



## BIBLE 211 - Course Syllabus

**Course Title:** *Translations of the Bible (1 credit)*

**Course Description:** This is a 7 week course that explores translations of the Bible in three categories: historical translations, present-day translations particularly in English, and future translations that are in progress or not yet underway. We will examine how we came to have the English Bible by way of God's superintending work of preservation of the Hebrew and Greek text, the translation of those texts, and early English translations. We will study the variety of modern English Bibles and learn about various translation philosophies. We will also examine modern translation work as a part of carrying out the Great Commission to provide the Bible to people groups that as yet have no portion of Scripture in their mother tongue, including the role of artificial intelligence technology in translation and a basic introduction to Scripture engagement. The course is structured with weekly lectures and quizzes, readings and in-class discussion, a project, and a final exam.

**Prerequisites:** None

### Instructors

- Professor: Pastor Matt Postiff, Ph.D., Th.M.
  - Email (preferred method of communication): [pastor@fbcaa.org](mailto:pastor@fbcaa.org)
  - Phone (for urgent matters): 734-417-0023

### Required Course Materials

- Fee, Gordon D. and Strauss, Mark L. [\*How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions\*](#), Zondervan: 2007.

### Supplemental Texts for Further Reading

- Brunn, Dave. [\*One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?\*](#) IVP Academic, 2013.

**Course Web Page:** <https://anchorbiblecollege.org/bible-211-winter-26/>

### Class Time

Class will meet once weekly **on Thursdays from 5pm-7pm from January 8 to February 19**. Class will take place in Room 105 at Hope Community Church, located at 2100 Ellsworth Rd. Ypsilanti, MI, 48197. Class time will be broken down into the following general schedule:

- Weekly Quiz (5:05 – 5:20)
- Review of reading and homework (5:20 – 5:45)
- Lecture (5:45 – 6:00)
- Break (6:00 – 6:10)
- Lecture (6:10 – 7:00)

In addition to the two hour class time, you can expect a couple hours of homework per week, including reading, studying for the next quiz, some simple homework, and some time working on the final project.

## Course Work

1. Weekly lectures
2. Class discussion
3. Assigned reading in the textbook.
4. Assigned homework about 30 mins weekly of various readings/writings.
5. Weekly quizzes - study about 30 mins.
6. Final exam.
7. Project completed in weekly segments.

## Course Objectives

In this course the student will:

1. Better understand how we got our modern English versions of the Bible, how the canon was formed, including how differences in manuscripts are handled, the meaning of text critical notes in a reference or study Bible, and where verse and chapter divisions came from.
2. Understand important issues involved in selecting an English translation of the Bible.
3. Become familiar with some Bible translation terminology.
4. Learn about the worldwide need for Bible translation and some ways that need is being met today, including with modern technology.
5. The use of word study and lexical tools.

## Assignments

- **Attendance and Participation** – Students are expected to participate in class discussion which will be based on assigned readings and written homework assignments.
- **Reading** – We will be reading one book in this half-semester course. The book has 5 parts, and we will read one part (two to three chapters) before each week's class.
- **Quizzes** - There will be weekly quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes will generally take place at the beginning of class time each week and will cover the previous week's material including reading and lecture. The quiz format will include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer-style questions. The purpose of these quizzes is to provide the students with regular graded feedback on their understanding of the course material and to prepare them for the exams. The quizzes also ensure a student's regular and punctual attendance for the weekly class time. In case of absence,

students are to arrange with the instructor to receive a copy of the quiz electronically, fill it out, and return it either electronically or at the start of the next class period. Quizzes are CLOSED BOOK. Sometimes they will be open Bible.

- **Homework** - There will be a number of written or participatory homework assignments based on the week's lessons. Submission of the homework will generally be done in class, on paper or via Canvas. Typed documents may be uploaded directly. Documents can be scanned and submitted as a complete .pdf document. Homework is graded for effort, accuracy and completeness.
- **Tests** – There is one final exam on the last day of class. Tests are CLOSED BOOK.

