

The Bible and Western Culture I

RELS 2310

Dr. Caryn Tamber-Rosenau
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-4 p.m.
Agnes Arnold 204

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Office hours: By appointment via Zoom or outdoors. You can make an office hours appointment to discuss the course, questions you have, assignments, etc.

Please call me: Dr. Tamber-Rosenau, Prof. Tamber-Rosenau, Dr. T-R, Prof. T-R, or just Professor (she/her pronouns)

How to get in touch: Send me an email! I generally respond within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours over a weekend. If I don't reply within that time frame, please contact me again.

Teaching assistant: Nick Eagan

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Please call him: Nick (he/him)



The Creation of Adam, Sistine Chapel fresco, Michelangelo, 16th century

Course description:

The Hebrew Bible (Jewish Tanakh; Christian Old Testament) is a rich and diverse collection of texts that has shaped world history and the lives of individuals for millennia, and that continues to play a significant role today. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to these texts. We will read pieces of the Hebrew Bible in translation and explore the circumstances of their composition and, to some extent, their reception. We will examine what the Bible can and cannot tell us about the history of ancient Israel. We will also sample modern scholarship on the Bible,

in the process learning about the various lenses used by those who study it in an academic context. Students will have an opportunity to evaluate claims made by contemporary readers of the Bible about its content on hot-button issues.

Course goals:

- To learn about the content of the Hebrew Bible, its genres, themes, and literary features.
- To be able to explain what the Bible can and cannot tell us about the history of Israel, and to be able to speak and write clearly about the major components of that history.
- To gain a basic understanding of the different methods scholars use to read and interpret the Hebrew Bible.
- To explore how the Hebrew Bible functions in the contemporary world and how scholarly study can help us to make sense of modern rhetoric about the Bible.

Required book:

An edition of the Bible. I recommend *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version* (5th edition), New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. This study Bible contains helpful footnotes, essays, and maps, but any straightforward translation (i.e. *not* The Message, the Good News Bible, God’s Word to the Nations, New Living Translation—all interpretive paraphrases) is fine. You may *not* use a Bible app or website in class. Bring a physical copy of the Bible to every session.

Recommended book:

Friedman, Richard Elliott and Shawna Dolansky. *The Bible Now*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

The book is also available in electronic form on the library’s website, which is why its status is recommended rather than required. Because reading online with the library’s e-reader can be annoying, you may choose to purchase this inexpensive book instead.

Other readings:

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard. Some will be PDFs and others will be links to articles, particularly from the website *Bible Odyssey*.

I am not assigning a textbook for this class. However, you may find that you would like to have a textbook for reference. If so, I recommend Michael D. Coogan and Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (4th edition). New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. If you decide to purchase and use this book, I am happy to guide you on what to read when.

Content warning: Please be advised that the Bible is not G-rated. It contains material about sex, violence, sexual violence, violence against animals, ethnic hatred, mass murder, and genocide. We will be treating all these topics this semester.

Diversity statement: This class includes and honors students of all backgrounds. The following will not be tolerated: hate speech, belittling others' religious traditions, arguing about whose religion is best/most valid/closest to "the truth," and proselytizing (also known as evangelizing, missionizing, seeking converts, or witnessing).

Course requirements and policies:

1. New concepts will be introduced every class session, so students are strongly encouraged to make attendance and punctuality a priority. An attendance sheet will be passed around every session (after the add period ends) at a random point, and it is your responsibility to make sure you sign it. Excessive absences or lateness will affect your grade, as will unexcused early departures from class. It will be your responsibility to make up work that you have missed. I suggest getting the notes and other details on what you missed from a classmate. (Please don't ask me or any professor, "did I miss anything important?" I do my best not to waste your time with things that are unimportant!)
2. You are entitled to three absences, no questions asked, without your attendance and participation grade suffering. Further absences will affect your grade unless they are excused. Examples of excused absences include holidays, personal illness, or family emergency. Documentation of absences may be requested by Dr. Tamber-Rosenau for them to count as excused. *Experiencing COVID symptoms and needing to get tested is always an excused absence, as long as you let me know at the time. Never come to class if you are experiencing COVID symptoms. Never come to class when you have a pending COVID test.*
3. Class participation is important! Please come to class prepared to contribute to class discussions and take part in group activities.
4. Please bring your Bible to every class. On quiz days, please bring the relevant scholarly article as well. You will not be able to refer to the article during the quiz, but we will follow each quiz with a short discussion of the article.
5. Laptops, tablets, phones, and other electronic devices are permitted only for class-related uses. Do not text, post, or chat during class. No earbuds or headphones may be worn in class. Do not do work for other classes during our class. Failure to honor these rules will result in a lowered attendance and participation grade.
6. I strongly encourage you to use paper and pen to take notes; research has shown that retention of class material is improved when students use pen and paper rather than a computer for notetaking. Lecture slides will be posted, but you still need to take your own notes; the slides are only an outline.
7. In between class sessions, I will occasionally need to communicate important information to the class via e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your university e-mail regularly.
8. For most sessions, students will be required to read selections from the Bible. Even if you have read the assigned biblical materials before entering this class, read them again, with an eye toward the critical academic study of the Bible. Sometimes, I assign short additional readings, such as articles from the website Bible Odyssey. Reading assignments should be completed in advance of the session for which they are listed.

