

BI 567: The Bible and Media

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Fall 2024



Course Description

This course engages the Bible's interactions with various forms of media throughout history. Examining ancient communication materials and practices, students will investigate how these influenced the reading, writing, and publication of biblical texts. Through the lens of book history, they will discover the ways the Bible changed as a textual artifact, as well as analyze modern adaptations of the Bible in film, television, children's Bibles, theater and musicals, graphic novels, and other contemporary media, elucidating the ways in which the Bible is interpreted and recast in these mediums. Engaging both ancient and modern media, students will develop an understanding of the enduring influence of the Bible across diverse cultural contexts and media platforms and how each medium affords both opportunities and limitations for experiencing and interpreting biblical texts.

Course Basics

Online (BI 567-60) or *Residential* (BI 567-01)

Smith Welcome Center ###

Mondays, 9–10:40 AM

Digital Student Hours

Tues/Thurs, 10 AM–12 PM

Instructor:

Dr. Nick Elder (he/him)

nelder@dbq.edu

Van Vliet Hall 209



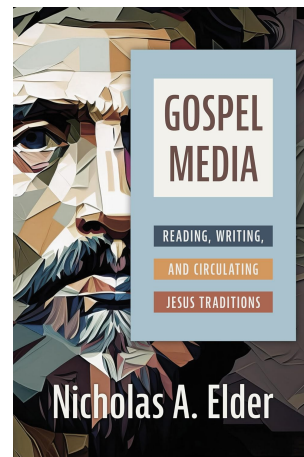
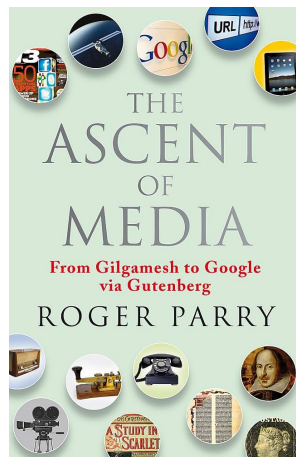
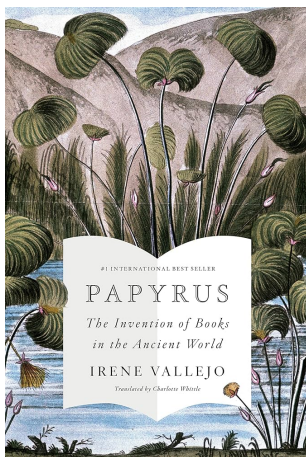
✓ Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Analyze how ancient communication materials influenced the reading, writing, and publication of biblical texts in antiquity.
2. Evaluate the Bible as a textual artifact, elaborating its significance as a product of historical, social, and technological processes.
3. Examine how the Bible is interpreted and represented across different cultural contexts and media platforms, evaluating the opportunities and limitations inherent in various media for experiencing and recasting the Bible.
4. Develop a robust appreciation for the enduring influence of the Bible across diverse cultural contexts and media platforms.



Course Books

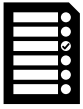


Elder, Nicholas A. *Gospel Media: Reading, Writing, and Circulating Jesus Traditions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024. ISBN: 9780802879219.

Parry, Roger. *The Ascent of Media: From Gilgamesh to Google via Gutenberg*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2011. ISBN: 9781857885705.

Vallejo, Irene. *Papyrus: The Invention of Books in the Ancient World*. Translated by Charlotte Whittle. New York: Knopf, 2022. ISBN: 9780593318898.

One or two yet-to-be-determined additional texts will also be required. Further, various additional texts may be required depending on the assignments and projects a student chooses to complete for the course.



Specifications Grading and Categories

This class uses what is called specifications or "specs" grading. Final grades are **not** determined by the collective score of weighted items. Rather, they are determined by the number of grade items that you successfully complete. Each grade item is pass-fail and contains detailed specifications. If these specifications are met, then the item is passed. The rationale for using this grading system is that it removes much of the subjectivity of grading, restores rigor to academic work, and it is learning-outcome oriented.

There are several different kinds of grade items in the class, including:

- Course Community (Forums, Zoom Meetings, In-person classes)
- Weekly Content Quizzes
- Media Reports
 - An explanation of the development of a singular media form (e.g. the codex book, radio, movies, television, etc.) and two examples of the Bible recast and re-interpreted in that media form
- Comparison Reports
 - A comparison of how one biblical text is recast and re-interpreted in at least two different media (e.g. a graphic novel and a film)