**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**HUMAN EXPRESSION**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number:** EN 310: Literature and the Bible

**Home Department:** English Department

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Dr. Michael Broadway (mbroadwa@nmu.edu)

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): Every other winter

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

**A. Overview of the course content**

The focus of EN 310 is to examine the Bible as a work of literature. That is to say, it focuses on and takes a literary-critical approach to the materials of scripture and the Apocrypha by examining the text as literature – stories, histories, poetry, etc. The Bible is a massive literary work, both in scope and depth, and its influence on Western Literature is immense. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the Bible as a literary work can be useful, if not necessary, to fully understand the subsequent development of Western Literature.

Specific areas of concentration within the course are:

1. The evolution of major biblical themes, both explicit and implicit.
2. The development and combination of literary forms.
3. The growth of a sense of historical consciousness and mission.
4. The progressive manifestations of concepts of God, and the way these influence concept of character and personal responsibility.
5. The convergent literary identity of the Bible as a whole.
6. The way methods of reading discover and explore the teachings within.

The course objectives are as follows:

1. To understand and appreciate the significant literary parts of the Bible through reading, writing, and discussion.
2. To understand the literary styles, genres, and conventions used extensively in the Bible.
3. To approach the Bible through an analytical lens and improve critical reading and writing skills.

**B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes**

**Critical Thinking Component:**

* **Evidence:** Students are assessed on their understanding of various concepts, themes, and literary forms by responding to the reading of the text and class discussion. In forming a response, students should demonstrate an ability to closely read and analyze text, then provide an argument in terms of their understanding of a specific biblical passage while using textual evidence as support.
* **Integrate:** Students are asked to consider their assumptions of the Bible, whether it is theological or personal, positive or negative, when reading and discussing the text. Throughout the semester, students are taught to consider how varying approaches can lead to different, often contradictory, interpretations of the text. For example, in considering the Adam and Eve creation story in Genesis 2:4 – 3, it is important to consider the context with which the narrative was originally written and how evolving theologies have substantially altered how the narrative is interpreted.
* **Evaluate:** Students are required to apply varying literary – critical methods in analyzing the text and draw conclusions, in terms of meaning and expression, particularly when considering audience, purpose, and technique. For example, when examining the Synoptic Gospels, students can apply a literary-historical lens in analyzing the Gospel of Mark, redactive criticism with the Gospel of Matthew, and comparative criticism with the Gospel of Luke. In the process, students should be able to draw thematic connections between specific books and passages of scripture. In terms of the previous example, students could examine how the Synoptics draw from the Messianic Theme found in the Old Testament books of the Prophets and apply them to the author’s vision of Jesus as Messiah.