## Canvas

Canvas is an online course management system for college courses. It will be used in this course for online submission of homework and for posting grades, announcements, and access to relevant course documents. Further details on how to set up a Canvas account and access this course can be found in the appendix to this document. **Please make sure you accept the course invitation as soon as possible!**

## Assessment

Assignments will have the following grade weights:

Assignment	Grade Weight	Notes
Attendance and Participation	10%	Attendance and instructor evaluation of discussions
Reading	15%	Weekly reading in Fee & Strauss (Yes/No/½)
Quizzes	20%	Weekly quizzes over the previous reading and lecture
Homework	25%	Reading, Analysis, and Final Project assignments
One Test	20%	Each test is weighted equally in the final grade.
Final Project Presentation	10%	

We will use the following thresholds to convert raw scores in the course into letter grades:

A+: >= 98%	B+: >= 88%	C+: >= 78%	D+: >= 68%	F: < 60%
A: >= 92%	B: >= 82%	C: >= 72%	D: >= 62%	
A-: >= 90%	B-: >= 80%	C-: >= 70%	D-: >= 60%	

Depending on the distribution of raw scores at the end of the semester, these thresholds may change; however the final thresholds will be no stricter than the current thresholds. For

example, if you receive a raw score of 85% in the course, you will be guaranteed a letter grade of at least B; however it may happen that you receive a higher letter grade depending on the overall distribution of raw scores.

### Class Schedule

Week	Topics Today	Reading Due Today	Quizzes/ Tests Today	Homework Assignment Due Today
1 1/8	How the Bible came to us	There will be weekly reading in this course.	None	Be ready to discuss what you hope to learn in this class.
2 1/15	Translation philosophy, how to select an English Bible.	Fee & Strauss, Part 1	Quiz 1	Read James in a formal equivalent translation. <sup>α</sup> <b>Have your final project person selected.</b>
3 1/22	Scripture use and engagement. Tools for word study, how to understand the notes in a reference or study Bible.	Fee & Strauss, Part 2	Quiz 2	Read James in a functional equivalent translation. <sup>α</sup> <b>List at least 5 resources you have found about your final project person. At least 2 must be in print, not online.</b>
4 1/29	Modern Bible preservation and translation as part of the Great Commission. Resources.	Fee & Strauss, Part 3	Quiz 3	Read James in a paraphrase-type of translation. <sup>α</sup> <b>Take notes from your resources—unstructured, lots of information.</b>
5 2/5	AI in Bible translation	Fee & Strauss, Part 4	Quiz 4	Analyze a passage in several translations. <sup>β</sup> <b>Organize your notes and write an outline for your final project.</b>
6 2/12	Space for overflow, other topics as needed.	Fee & Strauss, Part 5	Quiz 5	Analyze another passage in several translations. <sup>β</sup> <b>Write a first draft of your final project and get feedback from the instructor.</b>
7 2/19		No reading due today.	Final Exam and <b>Final Project</b>	Study for final exam <b>Polish the draft of your final project.</b> <sup>Ω</sup>

α **Reading in James:** Submit a one-paragraph reflection, maybe highlighting one or multiple verses that you noted as standing out or that sounded different from when you have read it before.

β **Analyze a passage:** Follow the pattern in my sample based on John 5:3-4. Select a passage from the following list, or another approved by the instructor, and explain why the text is translated differently in the various translations. Do you prefer one over the other? Use one of the following passages Mal 2:16, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 6:13, Acts 8:37, 1 John 5:7-8, Romans 16:7, Matthew 17:21.

Ω **Final project:** I would like you to give the class a 10-15 minute presentation on the story of a person involved in Bible translation, with particular attention paid to their translation work, and if applicable, persecution for that work. Each student will take a different person. Examples: John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, John Rogers, John Huss, Martin Luther, Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, Desiderius Erasmus, St. Jerome (Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus). Consult with the instructor if you want to present on another person not on this list.

## Late Policy

Assignments are expected to be submitted on the due date. If there are extraordinary circumstances outside of the student's control, they may request an extension from the teaching staff.

