

General Education and the Department of Bible, Missions, & Ministry ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Mission Statement: The mission of the Department of Bible, Missions, and Ministry (DBMM) is twofold: 1) to equip all departmental majors with a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills, and experiences in preparation for further study or for engagement in ministry; and 2) to provide all ACU students with biblical and spiritual resources with which they may discern their Christian calling and vocation in order to live as committed disciples.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for DBMM majors:

Majors will demonstrate:

- 1) Practices of personal and communal spiritual formation.
- 2) Knowledge of the broad scope of the Christian tradition.
- 3) Facility in biblical interpretation.
- 4) Critical analysis of cultural contexts.
- 5) Integration of their learning into the reflective practice of ministry.

Department contributions to General Education at ACU:

Currently, all four-year students at ACU enroll in fourteen hours of general core curriculum courses offered through the DBMM. These courses include BIBL 101, 102¹, 211, an advanced course selected in designated areas within the curriculum, and a summative course on mission and vocation.

These courses are designed to promote a Christian worldview, to integrate faith and learning, to develop theological reflection, and to bring about spiritual formation of students in the image of Christ. As stated in the current university catalogue, "The study of the Bible as God's Word is at the heart of the curriculum of ACU and is the reason for the existence of the university."

The department provides leadership and contributes resources to shape effective servant leaders in the church, our society, and in our world.

Additionally, the DBMM contributes at least 17 (16 hours for two Core hires and 1 hour for the reduction of Gen Ed Bible from 15 to 14 hours) teaching hours to the integrative Core courses each academic year.

¹ A course, *Message of the New Testament*, for transfer students combining BIBL 101 and 102 into one semester is currently under construction and will be brought to the UGEC in the next few months for approval.

Proposed SLOs for Gen Ed students:

All ACU will students will:

- 1) Understand the basic message of the biblical text, both Old and New Testaments.
- 2) Gain experience in interpreting and applying the Bible from historical, literary, and theological perspectives.
- 3) Acquire ministry skills and/or knowledge of various global and cultural contexts that encompass and challenge the Christian tradition.
- 4) Integrate their learning into a sense of mission within their chosen vocation.

Criteria for Gen Ed Bible elective:

Courses offered in this category will be included in the menu based on any of the following criteria:

- 1) Examine *biblical content* either not covered in the required foundational courses or go into greater detail on a particular topic of interest to students.
- 2) Expand specialized *ministry knowledge and skills* that will enhance a student's service or leadership in the world.
- 3) Explore *topics in religious studies* that deepen a student's understanding of major developments in Christian History and Theology, as well as other World Religions and Philosophy.

Other important considerations:

All courses that fulfill the fourth Bible elective requirement for general education at ACU must have a BIBL, BGRK, BHEB, BIBM, BMIS, BIBD,² or BIBH designation and will be taught by an appropriately credentialed faculty member. To be qualified to teach courses in the DBMM, faculty minimally must have a Master's degree with at least 18 graduate hours in the subject they are teaching.³

The majority of faculty who teach in the DBMM, however, have a terminal degree in hand or are very close to completing their doctoral studies from a reputable college or university. Currently faculty in the DBMM hold terminal degrees in Biblical Text, Biblical Languages, Ministry, Missions, Church History, and Theology.

² In the current curriculum revision within the DBMM, the faculty voted to change the BIBD (Doctrine) designation to BIBT (Theology) and BIBP (Philosophy) in order to better reflect the content of each course. These changes will be put before the academic councils this fall.

³ Or through alternative certification approved by the Dean and Provost (e.g. advanced publication or similar alternative qualifications).

Furthermore, courses in this menu of electives must contain at least 70% of the content beyond what students covered in their three foundational courses and the fifth Bible requirement.

Courses may be cross-listed with other various disciplines as long as the above criteria are met. A current example of this arrangement is BIBM 480, *Arts and Culture: A Christian Aesthetic* (same as THEA 480). Additionally a course may be developed specifically for the Bible elective for another discipline. A current example of it is BIBD 352, *Biomedical Ethics*.

Submitted by:

Dr. Jeanene Reese
Associate Professor and Associate Chair
Dept. of Bible, Missions, and Ministry
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Adopted by:

DBMM Faculty
September 28, 2011

Approved by:

Dr. Rodney Ashlock
Chair, Department of Bible, Missions, & Ministry
September 28, 2011

Dr. Christopher Hutson
Associate Dean, College of Biblical Studies
Chair of the CBS College Academic Council
September 29, 2011

University Education Council⁴
_____, 2011

⁴ Please note: Adoption of this criteria will overturn a prior decision made by the UGEC to allow MUSM 431 to count as the upper level Bible requirement for Music majors. Our research shows that this exception goes at least back to 2002 – 2003. The former description of the course is listed first below and the revised one is second:

MUSM 431 Music History I. *Style and form with representative literature in the development of music from its beginning through the Baroque Period.* A writing-intensive course. Prerequisite: MUSM132

MUSM 431 Music History I: Antiquity to 1750 (3-0-3), fall. *A survey of the development of musical genres, styles, and compositional practices from Antiquity to 1750. Attention will be given to parallel developments in church history and liturgy as they relate to music.* A writing-intensive course. Prerequisites: MUSM 131 and 132.