

Portfolio Piece Four: The Bible Today

Choose a current event, cultural artifact, political discourse, or other aspect of contemporary culture that makes specific reference to the Hebrew Bible (in whole or part), which you have encountered in the world outside the context of this class. It could be the **representation of an actual Biblical text** (e.g., the sculpture of the Ten Commandments outside the Arkansas State Capitol); the **invocation of Biblical texts** in a discussion of contemporary events (e.g., references to the laws of Exodus or Leviticus in arguments about abortion legislation); or a **retelling of a Biblical story** by a contemporary artist or author (e.g., Darren Aronofsky's 2014 film Noah). If you have an idea that you're not sure whether it fits into this assignment frame, please reach out and check with me!

Think critically about your chosen topic, research the event or object in question, and review the specific relevant Biblical passage(s). Then, write a 2-3 page reflection, based on the following prompts:

- What aspects of the Hebrew Bible are being **highlighted** here? Why do you think these elements are important for the story being told? What connections can you make between this portrayal and the Biblical texts we've encountered in class?
- What aspects of the Hebrew Bible are **absent** here? Are there inaccuracies or anachronisms in its presentation? Do you think this portrayal is conscious or unconscious of its departures?
- What do these images, motifs, elisions, absences, or retellings tell us regarding **contemporary ideas about the Hebrew Bible**? How are they shaped by the affiliations, ideological positions, and audiences of their creators?
- How might you as a (budding) Biblical scholar **analyze** the invocation of the Hebrew Bible in this context? What methodologies or reading approaches, if any, does it display? Do you find it compelling, useful, dangerous, and/or misleading?

Your argument should be clearly reasoned, well written, and supported by specific evidence, in the form of references to and/or quotations from your chosen topic of analysis. Published media should be cited in footnotes and a bibliography; please use the Chicago Manual of Style citation format:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

Your essay should be 2 to 3 double-spaced pages long (approximately 650-850 words — no more than 1000 words).