9. For most class sessions, I have provided a few questions for you to consider while doing the readings. I hope that this will focus your time and allow you to get more out of both the readings and class sessions.
10. *Quizzes*: In some weeks, I will assign a scholarly article related to one of that week's topics. These articles will be posted on Blackboard and are intended to give you a flavor for modern scholarly discussions about the Hebrew Bible.
 - a. In weeks when we read one of these articles, there will be a short (10-minute) quiz about it at the beginning of the Wednesday class.
 - b. Grades for these quizzes will be check-plus (superior understanding of and engagement with the article; corresponds to 100), check (adequate understanding of the article; corresponds to 85), check-minus (deficient understanding of the article; corresponds to 70), or 0 (complete misunderstanding of the article, very incomplete answers, or missed quiz).
 - c. Unless there are extenuating circumstances *that you tell me about before the quiz*, no make-up quizzes will be allowed. (Experiencing COVID symptoms or waiting for the results of a COVID test count as extenuating circumstances. You can make up a quiz for COVID-related reasons as long as you tell me about your absence beforehand.) If you arrive late, you will have that much less time to complete the quiz.
 - d. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.
11. *Written work*: There will be three written assignments during the semester. Details will follow on each assignment.
 - a. Reflection on your acquaintance with the Bible, Part I, ~2-3 pages. Due Monday, **January 31** by 11:59 p.m. on TurnItIn
 - b. *The Bible Now* discussion board postings and responses. Initial posts due Monday, **April 4** by 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard. Responses to classmates due Monday, **April 11** by 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard.
 - c. Reflection on your acquaintance with the Bible, Part II, ~2-3 pages. Due Monday, **April 25** by 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard.
 - d. My policy on late written work is as follows: I accept it up to one week after the due date. Late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade per late day. For example, a paper handed in up to 24 hours late would start with a 97, 24-48 hours late with a 94, 48-72 hours late with a 90, and so on.
12. *Exams*: There will be a midterm and a final exam. Each will be a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions. For the midterm and final exam, you will be required to purchase and bring with you a blue Scantron form.
 - a. The midterm will be given in class on Wednesday, **March 9**.
 - b. The final exam will be held on Wednesday, **May 11, 2-5 p.m.**
13. There will be opportunities to earn extra credit points by attending events on campus and/or completing a (fun) bonus assignment. Stay tuned for more information. By policy, I do not offer individualized extra credit.
14. To succeed in this class:
 - a. You should expect to spend at least 4-6 hours per week *outside of class* on work for this course: reading, taking notes, asking questions, working on written assignments, and studying.

- b. Make sure to keep a document on your computer or in a notebook where you record your observations about the course material. Write down notes when reading, record your answers to any guiding questions or prompts, and keep a record of your thoughts and important quotes from your readings. Make sure to write down questions that occur to you, or objections you have to what you are reading. These will be useful for your other activities.
 - c. Communicate with me regularly.
15. We are (still) in the midst of a global pandemic that is upending all facets of our lives. There may be circumstances where following the above guidelines becomes challenging or impossible for you. Please keep me in the loop if this happens, and we will work together to find a solution. Additionally, there may be COVID-related circumstances in which it becomes impossible to meet in person on a particular day. I am prepared to pivot any individual session to asynchronous or synchronous online instruction if necessary, and I will give you as much notice as possible if this needs to happen.
16. Attending class on Microsoft Teams: every class at the university has a dedicated Microsoft Teams channel. You can find a link to ours on Blackboard. If it becomes necessary to hold class online at some point, this is the format we will use. Additionally, if you cannot attend class due to personal illness/to avoid infecting others, but are well enough to attend virtually, you may arrange with me in advance to attend via Teams. I will only be live-streaming class on Teams on days when someone has made this arrangement. If you are on Teams but haven't made this arrangement, you will not get credit for attendance.
17. This syllabus is subject to change. If I make any changes, I will notify you.

