



Syllabus

Zoom Class: What's the Word?

May - June 2025

Instructor Information

Instructor: Melisa Ortiz Berry, PhD

About: www.melisaberry.com

Course Description

This Zoom class builds off of the podcast series called: "PodClass: What's the Word?" going into greater detail with classroom lectures and class discussion to answer theological questions about the Bible such as: "Who wrote the Bible?" "How do we interpret it?" "When did it become an actual book?" "Why do we have so many translations?" and "What can we do with all of those translations in our personal study of the Bible?" There are no mandatory assignments in the class, however students would benefit from listening to the required podcasts before each class.

Purpose of / Reason for the Course

Provide an opportunity for deeper learning through Christian continuing education on the theology and history of the Bible. Help develop the student's confidence in their understanding of what scripture is (and is not) and where it came from.

Course Objectives

- 1.) Create Christian continuing education for the listener.
- 2.) Build up the student's faith through theological inquiry into the Bible, presented in an accessible community college level classroom.
- 3.) Be able to distinguish various theologies and wrestle with them, to the end of working out one's own beliefs.
- 4.) Developing a charitable theology, where we can appreciate theological views that are of our own, not demonizing the other, while having a strengthened awareness of the student's own belief system.

Assignments

- 1.) Listen to the podcasts being discussed before we meet.
- 2.) Keep a journal with notes.

Schedule

Who Wrote the Bible?

- May 4: Lecture & Discussion: Introduction to theological terms and ideas
Homework: May 5 - May 11: Listen to Intro, Episodes 1, 2, and 3
- May 11 Lecture & Discussion: How the Bible was revealed to us (special revelation): Protestants
Homework: May 12 - May 18: Listen to Episodes 4 and 5
- May 18 Lecture & Discussion: How the Bible was revealed to us (special revelation): Catholic and Orthodox Christians
Homework: May 19 - May 25: Listen to Episode 6

Why do people interpret it so differently?

- May 25 Lecture & Discussion: Judaism and the Bible
Homework: May 26 - June 1: Listen to Episodes 7 and 8
- June 1 Lecture & Discussion: Archeology, disability, and the Bible
Homework: June 2 - June 8: Listen to Episodes 9 and 10
- June 8 Lecture & Discussion: Cultural and racial identities and the Bible
Homework: June 9 - June 15: Listen to Episodes 11, 12, 13
- June 15 Lecture & Discussion: Reading the Bible from around the world
Homework: June 16 - June 22: Listen to Episodes 14, 15, 16

How did the Bible become a book?

- June 22 Lecture & Discussion: Making the Bible: Church history and Bible translations
Homework: June 23 - June 29: Listen to Episodes 17

What are some of the ways that we can use the Bible in everyday life?

- June 29 Lecture & Discussion: Using the Bible in Everyday life: Practical Theology