

Topics in Theological Interpretation of Scripture:
The Old Testament in the Movies
(BIB 4045- 3 units)

School of Theology and Christian Ministry

Point Loma Nazarene University
 Fall 2023
 Wed. & Fri. 8:00-9:15am
 Location: Wesleyan Center Seminar Room

Professor: Rev. Dr. Brad E. Kelle
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 Office: Smee Hall
 Phone: 849-2314
 Office Hours: See schedule on door

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description (Catalog)

Advanced study in the theological interpretation of scripture.

Course Focus

This course explores the theological interpretation of scripture by studying the interaction of the Bible and film generally, and specifically with reference to case studies of movies depicting the biblical story of the Exodus from Egypt and the book of Hosea. Rather than a one-directional analysis, the course considers how, toward what ends, and with what effects the modern films receive and appropriate the biblical texts, and how the representations given in the films influence our understanding of the biblical texts. The focus is on the different ways in which the Bible and film can be placed into mutually critical conversations, with specific attention to constructing mutually enriching dialogues between recent films and the biblical texts they purport to represent.

Course Learning Outcomes

The class sessions, readings, and assignments should enable the student to

1. be familiar with the broader academic field that studies the Bible and film.
2. acquire and use critical skills and tools for viewing, interpreting, and analyzing biblical texts and modern films in dialogue with one another.
3. practice reading biblical texts closely in order to discern their potential meanings.

4. practice viewing films analytically in order to discern and articulate their elements, effects, and meanings.
5. appreciate the contemporary theological significance of cultural reception and appropriation of biblical texts in modern films, especially for Christian interpretation, teaching, and preaching.

Christian Studies Program Learning Outcomes

1. Interpret scripture evidencing biblical literacy.
2. Articulate clear theological doctrines relevant to Christian life and ministry.
3. Engage the perennial questions of the human condition using resources from philosophy.
4. Apply principles of Christian formation for the practice of ministry.

Course Texts	
1. Matthew Rindge, <i>The Bible and Film: The Basics</i> (Routledge, 2021).	
2. A Bible of the student's choosing (NRSV preferred; modern translation required [i.e., no KJV, New KJV, Message, Living Bible, New Living Bible]).	
3. <i>The course will view several modern films.</i> Most of these the professor will provide (and we will watch together in class). <i>Some, however, the student will need to procure on their own through streaming services or other appropriate means.</i> One assignment also requires the student to choose her or his own movie selection. <u>The movies that will receive the most focus include the following:</u>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Exodus: Gods and Kings</i> (2016) b. <i>Prince of Egypt</i> (1998) c. <i>Amazing Love: The Story of Hosea</i> (2012) d. <i>Hosea</i> (2019) e. <i>Redeeming Love</i> (2022)
*Please note that some of these required films contain (potentially disturbing) language, violence, sexuality, nudity, and sexual violence.	

- a. *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (2016)
- b. *Prince of Egypt* (1998)
- c. *Amazing Love: The Story of Hosea* (2012)
- d. *Hosea* (2019)
- e. *Redeeming Love* (2022)

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation and Attendance: In this abbreviated journey into the study of the Old Testament and film, attendance is a necessity, especially since we will be viewing and discussing many films together as a group during the class sessions. *If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings (more than **THREE [3] classes**), the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment.*

If the absences exceed 20 percent (more than FIVE [5] classes), the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. In addition, each student is expected to participate actively in class by contributing to the discussions on the basis of his or her reading of the assigned material.

2. Readings: Group discussion of assigned biblical and non-biblical readings will feature prominently in the class meetings and work. All readings are required unless otherwise indicated. *Please bring your Bible to class.* It is important to keep up with the readings on a session by session basis or the information will quickly become overwhelming.