Grading:

Scholarly article quizzes: 20%

Written work:

Reflection on your acquaintance with the Bible, Part I: 7%

Reflection on your acquaintance with the Bible, Part II: 8%

The Bible Now discussion board postings and responses: 15%

Exams:

Midterm: 15%

Final: 20%

Attendance and participation: 15%

Participation points may be earned by asking or answering questions in class, making respectful and valuable contributions to class discussions, actively participating in group activities or discussions, and/or attending office hours to discuss course material.

Grading will be on the following scale. Please note that the highest *final course grade* the University permits is A.

97-100: A+

77-79: C+

93-96: A

73-76: C

90-92: A-

70-72: C-

87-89: B+ 67-69: D+
83-86: B 63-66: D
80-82: B- 60-62: D-
 <60: F

Course Schedule:

Week 1

Wednesday, January 19: Introductions, syllabus review, Bible basics

Week 2

Monday, January 24: The lay of the land, approaches to the Bible

Read: Amy-Jill Levine, [“What Is the Difference between the Old Testament, the Tanakh, and the Hebrew Bible?”](#) on Bible Odyssey

John Barton, [“Judaism and Christianity Both Rely on the Hebrew Bible. Why Do They Interpret It So Differently?”](#)

- Which readers are most likely to use the term “Old Testament”? How about “Tanakh”? “Hebrew Bible”?
- Name some differences in the content and interpretation of the Old Testament and the Hebrew Bible, according to Levine.
- According to Barton, what most surprises Christians about how Jews read the Hebrew Bible?
- What forces outside the text shape how Christians and Jews interpret the Hebrew Bible?

Wednesday, January 26: Bible translation

Read: Leonard Greenspoon, “10 Common Misconceptions about Bible Translation” and introduction and verses marked with a leaf in Paul Davidson, [“Poor and Misleading Translation in the New International Version \(NIV\)”](#)

Quiz and discussion: Greenspoon article

- What are some common mistakes people make about translating the Bible according to Greenspoon? Which of these have you heard before?
- Why is translating the Bible so complicated?
- What is the reason for the NIV’s translation issues, according to Davidson?
- What kinds of translation choices does Davidson criticize the NIV for?
- Do you think these issues make it a “bad” translation? What does your answer imply about how you evaluate whether a translation is good?

Week 3

Monday, January 31: The Documentary Hypothesis

Read: Sarah Shectman, "[How Do Biblical Scholars Read the Hebrew Bible?](#)" and Steven L. McKenzie, "[What Is Source Criticism?](#)" on Bible Odyssey

Due 11:59 p.m. on TurnItIn: Reflection on your acquaintance with the Bible, Part I

- How might biblical scholars read the Bible differently than do people reading in a religious setting?
- Name and describe some methods of scholarly criticism of the Bible.
- What is the Documentary Hypothesis? How did it develop?
- Why might some methods of scholarly study be controversial for some religious readers?

Wednesday, February 2: Creation

Read: Genesis 1-3

Phyllis Trible, "Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread"

Quiz and discussion: Trible article

- What happens in Genesis 1? In what order are things created? By what method does God create?
- What happens in Genesis 2-3? Are there elements of these two chapters that contradict Genesis 1?
- Which character (man, woman, snake, deity) do you think is most at fault for what happens with the fruit in the Garden of Eden? Why?
- What does Trible argue about how feminists view the Bible?
- How does she, as a feminist biblical scholar, view the creation story in Genesis 2-3?
- How does Trible explain the meaning of *ha-adham*?

Week 4

Monday, February 7: Primeval History

Read: Genesis 4, Genesis 6-9

- What questions does the text of Genesis 4 leave unanswered about Cain's killing of Abel?
- Why does the flood happen? Why is Noah chosen to survive? How long does the flood last? How many of each different kind of animal is to be taken on board? How does Noah know the flood is over? If you have trouble arriving at a single answer for any of these questions, can you think of an explanation for why that might be?
- Why is Ham's son Canaan cursed?

