

330 Biblical Literacy

Beardsley Ruml

Readings: Bart Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford UP, 2001); James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* (Free Press, 2008); *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford UP; either edition); and any NRSV *New Testament*.

This course surveys the most culturally significant portions of the *Hebrew Bible* and *New Testament* from the point of view of modern bible scholars, as a human artifact. For example, the two creation stories in Genesis 1-3 were written centuries apart and have clearly distinct purposes. *The Book of Job* asks: why do bad things happen to good people? Today we would speak of “evil” but that idea was not yet formulated and the authors provided the two best answers available to them. We will focus on the historical Jesus (a Jew who preached to other Jews about how to be good Jews) but also consider John’s later recharacterization. Our highly interactive sessions (and break-out groups) will assume diligent preparation. No previous knowledge of the Bible will be necessary. Estimated outside work is three hours per week. Class size is limited to 24.

Beardsley Ruml has led several study groups about biblical subjects since his first study group surveying the Bible in 2009.