

Fall 2015 Comment Report

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Course Sections

- A** BHEB 622 (01): Elementary Syriac
- B** BIBH 651 (01): Hist/Christ. I: Early Medieval
- C** BIBH 651 (W1): Hist/Christ. I: Early Medieval
- D** BIBH 651 (W2): Hist/Christ. I: Early Medieval

Comments -

- A**
 - I really enjoyed the approach of a short, concise grammar and longer texts for reading that explain and solidify the grammar. I have usually learned languages the other way and found this way to be challenging and much more rewarding.

What did the professor do that was effective? Be specific and name the actions that helped you as a learner. For example, you could mention specific handouts, AV presentations, particular lectures, presentations, discussions, assignments, or aspects of the syllabus. -

- A**
 - I love the conciseness of Healey and your concise additions to the material. I was amazed at how few materials we had but how much we were able to read.
 - Supplemented textbooks with material compiled by the professor.
 - Having us read text early and often was very effective. Class was relaxed but focused, with excellent discussions.
- B**
 - Simply put: she was prepared, every single day. She had thought about the lesson beforehand, knew what she was going to talk about, and was ready to go. There was no dull, hanging moment where I wondered if she had thought about the class or not. I knew she thought about us beforehand. That was the biggest, most effective thing in the class.
 - Having weekly readings and class discussions of our readings.
 - She was helpful when it came to working with me. She noticed I was doing great on my essays outside of class. So she allowed me accommodations to be used during my essays for the exam and midterm.
 - The professor effectively answered class questions during lectures, and was honest about now knowing/having an answer to certain questions.
 - All the books that were chosen were extremely helpful in thinking/re-thinking the subject matter and its contexts. The primary resources given each week to read really helped me understand the broader cultural movements going on.
 - Lectures were always effective and easy to follow. The critical discussion of Rhee was especially enjoyable and insightful.
 - The review of Griffith's book was entirely helpful not only in class, but it holds relevance outside of class as well. We don't often have to wrestle with thinking about inter-religious dialogue, and the book review provided a way to do that.
 - I appreciated her writing names and dates up on the board- for a visual learner like me, that really helped me learn! I also thought she did a good job of presenting the material clearly and being honest about areas she didn't know extensive facts about. I particularly loved that when we talked about the crusades, we spent some time in silence and reading a psalm together. I'm not a huge fan of church history, but I appreciated Dr. Gibson and this class and definitely feel as if I learned something. The Ferguson book was not my favorite, but I liked reading the primary sources and feel as if that exposure was one of the most beneficial part of the class for me.
 - I have yet to have a professor that is as visibly excited about their topic or field of study as Dr. Gibson. That in itself acted as an important aspect and place of encouragement throughout this semester. I most appreciated the particular lectures where she

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provided modern examples as well as explaining in depth the relationships between history and modern day. A majority of us in this class will be working with congregations someday, so it is helpful to be given appropriate and relevant examples.

- One thing that I appreciated was trip field to a local Anglican church in Abilene. The trip helped to have a better understanding of the topics we were discussing.
- Dr. Gibson is a very skillful lecturer. She seemed somewhat nervous early on, but really found her stride and she made the material fascinating. The books she chose to read were good and applicable to the course, books that I will remember and utilize in the future. I liked that they made great use of primary source material, but also had a strong emphasis on application.
- I enjoyed the integration essays, which allowed me to contextualize my learning instead of only existing conceptually. She had a deep knowledge based that she shared with us allowing us to see how the church developed and its struggles that we take for granted.
- The books "Loving the Poor" and "Church in the Shadow of the Mosque" were especially beneficial in my learning about these subjects. Also, the handouts were helpful, especially the one comparing the Creeds. I appreciated the lecture style--focusing on specific people and movements; also the theological discussions were particularly helpful. I'd like to delve more into church history in the future. Also, the prayer time we had at the beginning of one class was pertinently beautiful.

C

- The professor sent a lot of materials which are very good sources of reference for answering questions. Apart from the she was also patient and helpful. She provided much guidance throughout the course.
- The choice of reading materials and the course content were great. Questions for discussions were clear and demanded originality in thought based on the reference materials.
- I appreciated the planning of the course. Each module made sense and the readings fit well together. The essay questions were chosen carefully and we easy to relate with one another. I enjoyed the podcasts even though there were not many of them.
- The Professor did his best to help me especially when I did not have the Griffith book he found a way for me to have materials to read. It was rather unfortunate that I could not make enough time to do the course the way I wanted due to the constraints of time.
- Having multiple papers due with solid feed back on them was helpful in allowing me to know which direction to take my study and writing for this course. Feed back is so important and she is only one of two professors I have taken so far that have given me feed back on a regular basis.
- Dr. Gibson always gave good feedback to essays and typically graded things quickly so that we could know what areas we needed to work on.

D

- Grading and feedback on the work was really good and timely.
- I really appreciated the integration topic projects. They gave opportunity (with pretty creative variety) for the material we were covering to be brought into contemporary ministry impact.
- The course was well developed and organized prior to course start. Reading selections were challenging but relative. Discussion questions were thought-provoking and helped shape the reading material into an organized thought. Most organized course I've taken so far in the program.
- professor Gobson was very good in making sure that requirements are made clear, and she was prompt in responding to any questions.
- Professor Gibson challenged us. After reading the material, she prepared questions that required us to dig deeper into the subject matter, and thus we steered into a richer understanding than just the superficial meaning of the words. Professor Gibson then placed us into groups so that we could respect each others ideas as we worked together.
- sometimes utilized different media such as videos and audio files (such as NT Wright lecture)
- She fixed problems when they occurred in the modules. She communicated well on assignments and when problems were fixed.
- The integration projects were relevant. The professor did a great job of providing research materials to students.
- I liked that the professor was very descriptive and detailed in what was expected of the students from the very beginning. I also liked that there was a rhythm/structure from week to week.