Wednesday, February 9: Patriarchs and Matriarchs

Read: Gen 12:1-9, Gen 19, Gen 22

- What are God's promises to Abram?
- What ambiguities do you see in the story of the binding of Isaac? Is there anything that confuses you?
- What happens at Sodom and Gomorrah? Why does it happen?

Week 5

Monday, February 14: Genesis Family Stories; Exodus

Read: Gen 34, Gen 37, Gen 39-50; Exodus 1-15

Jeffrey Stackert, "[Moses,](#)" on Bible Odyssey

- Who is Dinah? What are the consequences of what happens to her?
- Who is Tamar? Do you think she is a sympathetic character? Do you think the text intends her to be sympathetic?
- Trace Joseph's journey from favorite son, to slave, to prisoner, to high-ranking public servant. Why does he fall so far, and how does he rise again?
- What is Moses' origin story? How do women figure in his early life?
- How and where does Moses first encounter God? What questions does Moses have for God, and what are God's answers?
- According to the biblical story, how do the Israelites escape from Egypt?
- Who is Aaron and what role does he play in the Exodus story?
- Make a tally of references to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) that appear in the Exodus story. How and why are these figures invoked?

Wednesday, February 16: Exodus; Wilderness Wanderings

Read: Exodus 32, Numbers 12, Numbers 22-25

Baruch Schwartz, "[The Worship of the Golden Calf,](#)" on Bible Odyssey

- How do the people rebel in Exodus 32?
- What does Schwartz say about a relationship between this story and something found later in the Bible?
 - How and why do the Israelites rebel during their period of wilderness wandering?

Week 6

Monday, February 21: Law and Ritual

Read: Exodus 19-23, Leviticus 1-7, 11-15, 17-26

- What does Leviticus say about proper and improper sexual behavior? What are some possible reasons for these detailed rules?
 - Describe the procedures and purposes of sacrifice.

- What does Leviticus say about what Israelites may and may not eat? Are reasons for the prohibitions given?

Wednesday, February 23: Law and Ritual

Read: Jay Michaelson, [“Does the Bible Really Call Homosexuality an ‘Abomination’?”](#)

Quiz and discussion: Michaelson article

- Who says that the Bible calls homosexuality an abomination, according to Michaelson?
- Why does he say those people are wrong?
- What is *toevah*?
- What other practices are called *toevah*?

Week 7

Monday, February 28: Ideas of God

Read: Mika Ahuvia, [“Us vs. Them: Challenging Stereotypes about Judaism in the Wake of the Pittsburgh Shooting”](#)

- What is supersessionism?
- What do many Christians believe about the “Old Testament God,” and why is it problematic?
- What is legalism? What do many Christians believe about Judaism and legalism?
- What are some persistent tropes in Christian anti-Judaism?
- Christians read the Old Testament in light of the New Testament. How do Jews read the Hebrew Bible?

Wednesday, March 2: Deuteronomy and Covenant

Read: Deuteronomy 12-26

- What does Deuteronomy say about how God is to be worshipped and obeyed?
- What are the potential rewards for obedience and consequences for disobedience?
- Deuteronomy describes a type of warfare called *herem*, often translated as “devoted to destruction” or “put to the ban.” What does this type of war require? Why?

Week 8

Monday, March 7: Midterm review

Wednesday, March 9: Midterm exam

Bring: Blue Scantron form and a pencil

SPRING BREAK

Week 9

Monday, March 21: Conquest and Settlement

Read: Joshua 1-15 OR Judges 1-15 (assigned in class)

In class: Discuss *The Bible Now* assignment

- How was Canaan settled by the Israelites, according to your text? Who did the settling? Was it conquest or something else? Which cities were conquered or remained unconquered? How long did it take? What was God's role?

Wednesday, March 23: Judges; Rise of the Monarchy

Read: Judges 4-5, 19-21; 1 Samuel 1-2, 8, 11-12

Robert A. Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians"

Quiz and discussion: Warrior article

- Who are Deborah, Jael, and Sisera?
- What happens to the Levite's concubine? Why is this text in the Bible?
- How and why does Saul become king?
- What is the role of Samuel in the creation and centralization of the kingship?
- Describe the covenant between God and David.
- Who is Bathsheba? What is David's relationship to her?
- What is Warrior's response to people who say Native Americans need a theology of liberation?
- How does Warrior, as a Native American, read Exodus and Joshua?