3. Engagement and Analysis of Biblical Texts (2 x 50 pts each = 100 pts): In order to enhance the quality of our classroom discussions, the student will complete **two** engagement and analysis assignments—one treating Exodus 1-15 and one treating the book of Hosea. *Instructions for these assignments will be provided in class.* The assignments are worth 50 points each. Students will submit the assignments **on Canvas** and discuss them during class sessions. *See the Course Schedule in this syllabus for the due dates and times.*

4. Engagement and Analysis of Films (5 x 50 pts each = 250 pts): In order to facilitate our study of the films for the course, each student will complete **five** engagement and analysis assignments covering films viewed in and for the course (see list of films under the Course Texts in this syllabus). *Instructions for these assignments will be provided in class.* The assignments are worth 50 points each. Students will submit the assignments **on Canvas** and discuss them during class sessions. *See the Course Schedule in this syllabus for the due dates and times.*

5. Observations Posting Assignments from Rindge, *The Bible and Film Book* (3 x 20 pts each = 60 pts): On **three** occasions in the course, students will post observations from assigned readings in the Rindge, *The Bible and Film* book. The assignments are worth 20 points each. Students will submit the assignments **on Canvas** and discuss them during class sessions. *See the Course Schedule in this syllabus for the due dates and times.*

****Instructions for the Observations Posting Assignments:** After reading the assigned materials, each student will post on Canvas **three** significant statements or points made or things observed in the reading, along with an explanation for each one of why you thought it was significant. (**Note:** the post should be a total of **400 words** for all three observations.)

6. Final Paper Project (Signature Assignment): Analysis of a Bible-Related Film (100 pts): As the final assessment (and signature assignment) for the course, each student will prepare an interpretive paper that analyzes a Bible-related film that she or he will choose from those discussed within Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, chs. 3 and 6. *The student should follow the instructions for this paper included at the end of this syllabus.* The final paper should be approximately **10-12 pages (or 3,000 words)** in length, typed,

double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1-inch margins on all sides. It will be submitted **on Canvas** and is **due on the scheduled day of the final exam for the course on Wednesday December 13, 2023.**

Course Policies

1. **Grading:** The student's grade will be based on a combination of class participation, reading, and assignments as follows:

<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
100 (2 at 50 pts each)	Engagement and Analysis of Biblical Texts
250 (5 at 50 pts each)	Engagement and Analysis of Films
60 (3 at 20 pts each)	Observations Posting Assignment from Rindge
100	Final Paper Project

*Total: 510 (possible points)

<u>*Grading Scale:</u>	93-100 A	84-86 B	74-76 C	64-66 D
	90-92 A-	80-83 B-	70-73 C-	60-63 D-
	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	50s F

2. **Attendance:** In this abbreviated journey into the study of the Old Testament and film, attendance is a necessity, especially since we will be viewing and discussing many films together as a group during the class sessions. *If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings (more than **THREE [3] classes**), the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent (more than **FIVE [5] classes**), the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. In addition, each student is expected to participate actively in class by contributing to the discussions on the basis of his or her reading of the assigned material.*

3. **Late Work Policy:** In order not to be considered "late," all assignments must be submitted on the day and time listed as the due date. If the student "forgets" an assignment, he or she may submit it late for no more than half credit. *No assignment will be accepted for credit of any kind more than one week after the original due date* (does not apply to extra credit, which must be turned in on-time in order to receive any credit).

4. **Inclusivity:** The School of Theology and Christian Ministry 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, the school urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings. This course will strive to practice sensitivity toward and foster respect for issues of inclusivity in matters of language and conduct. Each student should seek to enrich this inclusive atmosphere in both their class contributions and personal interactions.

5. State Authorization: State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

6. PLNU Copyright Policy: Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

7. PLNU Academic Honesty Policy: Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

8. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy: You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

9. Academic Accommodations: PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course. Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

10. Final Examination Policy: Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on

the [Class Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Tentative Course Schedule

1. Wed. Aug. 30

A. Starting Points

B. Introduction to the Bible and Film (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: none

2. Fri. Sept. 1

Introduction to the Bible and Film (Pt. 2)

*Readings: 1) Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, “Preface” and “Introduction” (pp. 1-3)

2) Read the Wikipedia entries, “The Bible in Film”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bible_in_film) and “List of Films Based on the Bible”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_based_on_the_Bible).