Additionally, it is often the case that due to any number of other circumstances, a student finds that they are unable to adequately complete a given assignment. In such cases, the student is welcome to submit the assignment after the due date, up to the end of the semester; however, a late penalty will be given for such a late assignment. The standard late penalty is a 20% flat reduction in grade for the given assignment. This late penalty is meant to penalize late submissions and encourage timeliness, while still allowing the student to still finish the given assignment to the best of their ability even if they are unable to complete the assignment for some time due to any extended circumstances.

This late policy is subject to instructor discretion. The 20% late penalty policy is intended to allow for unique or difficult but not extraordinary circumstances. Any student who abuses this policy, per the instructors discretion, is liable to have this policy revoked and the grade revert to either a zero or that based on any submission prior to the due date.

## Appendix: How to set up your Canvas Account

This course will use the free version of Canvas. This means that you will be able to set up a Canvas account with your regular email and will be able to access the course on Canvas with a simple course invitation sent to your email. Please perform the following steps to setup your Canvas account:

- Check your email for a course invitation to Canvas.
- Click the "Get Started" button, which should redirect you to a Canvas page.
- Accept the course invitation. Upon accepting, it should redirect you to a page that will allow you to either set up a new Canvas account or link a current Canvas account.

- If you do not already have a free Canvas account, proceed to create a new account. To create a new account, it will set your login to be your email, you simply need to set your password and accurate time zone.

Your new account should be all set. To log in to Canvas in the future, go to the following URL:

<https://canvas.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Use your email and password to log in. Then click on your BIBLE 121 course.

To use the mobile Canvas app, you'll want to download the Canvas app. Upon downloading and opening the app for the first time, it will prompt you to "Find my School." Select this option and put in "Free Canvas Accounts." Select this option and proceed to log in with your email and password associated with your free Canvas account.

### **Appendix: How to submit homework on Canvas**

From the course's Canvas home page, navigate to the assignments tab. Select the homework assignment from the list of assignments. Follow the instructions for the different cases of typed and handwritten submissions.

*For typed documents:*

- Click "Start Assignment" ("Submit Assignment" in the mobile app)
- Click "Upload File" ("Files" in the mobile app)
- Click "Choose File" (simply select the file in the mobile app)
- Navigate to the proper file and select it
- You may add any number of files by selecting "Add Another File"

*For handwritten documents:*

You may use a scanner, scanner app, or simply take photos of your work and submit the files by following the same steps outlined for typed documents. The best option may be to use the Canvas mobile app to submit the assignment and use the scanner feature as an option after selecting "Submit Assignment."

Please note, you may submit as many times as you would like prior to the assignment deadline. The most recent submission will count as your graded submission.

### **Appendix: Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to hold themselves to a Christian standard of ethics in all matters. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from any forms of plagiarism, cheating, sharing or acquiring any materials that would give a student an unfair advantage, or any dishonest representation of one's work. Below is outlines the consequences for an infringement of academic integrity for a given assignment:

- First offense – A grade of zero is given for the assignment; the professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file.
- Second offense – A grade of F is assigned for the course; the professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file. The Dean of Students and/or Registrar will notify faculty of students who incur a second offense in this area.

- Third offense – The professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student’s file and the student may be suspended or dismissed from this institution.

### **Appendix: Policy on Use of Generative Language Models for Written Assignments**

The use of generative language models, such as ChatGPT, is not strictly prohibited and in some cases is very much encouraged as a research and brainstorming tool. However, all written assignments submitted as your own work should reflect your own personal writing. This prohibits copy and paste use of such tools, however, you may feel free to quote such tools provided that you make clear it is a quotation.

In general, you should treat generative language models as equivalent to speaking to another person. You may gain insight from them and be able to improve your value and productivity, but you should not misrepresent someone else’s work as your own. These tools may also be treated somewhat like calculators in a math class. You may use them when appropriate and assignments may even assume their use in some ways, but all submitted work must be your own unless specified otherwise.