Week 10

Monday, March 28: The United Monarchy—David, Solomon, and the Temple

Read: 1 Samuel 15-17; 2 Samuel 7, 11-13; 1 Kings 1-2, 8-9, 12

Sarah Malena, "[Solomon](#)," on Bible Odyssey

- What picture emerges of David in the books of Samuel and 1 Kings? Do you think he is a sympathetic figure?
- How does David rise to power, when he is not Saul's heir?
- How does Solomon rise to power, when he is not David's eldest son?
- Why is the matter of who builds the Temple so important?
- How is Solomon thought of in the modern imagination, and how does this idea compare to the picture painted of him in the Hebrew Bible?

Wednesday, March 30: The Divided Kingdoms; Introduction to Prophecy

Read: 1 Kings 16-19, 21-22

Debra Scoggins Ballentine, "[Kingdom of Judah](#)," and Steven L. McKenzie, "[Kingdom of Israel](#)," on Bible Odyssey
Corrine Carvalho, "[How to Recognize a Biblical Prophet](#)," on Bible Odyssey

- According to the biblical text, why do the northern and southern kingdoms split?
- What is a prophet?
- Who are Elijah and Elisha?
- How did prophets get their message across?
- Are prophets in the Hebrew Bible discussing their own time or predicting events far in the future?

Week 11

Monday, April 4: Prophecy

Read: Amos 2-4, Hosea 1-3, Isaiah 1-6

Due by 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard: *The Bible Now* initial discussion board post

- What were the messages of Amos and Hosea?
- What is the metaphor described in Hosea 1-2?
- How does Amos describe the people of the northern kingdom?
- How does Isaiah envision and describe God?
- How is Isaiah different from other prophets?

Wednesday, April 6: The Fall of the Northern Kingdom and the Fall of the Southern Kingdom

Read: 2 Kings 11, 17-25, Lamentations 1-5

Excerpt from Renita Weems, *Battered Love*

Quiz and discussion: Weems reading

In class: Discuss extra credit assignment on Lamentations

- Why and how does the northern kingdom fall?
- What happens to the people of the northern kingdom after the conquest?
- How does the southern kingdom manage to withstand Assyrian invasion?
- Who ultimately conquers the southern kingdom?
- What happens to the people of the southern kingdom after the conquest?
- How does Lamentations respond to the conquest? What imagery does the poet use to describe the land and its people?
- What is the prophetic marriage metaphor, according to Weems?
- Why did prophets use this metaphor?

Week 12

Monday, April 11: Exile, Return, and Restoration

Read: Isaiah 40, Ezekiel 37, Ezra 1

Lisbeth S. Fried, "[Cyrus the Messiah](#)" on Bible Odyssey

Due by 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard: *The Bible Now* responses to others' posts

- How does Psalm 137 reflect on the exile? What do you make of the last lines of the psalm?
- Describe the circumstances leading to the return of the exiles.
- Who is Cyrus? Why is he called "messiah"?

Wednesday, April 13: Psalms, Song of Songs

Read: Psalm 23, Psalm 137, Song of Songs 1-8

Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "By the Waters of Babylon: Exile as a Way of Life"

Quiz and discussion: Isasi-Díaz article

- What is Psalm 23 about? What kinds of metaphors does the psalmist use? Have you encountered it before? If so, in what context?
- What is the Song of Songs about? How does it differ from other biblical texts you have read?
- Where is the psalmist in Psalm 137? What is the psalmist's political situation?
- How do you react to the last lines of Psalm 137?
- Why is Psalm 137 especially meaningful to Isasi-Díaz?
- What does Isasi-Díaz say about objectivity and subjectivity?

Week 13

Monday, April 18: Wisdom literature

Read: Proverbs 1-9, 31

- What is the role of women (or female figures) in the first several chapters of Proverbs?
- How would you describe the woman praised in Proverbs 31?

Wednesday, April 20: Wisdom Literature

Read: Job 1-3, 38-42, Ecclesiastes 1-2

- How might the books of Ecclesiastes and Job have been challenging to an ancient audience?
- Why does Job suffer?
- What is Ecclesiastes' answer to questions about the meaning of life?

