge of God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student will: b. Use scholarly methods for understanding Scripture, c. Identify key theological themes as they arise from Scripture, d. Identify and relate literary and theological emphases of Scripture, e. Understand the formative power of Scripture in shaping corporate and personal Christian life, f. Appropriate Scripture to personal and corporate life both in and beyond the church.”
- MACFD Objective 1, “Appropriate and enhance the student’s ecclesial understanding of the Word of God, the heritage of the faith, the doctrines of the church, and the fellowship of believers, sufficient to enable him or her to deepen a personal commitment to God and the Church and to inform a passionate, vital, and redemptive ministry.”
- MAICS Objective 4, “Graduates will articulate, communicate, and contextualize the essential affirmations of the Christian faith in a cross-cultural setting.”
- MA(TS) General Academic Track Objective 1, “Students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the major theological disciplines and their interrelationships.”

**Course Outcomes**

At the conclusion of this course the student should be able to:

1) Describe the major steps by which the Bible came into its present form, (Accomplished by Assignments 1 and 5a)
2) Identify the translation philosophy used in major contemporary English versions of the Bible, (Accomplished by Assignments 1 and 5a)
3) Describe the general literary structure and story line of both Old and New Testaments, (Accomplished by Assignments 2, 4, 5b, and 6)
4) Identify the major genre(s) of each Biblical book and the general characteristics of that/those genre(s), (Accomplished by Assignments 2, 3, and 6)
5) Describe the historical context of each major section of the Bible, (Accomplished by Assignments 1-4, and 6)
6) Identify the chief persons, places, events, dates, and texts of the Bible, (Accomplished by Assignments 1-4, 5b, and 6)
7) Describe the major theological themes found in the Old Testament and the New Testament, and (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3, and 4)
8) Reflect on how literary structures, historical and geographical contexts, and theological perspectives impact one’s reading of Scripture. (Accomplished by Assignments 5c)
Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies

**CN 1** Ability to identify the literary structure and the main story line of the Old Testament
(Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2, 5,b, and 6)

**CN 2** Ability to identify the books of the Old Testament by genre (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2, and 6)

**CN 3** Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the Old Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2, 4, 5b, and 6)

**CN 4** Ability to identify the main characters of the Old Testament and their role in the story
(Accomplished by Assignments 1-3, 5b, and 6)

**CN 5** Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament
(Accomplished by Assignment 1, 2, 4, and 5c)

**CN 6** Ability to chronologically order the main events and persons of the Old Testament
(Accomplished by Assignments 1-3, and 6)

**CN 7** Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3, and 5b-6)

**CN 8** Ability to identify the literary structure of the New Testament (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2, and 6)

**CN 9** Ability to identify the genre and basic thrust of each New Testament book (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 4, and 6)

**CN 10** Ability to summarize the significant life events of Jesus and Paul (Accomplished by Assignments 1-4, and 6)

**CN 11** Ability to identify the significant elements in the message of Jesus and Paul (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3, and 6)

**CN 12** Ability to describe the impact of the historical background of the New Testament on the message of Jesus and Paul (Accomplished by Assignments 1, 3, and 6)

**CN 13** Ability to chronologically order the significant events and persons of the New Testament
(Accomplished by Assignments 1-4, and 6)

**CN 14** Ability to identify and describe the major theological concepts of the New Testament
(Accomplished by Assignments 1, 2, 4, and 5c)

**CN 15** Ability to describe how the Bible came into being up to contemporary translations
(Accomplished by Assignments 5a)

**Required Texts & Course Materials**

_The Holy Bible._ It is important that if you do not read the Hebrew and Greek texts that in all Bible classes at NTS you use an ‘essentially literal’ translation of the Bible such as the NRSV, the NASB (or NASB95), the ESV, or the RSV, and not a ‘dynamic equivalence’ translation such as the NIV, TNIV, NLT, etc. If possible you should obtain an ‘essentially literal’ translation with the Apocrypha such as can be found in certain editions of the NRSV or the RSV.


Course Outline

Pre-Module

I. What Is It that We Read?
   A. What Is This Book? – The History of How the Bible Came to Be
   B. Biblical Languages and Bible Translation(s)

II. Reading the Bible as Literature
   A. Macro Literary Structures of the Bible
   B. Literary Conventions of the Bible
   C. Themes of the First and New Testaments

Module

III. Building Comprehension of Bible Content
   A. Torah
   B. Former Prophets
   C. Latter Prophets and the Twelve
   D. The Writings
   E. Intertestamental Period
   F. Gospels and Acts
   G. Pauline Epistles
   H. Catholic Epistles
   I. Revelation

Post Module

IV. Reading the Bible Devotionally
   A. Wisdom Literature
   B. Practicing Discernment in Devotional Reading
   C. Contextualizing Your Experience

