



VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Bad Girls of the Bible Online Course

Are you curious about how to design and facilitate an entirely online course? This guide offers a glimpse of how to structure an online class in a theological context. The professor and a digital coach began with an existing course- Bad Girls of the Bible, based on the genealogy in Matthew 1- and successfully adapted it into an engaging and informative online course.

OTS 658 as an online course highlights the [Digital Literacies](#) necessary for church leadership. Learners hone the seven literacies as they interact with the material and one another: navigating hybrid and digital cultures, convening hybrid and digital community, maintaining a posture of experimentation, cultivating a spiritually wise digital habitus, presenting authentically and pastorally online, connecting media theory and theological reflection, and creating and curating faith-based media artifacts. Church leaders, lay and ordained, must navigate the digital environment in the twenty-first century.

Here is a brief look at how the course fosters these four of these literacies in particular:

- Convening Hybrid and Digital Community
 - Learners experience small-group online discussions of various forms. They learn the benefit of breaking a large online cohort into smaller discussion-sized groups while also developing a better sense of how to interact with peers online.
- Maintaining a Posture of Experimentation
 - Experimentation is foundational to this course, as it uses a dialogic lens to explore the question of women in the bible. Specific assignments ask learners to try new tasks with an eye towards process rather than perfection. Learners create videos of themselves trying on various roles in the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. They create memes to express how women are portrayed in the Exodus story. These assignments demand experimentation, and they also demonstrate how playful creativity interacts with our most foundational stories, connecting them to the current culture in new and profound ways.
- Presenting Authentically and Pastorally Online
 - The *product* for several assignments in the course is a blog written for a church audience, a genre which did not exist two decades ago and which now keeps congregations informed and in conversation with how faith and the world interact. Presenting authentically online while also being pastoral is a learned skill, related to *netiquette* but also intricately tied to Christian notions of koinonia and the kingdom. How can a church leader give pastoral voice to a prophetic message? How does a church leader write about charged issues from a place of scriptural authority without alienating those parishioners who disagree?
- Creating and Curating Faith-Based Media Artifacts



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- Church leaders today may use digital sources and resources to create and curate artifacts like videos, toolkits, art, and lessons for their church. This course allows learners to practice creating artifacts (memes, personal videos, digital storytelling videos) and also asks them to experiment with curation (art assignment). Moreover, the instructor models both curation and creation in the set-up of the course. Each weekly module both begins and ends with brief, unadorned personal videos which introduce themes and create a real sense of community in an online environment. The instructor also curates resources for students to use, modelling that it is unnecessary to create everything from scratch.

Course Outline

The semester-long course is divided into weekly modules, with an introductory video, readings, and assignments due. Notice the weekly modules dates, which are fixed over time. This creates a predictable rhythm for learners and predictable grading for the instructor.

September 2017 Bad Girls of The Bible						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Student Assignment Due					1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6	7	8 Welcome/Intro Week Launch - Noon	9
10	11	12 Due: Welcome and Introduction to each other	13 Due: Video or audio response on colleagues' intro	14	15 Eve Week Launch - Noon	16
17	18	19 Due: Eve Jigsaw exercise	20 Due: Eve Jigsaw exercise follow-up	21	22 Sarah + Hagar Week Launch - Noon	23
24	25	26 Due: One story, multiple perspectives (Genesis 16)	27 Due: Response to 2 colleagues' videos	28	29 Rebekah, Leah, Tamar Week Launch - Noon	30



OTS658: BAD GIRLS OF THE BIBLE
Fall 2017

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO WORK FLOW

(AKA HOW TO FIGURE OUT THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE)

FRIDAY: NEW CONTENT BEGINS

Dr. Fentress-Williams' video will share a lecture and questions to consider on the weekly theme. Her video reflects the upcoming week and is a short lecture.

TUESDAY: WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE

Turn in your first assignment. Directions will be provided every week. Make sure you know where to post! (due by 11:55pm)



WEDNESDAY: WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE

Most weeks there will be a short follow-up assignment that lets you put the context and content in the different light. Sometimes it includes commenting on colleague's work. (due by 11:55pm)

THURSDAY: FEEDBACK AND OBSERVATIONS VIDEO

Dr. F-W will reflect on the week's assignments. This informal video will provide important commentary on how the class interpreted the assignments and content. Make sure to watch!

DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECT

At some points during the semester, you'll be submitting assignments for your end-of-class project.



KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

The workflow of this class might be different than what you're used to. Give it a few weeks and we'll get used to it together!

Friday: New Content Begins

When content begins on Friday, students have access to all readings and assignments for the week as well as a brief module introduction, created by the instructor. [Here is an example of one such introductory video.](#)

Tuesday and Wednesday: Weekly Assignments Due

The majority of assignments are turned in via discussion. Most weeks, the class is divided into smaller groups to allow for more personal engagement. These groups change from week to week. The first assignment, due Tuesday, takes various forms and requires learners to interact with the weekly content in analytic and/or creative ways. The second assignment, due Wednesday, is a shorter follow-up assignment in the form of reply or synthesis. Sometimes it requires responding to a peer's work.

Thursday: Feedback and Observation Video

On Thursdays the instructor posts a follow-up and feedback video with observations on student learning. [Here is an example of a Feedback Video.](#)