*DUE: Read the Wikipedia entries, “The Bible in Film”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bible_in_film) and “List of Films Based on the Bible” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_based_on_the_Bible). From the films discussed there, identify briefly which, if any, you have seen AND discuss one thing you observe or find interesting from the entry describing the Bible in film (submit on Canvas).

***Part 1: The Exodus and Hebrew Bible Epics**

3. Wed. Sept. 6

The Biblical Exodus Story (Pt. 1)

*Readings: 1) Exodus 1-15

2) Watch the video, “Exodus 1-18” from the Bible Project

(<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/torah-exodus-1/>)

*DUE: none

4. Fri. Sept. 8

The Biblical Exodus Story (Pt. 2)

*Readings: 1) From bibleodyssey.com, read: a) “Moses;” b) “Unnamed Women: Significant Secondary Characters;” c) “The Exodus Tradition in the Bible”

*DUE: Engagement and Analysis of Biblical Text on Exodus 1-15

5. Wed. Sept. 13

Watch *Exodus: Gods and Kings* in Class (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: none

6. Fri. Sept. 15

Watch *Exodus: Gods and Kings* in Class (Pt. 2)

*Readings: none

*DUE: none

7. Wed. Sept. 20

(Finish watching *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, if needed)

Discussion of *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: Engagement and Analysis of Film: *Exodus: Gods and Kings*

8. Fri. Sept. 22

Discussion of *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (Pt. 2)

*Readings: 1) Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, pp. 4-5, 17-20

*DUE: Observations Posting Assignment for Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, pp. 4-5, 17-20

9. Wed. Sept. 27

Discussion of Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* (1956)

*Readings: 1) Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, pp. 9-14

*DUE: Observations Posting Assignment for Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, pp. 9-14

10. Fri. Sept. 29

Watch *Prince of Egypt* in Class (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: none

11. Wed. Oct. 4

Watch *Prince of Egypt* in Class (Pt. 2)

*Readings: none

*DUE: none

12. Fri. Oct. 6

Discussion of *Prince of Egypt* (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: Engagement and Analysis of Film: *Prince of Egypt*

13. Wed. Oct. 11

Discussion of *Prince of Egypt* (Pt. 2)

*Readings: 1) Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, pp. 14-17

*DUE: Observations Posting Assignment for Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, pp. 14-17

Part 2: Hosea in Bible and Film*14. Fri. Oct. 13**

Biblical Hosea: The Prophet and the Book (Pt. 1)

*Readings: 1) Kelle, "The Book of Hosea," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (provided by the professor)

2) Watch the video, "Hosea" from the Bible Project

(<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/hosea/>)

*DUE: none

15. Wed. Oct. 18

Biblical Hosea: The Prophet and the Book (Pt. 2)

*Readings: 1) Kelle, "Hosea Introduction and Study Notes for Chs. 1-3" in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible Sixth Edition* (provided by the professor)

2) From bibleodyssey.com, read "Gender and the Hebrew Bible"

(<https://www.bibleodyssey.com/bible-basics/gender-and-the-hebrew-bible/>)

*DUE: Engagement and Analysis of Biblical Text: Hosea (with special emphasis on Hosea 1-3)

FRI. OCT. 20: NO CLASS (Fall Break)*16. Wed. Oct. 25**

Watch *Redeeming Love* in Class (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: 1) Submit (in-class) the movie you will use for your final paper project (see options in Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, chs. 3 and 6; and see instructions at the back of this syllabus)

17. Fri. Oct. 27

Watch *Redeeming Love* in Class (Pt. 2)

*Readings: none

*DUE: none

18. Wed. Nov. 1

Discussion of *Redeeming Love* (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: Engagement and Analysis of Film: *Redeeming Love*

***FRI. NOV. 3: NO CLASS**

19. Wed. Nov. 8

Discussion of *Redeeming Love* (Pt. 2)

*Readings: none

*DUE: none

20. Fri. Nov. 10

Watch *Amazing Love: The Story of Hosea* in Class (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: Be working on final paper!