Course Assignments & Requirements

1. Reading (Pre-Module, Module, and Post-Module) – Outcomes 1-7; CN1-14

   This course will have a steady load of reading from the four textbooks. You will have weekly
assigned reading in each of the texts. The schedule of pre- and post-course reading is included on the Course Calendar. During the Module, students will be reading large chunks of the Bible in preparation for class. This course is designed to build content and comprehension; reading is essential to this task. Students will post the percentage of the reading they have done for the week in the online forum on Moodle titled, “Weekly Reading.” (150 points)

2. **Old Testament Survey Workbook and New Testament Survey Worksheets (Pre-Module and Post-Module) – Course Outcomes 4-6; CN 1-4, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 14**

   There are exercises that will accompany the student’s reading in the Old Testament and New Testament Survey textbooks. This work should be done in conjunction with the reading. Unlike the reading, there is no partial credit; it is all or nothing. All pre- and post-module work will be reported weekly in the online forum in Moodle title, “Weekly Exercises.” When you arrive for the module on Monday, January 21st, the instructor will collect your Old Testament Workbooks to make sure that the pre-module work has been done. (150 points)

3. **Class Participation (Module) – Course Outcomes 4-7; CN 4-7, and 10-13**

   Attendance in class, punctuality in being in the classroom and participation in classroom discussion, will be factored in the final course grade. Part of this course is engaging in discussion regarding the genres, content, outline, historical contexts, geographical contexts, and theological themes that occur throughout the story of the Bible. These discussions will take place during each session after the groups have prepared their outlines for the day (50 Points)

4. **In-Class Projects (Module) – Course Outcomes 3, and 5-7; CN 3, 5, 9-11, and 14**

   Each day, the student will engage with a group to produce a detailed outline of a particular story from the First or New Testaments that includes the important geography, history, and theological themes present in the section. These nine projects will be factored in to the final course grade. (150 points)

5. **Writing**

   a) **Personal Reflection (Outcomes 1 and 2; CN 15)** – 50 points: After reading the assigned articles from *The Origin of the Bible*, the student will write a 1-2 page reflection on the student’s notion of the Bible in contrast to the views presented in the reading. The importance of this essay is in the candor demonstrated by the student. The goal of this assignment is to allow space for the student to reflect on the historical development of the text we call the Holy Bible and how this text functions (or does not function) in the life of the student. The questions that should be addressed in the reflection are:

   1. What is the Bible to you?
   2. How do you feel about the Bible?
   3. What is your preferred translation and why?
   4. How does the information regarding the canon of the First and New Testaments affect your understanding of what the Bible is?
5. How does the history of the development of the English Bible affect how the Bible functions for you or your local church?
6. After reflection, what translation do you prefer now and why?

b) Annotated Bible Outline (Outcomes 3, 6, and 7; CN 1, CN 3, CN 4, CN 7) – 200 points: Write an annotated outline describing the key story line of the Bible beginning with Creation to Christ’s Second Coming. In this outline, you should describe the “grand story” of the Bible. Include which biblical books contribute to the key points of this story. Provide the names and dates (estimated or if known) of any key people, nations, or events in this story. Format: the outline can be either single or double spaced but should include complete sentences. The main points of the outline ought to match the key points of the biblical narrative. Attempt to have at least 5-8 major points, but avoid making an overly complex outline. The total length of the outline should be a minimum of 1,250 words, but no more than 2,000. At the conclusion of the outline, offer a closing section of why it is important for a Christian to know this story line well. **This outline must be submitted on Moodle on Sunday, February 24, 2013 by 11:55 p.m.**

c) Reflection Essay on Wisdom Literature (Outcome 8; CN 5, 7, and 14) – 100 points: The student will engage Ryken’s treatment of wisdom literature (Ryken 159-289) as well as House and Mitchell’s treatment (House 267-303, and 311-319) with one of four selections from the wisdom literature: 1) Ecclesiastes; 2) Psalms 73-89; 3) Psalms 90-106; or 4) Proverbs 1-9. **This assignment must be submitted on Moodle on Sunday, March 10, 2013 by 11:55 PM.** In this reflection, the student will perform three tasks:
   1. The student will describe how an understanding of the story of the First and New Testaments in their historical and geographical contexts affects the meaning of the text.
   2. The student will describe how this meaning intersects with the student’s own experience.
   3. The student will explain and generalize how comprehension of the entirety of the biblical story should affect the devotional reading of these texts for the local church.

6. Bible Content Exam – Outcomes 1, 3-6; CN 1-4, 6-11, 13-15

To pass this course a student must pass the Bible Content Exam with a minimum score of 75. Students who passed the BCE prior to enrollment in this class may use their score or their class average (whichever is higher) to be entered into the gradebook for the Bible Content Exam. If such student wishes to raise their BCE score for the purpose of this class, they may request permission from the instructor to re-take the exam. They may not take the exam more than two times attempting to improve their score.