What specific recommendations do you have for the improvement of this course? Name particular actions that the professor could do to improve learning in the classroom. Name concrete ways the course could better meet student learning outcomes. -

A

- Supplement Healey Grammar with Coakley Grammar (I was willing to pay for both and it helped).
- Be more strict on those who do not finish work for class. In a language course, waiting on those who did not do the homework as they struggle through the translation in class is a waste of everyone's time.
- Continue to give your own concise summaries of the various aspects of grammar in addition to what was found in Healey.

B

- I'd appreciate more theological reflection and discussion about the topics, especially the controversial ones (Crusades, mendicant orders, Muslim-Christian relations, international missions, etc.). It is a lot of information to fit into one class, and it takes time to digest the meaning of it all for our current theological and spiritual contexts. Maybe a follow-up class would be in order for the hashing out of these issues. Maybe there's already one available that I'm unaware of! Anyway, I tend to desire to see more spirituality incorporated into the theological academic scene.
- Perhaps more multimedia. There is a very large amount of images and maps that could be used in lectures on the projector that would greatly benefit lectures. History is difficult to teach without lecture, so making the lectures more engaging would be helpful. I would simply keep a browser tab open and search Wikipedia for each historical figure or maps and that helped me engage much more. I think that would be a great compliment to Dr. Bryant-Gibson's presentation. She was new and in a rush getting here to begin this semester so I imagine she already has plans for changes in the coming semesters.
- While I liked the books, I didn't really feel that the paper we had to do fit the book well. Griffith didn't seem to have a strong argument permeating the book, so it was very hard to review. I also think that the course seemed a bit loaded towards the end. I think she is aware of that and just needs some practice on pacing the course well. Overall, I really enjoyed the course and Dr. Gibson as a teacher. Would definitely recommend her to other students.
- I think Dr. Gibson did a great job.
- A few more handouts on various primary sources would have been nice.
- We stopped reflection on the primary source readings during class about midway through the semester. I would have liked to continue to discuss the readings with other students in a round table discussion.
- I would suggest more critical group discussions, such as the one regarding Rhee's book. Perhaps an emphasis on class discussion of the primary sources read in preparation for each class would be helpful.
- More handouts that organized the material covered in class would be extremely helpful. Too often I felt like we were jumping around and I could not organize it as we were going through class.
- I think there should be more time to discuss the primary sources/documents that were assigned reading. Lecture is good, but there should be more time for discussion as well.
- Have reviews with more detailed. Maybe one more paper and no final exam.
- Tangible items to hold (maps, documents, etc.) have helped me learn in the past. Visual presentations of movements over time and expansions of nations/empires that we studied would help. We often mention people groups and places, but I don't know where those people are, how big the nations got, etc. I wish I could have seen images alongside what we studied.

C

- I had difficulty with the group project. I would recommend discontinuing the collaborative proposal all together. If that is not an option, be sure to group people up who live in the same or similar time zones. If someone would have to be up in the middle of the night in order for the group to have conversations, then they should not be in a group together.
- Don't do group projects or at least do not make them such a large portion of our grade. At this level and in my practical ministry life group projects in academia prove useless, not needed, and not representative of actual real life ministry work. If you need further insight ask some of the distance students how well this does not work.
- I think the time allotted for the course is too short giving the bulk of materials that one has to read. Aside of that some of us on the programme are workers so it is really difficult to make enough time.
- The professor did not interact with the course in any way. To my knowledge, she never interacted in the discussion boards nor did she make any positive or negative comment on any of my essays. For all I know, my work was being graded by an assistant and not the professor. I was looking forward to interacting with the professor but had no such interaction. I feel the course could be humanized by creating meaningful teacher-student interaction. Many of my fellow students have not had previous theological training and it is obvious in the forums. It would have been nice to have the expert opinion of the professor. The course was tedious and mechanical - no lively discussions were had, possibly from a lack of teacher involvement.
- This course is best for full time students to enable them have enough time to read the materials. The reference materials are rich

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and great to read but the allocated period for each week's bulk of materials are woefully inadequate.

- The professor was excellent but the duration for the course is so short. For some of us Africans who are full time workers had difficulty doing the course . I suggest a little time be added to the duration for the whole course.

D

- N/A
- Maybe subtract some of the reading. Over all, it was great.
- Too much reading- I love to read but 7 weeks course must cut back somewhere in order to adequately cover the material. Timing of assignments due on Wednesday nights created problems with ministry. One day later would have been much more accessible. Different due dates on the same project created problems with scheduling in real world student situations. The professor could be more proactive in recognizing the needs of an online student and not a traditional one. Professor could improve communication of expectations and clarifications. There were several times students didn't know what to do and she often failed to clarify adequately.
- I can't really think of any way to improve the course.
- I hesitate to be too harsh, but I feel the instruction for this class was very inadequate. The instructor had almost no interaction with students other than reminders of deadlines. Assignments were graded but no feedback was given. I believe there was also a component of difficulty that comes from the change to 7 week courses. The amount of reading and the number of assignments was quite a heavy load and all the more for the instructor who had to review and grade all of the assignments. I feel that the two courses I have had in this 7 week format have devolved to plowing through material rather than the exposure, processing and formation I have come to expect from courses with the GST.
- The content delivery coming from so many different sources over the internet and containing the multiple links was difficult to navigate and synthesize the information from. I found, for me, following the links and reading from the multiple sources in such a compressed amount of time was extremely tiring and by the time I needed to write my brain was very tired. I would recommend having some lectures posted that help with guiding the reading a little bit, since this class is only 7 weeks and there is a lot of material to cover.