

The basic homework assignment in this class asks you to provide four "observations", two in the form of questions and two comments.

Questions are a valuable product of thoughtful reading, and I'll ask you to come up with some. I'm looking for real questions, things in the reading that puzzled you, things you didn't know the answer to or were curious about when you finished the reading.

Stating the question is only the start. Develop, discuss your question. Why are you curious about it? Why is it not clear? What are some probable answers?

Unity is important here. You don't want to pile up a lot of unrelated questions, separate issues, but to focus on your point, one question, developed and discussed. Also, be careful of questions that are too big or too small. Most word issues can be solved by a dictionary, for example.

I'd also like you to provide some comments about the reading -- insights, things you noticed or realized, ideas you have about something particular in the reading. What did you find interesting? (What interests us is usually what surprises us, what we hadn't anticipated.) These thoughts should also be developed and discussed, along the lines of the questions.

Again, with both questions and comments, go for detailed observations rather than broad, general ones. Don't start out, "In this book, it seems that..." -- most comments about the book as a whole are useless. Read and think in terms of what we've been studying: meaningful details, motifs, and character motivation are often fruitful.

Normally, there will be a written homework assignment due each week. You may skip two of these without penalty during the course, as long as they fall in different graded "batches". Please don't squander these, as they're meant for your protection in case of illness, job conflicts, or other emergencies.

This is a writing assignment, and I'd like you to write well and carefully -- compose your thoughts and words. This is an upper level English course after all, so I expect competent writing. I require typing, double-spaced, dark copy.

For clarity, label your observations ("Question 1", "Comment 2") so I can tell which part of the assignment you're addressing. Also, provide a chapter and verse reference so I know where you're at ("In chapter 17, verse 4, it says...")

Be sure to spread out your attentions to cover the whole assignment, as much as possible. In other words, if there's a twelve chapter reading, don't give all your observations on only one or two chapters.

Finally, homework completed on time is much more valuable than late work, which is normally graded down. The process works much better if you can get me your thoughts before class discussion.

Literature of the Old Testament

You'll need a Bible for this class, and while there are several translations available, there are only a few I would strongly recommend for your use here. I'll discuss that the first day of class. With luck, you can use your "home" Bible, and that will solve the textbook requirement for the course.

Most of your grade for the class will be based on weekly homework assignments that are described in detail on an accompanying sheet. There is also a final exam, based on information from our class discussions, which may draw on any of the material we've studied this semester. I urge you to take careful and thorough class notes on the points we make in class as the best preparation for that test.

Attendance and participation are both factors in this class. I hope you'll be able to attend every class session, but I'll grant you ~~two~~³ absences in the course of the semester. On the ~~third~~^{fourth} absence, you can expect to be dropped from the class. If you foresee a conflict down the road on this issue, see me right away.

Participation means vocal participation in class, not just "answers" but also your questions, interpretations, ideas. Some people are shyer than others, but I hope everyone will feel comfortable enough to share in the conversations. As an extra incentive, those who contribute regularly and thoughtfully to the class discussions, in my judgment, will receive a half-grade improvement on their final grade for the class.

The Bible contains some of the best stories and some of the most beautiful poetry in world literature. I hope you'll enjoy reading and thinking about these with me and your fellow classmates.

My office number is S-18, in the basement of the Fine Arts Building. The office phone is 686-9155. Please leave a message if you don't catch me in. There are other faculty on this phone line, so be sure to identify yourself as my student when you call. Also, bear in mind that I'm normally at Delta on Thursdays, so e-mail is an even better option. My e-mail address is jfaugust@delta.edu.

There are two times you should definitely get in touch with me. If you miss class, you should call right away to get the information you need for the next class. Also, if you're confused on an assignment, you should contact me for clarification. In addition, I appreciate your letting me know if you'll be unable to attend class.

23 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me
beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteous-
ness, for his name's sake.

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of mine
enemies: thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The
Living
Bible

Because the Lord is my shepherd,
I have everything I need! He lets
me rest in the meadow grass and
leads me beside the quiet
streams. He restores my failing
health.

The
Good News
Bible

The Lord is my shepherd; I have
everything I need. He lets me
rest in fields of green grass and
leads me to quiet pools of fresh
water. He gives me new strength.