Students who have not passed the BCE prior to enrolling in this class must take the BCE until they achieve a minimum grade of 75. Their first attempt of the BCE should be no later than during the week of October 29-November 4, 2012. Once they have achieved at least a 75 on the exam, they may request permission from the instructor to re-take the BCE one additional time.
to raise their grade. Their highest grade on the BCE will be entered in the gradebook for the BCE requirement. No student will receive a passing grade in BIB515 who has not passed the BCE. March 15, 2013 is the latest date to achieve a 75 on the BCE to pass this course.

**Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>pre-module hours</th>
<th>module hours</th>
<th>post-module hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face Class Sessions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading (textbooks and lectures)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing, including Worksheets and Essays</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assignments and Learning Activities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
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**Method for Submitting Assignments**

All assignments for online courses will be submitted using the corresponding location within the Moodle course. Assignments should not be submitted by hardcopy, fax or email.

**Form and Style Expectations**

When referencing a course textbook, place the author’s (or editor’s) last name and (a) page number(s) within the body of the text, in parentheses, e.g., (Ryken 286). If referencing a source that is not a course text (the course does not require this), consult and follow Turabian.

**Inclusive Language**

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

**Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams**

Assignments should be submitted by the due date and time listed in Moodle or the course schedule. In cases of significant emergency regarding due dates, you may contact the professor to seek specific possible extensions.

All work is due by 11:55 Central Time on the date listed in the course syllabus and schedule. I will still accept any work as on time as long as it is time stamped before midnight. Moodle will give each submission a time stamp. If an assignment is submitted one minute after the deadline, it will be counted late, so plan ahead and consider the time it takes to upload your assignment. To avoid having the wrong due time and date in Moodle, please check your personal profile to make sure
your time zone matches that of NTS (set Timezone to “Server’s local time”). Late posting of
discussion questions and responses will result in a 50% deduction in credit for the first week late
and 75% reduction thereafter. Late written work will result in a 10% reduction in credit per week
late up to 50%. All assignments must be in no later than the last day of the course (12/13), no
exceptions. Even if your work is late, it is better to turn it in and get partial credit for it. If you know
of some outside responsibility that will delay your work or participation, arrangements must be
made ahead of time with the professor who will take each situation into consideration on a case-by-
case basis. Request for an Incomplete should be filed with the Registrar far enough ahead of time
to avoid failing the course. Late penalty for incomplete assignments will be put on hold once official
notice for an incomplete has been made and accepted through the Registrar’s office.

Course Grading
The final grade will be determined according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Projects</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Exercises</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Reflection</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Outline</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisdom Lit. Essay</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible Content Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing
students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and
activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to
accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would
impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would
fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing
accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor
no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that
have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPIC/READING</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Origin of the Bible, pp 51-78, 155-214, and 273-308 (121 pp)</td>
<td><strong>Exercise:</strong> Personal Reflection due by 11:55 PM CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 10-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Words of Delight, pp 35-156 (121 pp)</td>
<td><strong>Exercise:</strong></td>
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<td>Dec. 17-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong> OT Survey, pp 1-88 (88 pp) AND</td>
<td><strong>Exercise:</strong> OT Student Guide, pp 15-60 (45 pp)</td>
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<td>Dec. 24-30</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>January 21st</td>
<td>Torah Reading:</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>January 22nd</td>
<td>Former Prophets Reading:</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>January 23rd</td>
<td>Latter Prophets and the Twelve Reading:</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>January 24th</td>
<td>Writings Reading:</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>January 25th</td>
<td>Intertestamental Period Reading: Gundry, 24-94 (70 pp)</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>January 28th</td>
<td>The Gospels and Acts</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
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<td>The Pauline Epistles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>January 30th</td>
<td>The Catholic Epistles</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>January 31st</td>
<td>Revelation</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Feb. 4-10</td>
<td>Luke-Acts Reading: Gundry, 235-281 and 331-376 (91 pp)</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Feb. 11-17</td>
<td>Paul’s Epistles Reading: Gundry, 384-478 (94 pp)</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Feb. 18-24</td>
<td>The Catholic Epistles and Revelation Reading: Gundry, 500-586 (86 pp)</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Wisdom Literature: Genre and Reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 4-10</td>
<td>Reading: Words of Delight, pp 159-289 (130 pp)</td>
<td>Exercise: Wisdom Literature Reflection Essay due on March 10th by 11:55 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
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<td>Mar. 11-15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**

**General Introductions**


**Old Testament Introductions**


**New Testament Introductions**


deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. 


**General Biblical Reference**


Revelation, Inspiration, and Authority of Scripture


Textual Criticism, Canon, and Translation