**Human Expression Component:**

* **Knowledge of Aesthetic Role:** Students are required to demonstrate a clear understanding of how varying literary styles, genres, and conventions are used in applying specific biblical themes and concepts, as well as the progressive manifestations of God.One of the primary goals of the course is to emphasize an appreciation for how these styles, genres, and conventions display the beauty of each specific book of the Bible, as well as how these books work together to create a succinct anthology that has had the most profound influence on Western culture and thought.
* **Innovative Thinking:** Students are asked to consider how historical change, social evolution, and varying theological movements have led to diverse approaches to the Bible. This requires an understanding of how theme, purpose, and the expression of biblical narratives have evolved. This can be assessed in a variety of ways and allows students to draw off of their own ideas and experiences in order to express how their interpretation of the text speaks to their own values and beliefs.
* **Acknowledges Contradictions:** The Bible, like all literature, is inherently subject to a variety of interpretations. These are often informed by the purpose of the writer, the theological purpose of the redactors, and the reader’s perspective, experiences, beliefs, and values. In analyzing the Bible, students are often required to identify or provide varying interpretations and contradictions through acknowledging that the different writers, redactors, and theologians often have a specific purpose unique to their interpretation of the text.
* **The following are examples of various means of assessment for both Critical Thinking and Human Expression:**
  + **Reading Journal Entries:** Students respond to prompts on assigned readings. The focus is on textual analysis and their impressions of a given book, narrative, or passage in the Bible. Since these can be posted in a discussion forum, students may be asked to consider and comment on responses from their peers. By means of this assessment, students will display their working knowledge of concepts, themes, and terminology relevant to the discussion.
  + **Writing Prompts:** Much like Reading Journal Entries, students are asked to provide responses in a discussion forum. These prompts do not have to be centered on analyzing specific text; instead, the focus may be centered on discussing various concepts (like *sin* or *free will*) and themes by allowing students to freely and creatively express their thoughts in terms of how their experiences, values, and beliefs mold their understanding. Writing Prompts are typically done in-class and can be linked specifically with a participation grade.
  + **Exams:** Students are given two or more exams throughout the course of the semester (typically a mid-term and final) designed to test their understanding of the Bible. Success is determined by the student’s ability to demonstrate a working knowledge of literary forms, concepts, themes, and terminology, as well as their application to the text, throughout the specific books of the Bible and the work as a whole.
  + **Essays:** Essays can be assigned covering a number of different topics, along with varying approaches to what and how it is analyzed. For example, the student is asked to examine the structure of narratives in the book of Judges and discuss how narrative form can be used to express the Deuteronomic Theme. Again, to be successful, students must demonstrate a working knowledge of literary forms, concepts, themes, and terminology, but also their skill in written expression, their ability to analyze text, and how they utilize textual evidence to support their thesis.

**C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)**

This is a survey course intended for all students interested in the Humanities and Religious Studies. This has been a popular choice in the Liberal Studies program for those looking to fulfill the Humanities requirement and the 300 level course requirement. Because this is an upper level English course, there is an expectation that students have already taken and passed first and second year composition; however, the course does not presuppose any background knowledge in the biblical or religious studies or the study of literature.

**D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)**

The course serves as an elective for the English Major and Minor, Writing Major, and English Graduate Bound Major. It is also an elective in the Religious Studies Minor.

**E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC**

The course cap is 25 students.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | **Task Type:** Students will compose multiple **reader responses/journals** that analyze course materials to support a position or that pose questions with academic rigor. Students may also participate in **class discussion** using the same skills. *Evidence* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least 4 times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20%-40%  **Expected Proficiency Rate:** 75% |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | **Task Type: Students will compose essays or answer essay exam questions or construct a project that synthesizes and/or interprets course materials to demonstrate their understanding of disciplinary knowledge.** *Evidence* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least 2 times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20%-40%  **Expected Proficiency Rate:** 75% |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | **Task Type: Students will develop essays or answer exam questions or construct a project that combines and/or interprets course materials and/or applies concepts to related subject matter.** *Evidence* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least 3 times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 20%-40%  **Expected Proficiency Rate:** 75% |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
HUMAN EXPRESSION**

*Attainment of the HUMAN EXPRESSION Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Knowledge of the role of the aesthetic** | Demonstrate comprehension of the role of aesthetic in the human experience including artistic, literary, and rhetorical expression. | **Task Type:** Students compose several **reader response forum posts** and participate in several **forum/classroom discussions,** demonstrating relevant disciplinary concepts, terms and approaches. *Evidence* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency: at** least 3  **Overall Grading Weight:** 10%-30%  **Expected Proficiency Rate:** 75%  . |
| **Innovative Thinking** | Create or adapt activities, ideas, or questions expressing both creativity and experience | **Task Type:** Students compose a **reflective essay or answer essay questions on exam or create a multimodal project**. *Evidence* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least 2  **Overall Grading Weight:** 10%-20%  **Expected Proficiency Rate:** 75% |
| **Acknowledging contradictions** | Integrates alternate interpretations or contradictory perspectives or ideas. | **Task Type:** Students compose an **analytical essay or answer essay questions on exam or create a project which shows an understanding of multiple approaches**.  *Evidence* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least 2 times  **Overall Grading Weight:** 15% -30%  **Expected Proficiency Rate:** 75%  . |