Week 14

Monday, April 25: Jewish Novellas—Ruth, Esther, Jonah

Read: Ruth 1-4, Esther 1-10, Jonah 1-4

Due by 11:59 p.m. on TurnItIn: Reflection on your acquaintance with the Bible, Part II

- What is the book of Ruth's take on whether non-Israelites can be righteous?

- What is the connection between Ruth and David? How might that connection provide an explanation for why this story is in the Bible?
- What is the book of Jonah’s take on whether non-Israelites can be righteous?
- How does God view the Assyrians in Jonah?

Wednesday, April 27: Jewish Novellas—Daniel, Susanna, Judith, Tobit

Read: Daniel 1-6, Susanna, Judith 8-16

Ericka Dunbar, [“For Such a Time as This? #UsToo: Sexual Trafficking, Silence, & Secrecy in the Book of Esther”](#)

Quiz and discussion: Dunbar article

- Why is Daniel in the Babylonian court? What do he and his friends do there?
- Identify examples of Daniel and his friends attempting to balance their Jewishness with serving in a foreign court.
- Find the source of the common expressions “read the handwriting on the wall” and “walk through the lion’s den” in Daniel.
- What is Susanna’s problem and how does Daniel solve it?
- Who is Judith and what does she do to save Israel?
- Do you see any connections between Judith and other characters you have read about in the Hebrew Bible?
- Why does Dunbar argue that there is sex trafficking in the book of Esther?
- How does Dunbar relate Esther to sex trafficking in other historical contexts?

Week 15

Monday, May 2: Final exam review

Final exam: Wednesday, May 11, 2-5 p.m.—Bring Blue Scantron and pencil

Academic integrity: Students at the University of Houston are required to adhere to the university’s academic honesty policy. If you are unsure how the honesty policy applies to a given assignment in this course, please ask me. I have a zero-tolerance policy towards any type of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism) and will refer all violations to the department hearing officer. According to plagiarism.org, plagiarism includes:

- “turning in someone else’s work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit

- f. copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not” (<http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism>)

CAPS Statement: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

Special accommodations for students with disabilities: The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students who have a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, the Student Accessibility Center strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please call the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center at [\(713\) 743-5400](tel:7137435400) or email them at JDCenter@central.uh.edu.

Title IX reporting: Please note that the instructor is a mandatory reporter for sexual misconduct and other concerns related to Title IX (including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking). Moreover, recent changes to Texas law impose increased reporting requirements and more drastic penalties for failure to report. According to the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy and state law, a disclosure regarding either a past or recent incident, or mention of your identity as a survivor of past misconduct, is sufficient to trigger reporting requirements. Thus, all students should be aware that no faculty member in a teaching role can agree to confidentiality in discussing these topics, and no statement from a faculty member should be taken as granting confidentiality. If you (in person or in writing) disclose any such information, it will be reported consistent with Texas law and UH policy. Please know that if a report is made, you will hear from UH Equal Opportunity Services (EOS)/the UH Title IX Office regarding your rights under the Sexual Misconduct Policy and the campus and community resources available to you, but you are not required to respond. Additionally, EOS/the UH Title IX Office will not compel you to make a police report, though it will assist you in doing so upon your request. Please know also that there are places on campus where you can instead make a confidential report: the Student Health Center, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Sexual Misconduct Support Services, and the A.D. Bruce Religion Center.

Face Covering Policy: To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the University strongly encourages everyone (vaccinated or not) to wear face coverings indoors on campus including classrooms for both faculty and students.

Presence in Class: Your presence in class each session means that you:

- Are NOT exhibiting any [Coronavirus Symptoms](#) that makes you think that you may have COVID-19
- Have NOT tested positive or been diagnosed for COVID-19

- Have NOT knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or suspected/presumed COVID-19

If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class. Please see [Student Protocols](#) for what to do if you experience symptoms and [Potential Exposure to Coronavirus](#) for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Consult the (select: [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#)) for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons.

COVID-19 Information: Students are encouraged to visit the University's [COVID-19](#) website for important information including on-campus testing, vaccines, diagnosis and symptom protocols, campus cleaning and safety practices, report forms, and positive cases on campus. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.

Vaccinations: Data suggests that vaccination remains the best intervention for reliable protection against COVID-19. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with pertinent [vaccine information](#), consult with their health care provider. The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated.

Excused Absence Policy: Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).