

Centre for the Study of the Bible

The Centre for the Study of the Bible at Oriel College, Oxford, provides a forum for risk-taking projects that integrate scriptural traditions—Jewish, Christian and Islamic—into the many disciplines of the Humanities. Our activities are devoted to building and developing deeper and more intricate understandings of biblical traditions that cut across disciplinary boundaries. The University of Oxford is an ideal home for the Centre, inviting new university-wide and international collaborations.

Biblical studies at the Centre includes the examination of the Bible beyond canonical traditions. We examine writings of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim writers—both orthodox and heterodox—and a large body of interpretative, legal, and liturgical texts ranging from antiquity through the medieval period and beyond. In addition, the Centre is devoted to understanding the ways in which the Bible and biblical traditions have been responsible for shaping religious, intellectual, literary, political, linguistic, philosophical, poetic, mystical, musical and artistic interactions across the centuries. The Centre's emphasis on living tradition allows for an understanding of canonical formation while also assuming an open corpus with no sharp distinctions between processes of editing and transmission.

For over two thousand years biblical traditions have grown, been transformed, and articulated in many languages, diverse religious traditions, and a variety of interpretative communities. We seek to integrate into biblical studies discoveries such as those from the Dead Sea Scrolls, Oxyrhynchus collections, Cairo Geniza, and the Nag Hammadi collection, among other ancient manuscripts and material finds that have transformed our understanding of the compositional history and the emergence of biblical traditions. The Centre is at the forefront of innovative research in which we are reconsidering the emergence and influence of interactions with other cultures, literatures, and religions. Through our workshops, seminars, conferences and publications we build, recover, explore, and develop a deeper, critical understanding of the way biblical traditions fill our world and the practices they have engendered.

By building an inclusive space where disciplines across the Humanities can learn from biblical studies and where biblical studies can be transformed by new and old ways of reading, we hope to contribute to the reconstruction and analysis of texts from a variety of methodological, religious, and cultural perspectives. The Centre furthers the ongoing contribution and relevance of the Bible to the public, scholars, research and education.