21. Wed. Nov. 15

Watch *Amazing Love: The Story of Hosea* in Class (Pt. 2)

*Readings: none

*DUE: Be working on final paper!

***FRI. NOV. 17: NO CLASS** (Society of Biblical Literature Conference)

***WED. NOV. 22 and FRI. NOV. 24: NO CLASS** (Thanksgiving Break)

22. Wed. Nov. 29

Discussion of *Amazing Love: The Story of Hosea* (Pt. 1)

*Readings: none

*DUE: 1) Engagement and Analysis of Film: *Amazing Love: The Story of Hosea*
2) Be working on final paper!

23. Fri. Dec. 1

Discussion of *Amazing Love: The Story of Hosea* (Pt. 2)

*Readings: none

*DUE: Be working on final paper!

24. Wed. Dec. 6

Discussion of *Hosea* (2019; directed by Ryan Daniel Dobson)

*Readings: 1) **View on your own** (*in advance of class today*) the film, *Hosea* (2019; directed by Ryan Daniel Dobson)

*DUE: 1) **View on your own** (*in advance of class today*) the film, *Hosea* (2019; directed by Ryan Daniel Dobson)
2) Engagement and Analysis of Film: *Hosea* (2019)
3) Be working on final paper!

25. Fri. Dec. 8

(Finish Discussion of *Hosea* [2019; directed by Ryan Daniel Dobson], if needed)
Catch-up Day and Prepare for Final Paper

*Readings: 1) Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, chs. 3 and 6

26. Wed. Dec. 13 (*We will meet during our scheduled final exam session!)

Discussion of Students' Final Paper and Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, chs. 3 and 6

*Readings: None

*<u>DUE</u>: Final Paper Project: Analysis of a Bible-Related Film

FINAL PAPER PROJECT: ANALYSIS OF A BIBLE-RELATED FILM

Instructions

As the final assessment (and signature assignment) for the course, each student will prepare an interpretive paper that analyzes a Bible-related film that she or he will choose from those discussed within Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, chs. 3 and 6. *The student should follow the instructions for this paper given on this sheet.* The final paper should be approximately **10-12 pages (or 3,000 words)** in length, typed, double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1-inch margins on all sides. It will be submitted **on Canvas** and is due on the scheduled day of the final exam for the course.

**How to get started before writing:*

1. Choose one of the films discussed in Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, ch. 3 or ch. 6 to be your focus for the paper.
2. Secure the film somehow and view it in its entirety.
3. Read any and all parts of Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, chs. 3 & 6 that relate to the film you chose.

**Now for writing the paper:*

4. Begin your paper by offering a **basic summary** of your film (plot, characters, setting, happenings, etc.)
5. **Summarize/synthesize** into a clear presentation **what Rindge says about your movie and its relationship to the Bible** in the relevant portions of Rindge, *The Bible and Film*, ch. 3 or ch. 6 (especially about how your movie is an example of “*Reimagining* the Hebrew Bible” (ch. 3) or the Bible “*in*” film (ch. 6).
6. *Provide your own analysis of the film and its relationship to the Bible by discussing the following questions or items:*
 - a) What do you take to be the overall theme or message of the film and how do you see it being communicated in the film and its various elements? (Give specific examples from the film.)
 - b) How do you see elements from the Bible (perhaps even the Bible itself as an object) being appropriated into the film? (Give specific examples from the film.)
 - c) What do you make of the things from the Bible that are appropriated? Are they positive? Negative? How do they function? What is their effect? Etc.
 - d) How does the film illuminate, shape, or even change how you see the Bible, especially the biblical texts, images, or themes with which the film engages? (Give specific examples.)
 - e) What is your overall assessment of how the Bible (texts, themes, images, elements, etc.) appears in this film? Is it a substantial engagement with the Bible or something less? Would you say it is overall to positive effect? Negative effect? True to the Bible? Not true to it? Does it motivate viewers to read the Bible? Does it push people away from the Bible? (You don’t have to address all of these questions; they’re just ideas.)