

## **Georgia Performance Standards for Literature and History of the Old Testament Era**

Course Name: Literature and History of the Old Testament Era  
Course Credit: Elective – ½ Carnegie Unit credit  
Course Number: 23.02400 e (ELA Classics and Comparative Literature)  
Course Description:

The purpose of the course shall be to accommodate the rights and desires of those teachers and students who wish to teach and study the Old Testament and to familiarize students with the contents of the Old Testament, the history recorded by the Old Testament, the literary style and structure of the Old Testament, the customs and cultures of the peoples and societies recorded in the Old Testament and the influence of the Old Testament upon law, history, government, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture. Topics may include historical background and events of the period; the history of the Kingdom of Israel; the poetry of the Old Testament; the influence of Old Testament history and literature on subsequent art, music, literature, law, and events, including recent and current events in the Middle East.

### Performance Standards:

B1. The student demonstrates an understanding of the major narratives, characters, stories and poetry contained in the Bible and how they are used in literature, art and music.

B1a. Demonstrates comprehension of the variety of literary forms in the biblical text

B1b. Identifies, analyzes and applies knowledge of structures, symbolism, motifs, and the use of language (e.g. diction, imagery, figurative language, alliteration) in biblical text

B1c. Recognizes and traces the development of various translations of biblical text

B1d. Understands and explains the influence of the Bible in classic and contemporary art, music and literature, including poetry, drama, and prose

B2. The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning regarding the Bible.

The student:

B2a. Reflects on the significance of translations on biblical text

B2b. Examines, compares and contrasts various translations

B2c. Demonstrates understanding of biblical narratives and applies them in a variety of modes of discourse

B3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the Bible's impact on the history, religion, government and law of various cultures

B3a. Explains how the Bible came to be, including different Bibles, the methods and tools of writing at the times the Old and New Testament were written, the means by which they were preserved, the languages in which they were written and translated, and the historical and cultural events which led to the translation of the Bible into the English language

B3b. Investigates and explains the biblical roots and influences on contemporary culture, to include history, government, law, customs, morals, and values

**Textbook:**

The book or collection of books commonly known as the Old Testament shall be the basic text for Literature and History of the Old Testament Era. The book or collection of books commonly known as the New Testament shall be the basic text for Literature and History of the New Testament Era. The local board of education may determine which version of the Old or New Testament shall be used as the main text or, if the local board of education does not do so, that determination may be made by the teacher of the course. No student shall be required to use one version as the sole text of the Old or New Testament. If a student desires to use as the basic text a different version of the Old or New Testament from that chosen by the local board of education or teacher, he or she shall be permitted to do so. (Ga Code 20-2-148 Section 3)

**Reading Materials:**

Students may be assigned a range of reading materials for the courses, including selections from secular, historical and cultural works and selections from other religious and cultural traditions. These supplemental instructional materials are solely for the purposes of commentary or expansion of discussion and do not replace the Bible as the text.

**Lesson Plans:**

Because of the availability of a variety of versions of the Bible and a wide range of supplemental reading materials, the State Board of Education recommends that local school districts review the numerous lesson plans which are commercially available to determine which, if any, will best meet their needs.

**Suggested Reading for Teachers/Administrators:**

Ga Code 20-2-148.

(a) All public schools with grade nine or above may make available to eligible students in grades nine through 12 an elective course in the History and Literature of the Old Testament Era and an elective course in the History and Literature of the New Testament Era. The purpose of such courses shall be to accommodate the rights and desires of those teachers and students who wish to teach and study the Old and New Testaments and to familiarize students with the contents of the Old and New Testaments, the history recorded by the Old and New Testaments, the literary style and structure of the Old and New Testaments, the customs and cultures of the peoples and societies recorded in the Old and New Testaments, and the influence of the Old and New Testaments upon law, history, government, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture.

(b)(1) No later than February 1, 2007, the State Board of Education shall adopt a curriculum for each course, including objectives, reading materials, and lesson plans, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of this subsection.

(2) The book or collection of books commonly known as the Old Testament shall be the basic text for the course in the History and Literature of the Old Testament Era, and the book or collection of books commonly known as the New Testament shall be the basic text for the course in the History and Literature of the New Testament Era. In addition, students may be assigned a range of reading materials for the courses, including selections from secular historical and cultural works and selections from other religious and cultural traditions. The courses shall familiarize students with the customs and cultures of the times and places referred to in the Old

and New Testaments. The courses shall familiarize the students with the methods and tools of writing at the times the Old and New Testament books were written, the means by which they were preserved, the languages in which they were written and into which they were translated, and the historical and cultural events which led to the translation of the Old and New Testaments into the English language. The local board of education may recommend which version of the Old or New Testament may be used in the course; provided, however, that the teacher of the course shall not be required to adopt that recommendation but may use the recommended version or another version. No student shall be required to use one version as the sole text of the Old or New Testament. If a student desires to use as the basic text a different version of the Old or New Testament from that chosen by the local board of education or teacher, he or she shall be permitted to do so.

(3) The courses provided for in this Code section shall:

(A) Be taught in an objective and non-devotional manner with no attempt made to indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of the biblical materials or texts from other religious or cultural traditions;

(B) Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian interpretation of the Bible or of texts from other religious or cultural traditions; and

(C) Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of religious beliefs.

(c) The provisions of this chapter relating to personnel employed by local units of administration, including without limitation certification requirements, employment, and supervision, shall apply to persons who teach the courses provided for in this Code section. In addition, no person shall be assigned to teach such courses based in whole or in part on any religious test, profession of faith or lack thereof, prior or present religious affiliation or lack of affiliation, or criteria involving particular beliefs or lack thereof about the Bible. Except for these requirements, the qualifications and training of teachers shall be determined by the local boards of education.

(d) On and after July 1, 2007, for the purpose of earning Carnegie unit curriculum credits at the high school level, satisfactory completion of the course in the History and Literature of the Old Testament Era shall be accepted by the State Board of Education for one-half unit of elective credit, and satisfactory completion of the course in the History and Literature of the New Testament Era shall be accepted by the State Board of Education for one-half unit of elective credit; provided, however, that such courses are taught in strict compliance with the requirements of this Code section.

(e) A local board of education may make such arrangements for monitoring the content and teaching of the course in the History and Literature of the Old Testament Era and the course in the History and Literature of the New Testament Era as it deems appropriate.

(f) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to limit the authority of a local board of education to offer courses regarding the Old Testament or the New Testament that are not in compliance with this Code section; provided, however, that no state funds distributed pursuant to this article shall be expended in connection with such a course that does not meet the requirements of this Code section.

(g) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to prohibit local boards of education from offering elective courses based upon the books of other religions or societies. In determining whether to offer such courses, the local board may consider various factors including, but not limited to, student and parent demand for such courses and the impact such books have had upon history and culture.