



Instructor: Kathryn Rickert Fall, 2007, Thursdays 5:45-8:35 pm
 Contact: krickert@covad.net Hunthausen 100

Course Description

Through reading representative texts of the Hebrew Bible, students will become attuned to the multiple voices to be heard in Torah, Prophets and Writings. An integrative consideration of worlds behind, within and in front of the biblical texts will lead to a practice of deep reading that honors both head and heart and leads to practical applications in Christian faith and work.

Course Objectives

- 1.) An uninterrupted reader-to-text encounter with the three sections of the Hebrew Bible
- 2.) Enhanced reading skills: to do close, aware, daring reading as balanced scholars of head & heart
- 3.) Four-wayness: to read from an identified orientation which *always* keeps in mind other directions, orientations, interpretations, and applications which pertain to the biblical text
- 5.) Jewish connection: to gain an informed sensitivity to Christian uses of Jewish biblical texts
- 6.) Resource awareness and application: to efficiently identify, locate and use scholarly resources to address the reader's questions and practical needs and to understand how it is that scholars arrive at their interpretations of the biblical text

Criteria: basis for evaluation in this course:

Class attendance & participation	Weekly Work (500 Words+)	Final Project
----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------

1. Class attendance and participation: Since we learn both with and from each other, you must be here to participate/perform in that exchange and to make *your* contribution to the learning. Come to each class prepared to make a contribution of your most pressing/ challenging/ interesting/ perplexing comments and questions on the week's reading and your assessment of the most "helpful" approaches to those readings and questions. Be specific. **When you make a comment about the text, please link that comment to a specific text, cite that text, and either read it aloud or wait for the group to find it in their own bibles.**

Note: If, for some very good reason, you must miss a class, you will need to propose, conduct and document a three-hour interactive learning event for yourself and at least one other (human) person that addresses the texts for the week missed. The proposal should be submitted to me via email before the next regular class; one page for the proposal and at the most three pages for the written reflection documenting what you learned from the event. (If you need ideas for the event, talk to me.) The documentation of the event may be submitted with your final project.

PLEASE BRING A COPY OF THIS SYLLABUS TO CLASS EVERY WEEK

2. Weekly Work: Each week (2-9) we will read appointed sections of the Hebrew Bible. (They are listed on page 5.) It is imperative that you read the text out loud as it is on the page without first consulting the footnotes or commentaries. We do this so as to allow our hearts and heads to “read, feel, question, and react” to the text. This method of reading is designed to bring out your questions, before you consult scholarly resources to help explore your questions. You are responsible for your own exploration of the biblical texts in terms of your own questions. In this class it is your questions that are the most important, because those questions will lead you to scholars and methods that are both challenging and helpful to you. Begin with the scholarly resources in your study bible, then Brueggemann and then seek further if you are not finding what you need.

(The detailed reading method is explained below and is based upon Tiffany and Ringe’s *Biblical Interpretation*. **If you should become lost in this process and wonder what you are doing:** return to Tiffany and Ringe, re-read again Chapter Three: “A Close Reading of the Biblical Text: Steps in the Process”, pp 67-87. Then re-read the directions below on **Steps For Close Reading**. If you are still lost, then write me an email.)

The 500 Words + Is a written reflection demonstrating your deep reading of the biblical texts. The depth is to include *both* that of the head and the heart. Each week (2-9), once you have done the reading, exploration and reflection upon the texts, you are to submit **500 Words +** as a Word Document attached to an email, by midnight Wednesday before class. That way I will be able to adjust our use of the class time to most fully respond to the current state of learning, pondering, etc. Please bring a copy of your **500 Words +** with you to class each week. I may ask you to share what you have written with the class. And if I see that you are lost, I will try to construct the class to help. You may write 3,000 words or more if that is helpful to you, but I only am able to read 500 of the best, so write as much as is helpful to you and then send me **500**. I will not read more.

STEPS FOR CLOSE READING:

The steps to be followed for this process are spelled out in *Biblical Interpretation* by Tiffany & Ringe, pp 25-125. For each week’s biblical text you will need to: locate yourself as reader of this text, locate the text in terms of form, canon, the questions the text considers, how those questions are addressed, clues as to the context of the first hearers, as well as some consideration of what is missing from the text.

The **500 Words +** are to be a *reflection and summation of your work*, not the details of the work itself. (That will take many more words.) The important points for the 500 Words:

- 1.) What kind of text is this? Who is it for? What does it do for the first readers?
How does it do that?
- 2.) What are *your* reactions to and questions about this text?
- 3.) Which scholarly resources are helpful to you for your questions? How so?
- 4.) So, *what* difference does this reading and reflection make to your learning, work, life & faith?

Most of the 500 Words should address #1 - #3. And #4 needs to be a thick, distilled *reflection* on what you have found and experienced in the week’s work, i.e. short.

After the **500 Words +**, please add in the briefest form possible: (words not sentences) (keep reading on the next page, this part continues.)

The “+” from 500 Words +:

- 1.) How many hours you spent on the work
- 2.) List the one resource that you have chosen for this week in support of your final project
This resource needs to be other than assigned reading, it is the research for your project
- 3.) The verse of Hebrew Scripture that you wish to embody, i.e. to memorize for this week

Course Session: Themes and Topics (may be adjusted as needed & substitutions considered)

Session 1: 9/27	Introduction: Methods, Reading From Here & There, Where is “Here “? & Preparation for the Final Project	
Session 2: 10/4	Genesis: Beginnings, Myth & Narrative	Genesis 1-2 & Gen 12
Session 3: 10/11	Exodus: Journey & Law	Exodus 1-3 & 19-24
Session 4: 10/18	Leviticus & Numbers: Torah & Grace	Numbers 10:11-12:16 & Leviticus 11
Session 5: 10/25	Deuteronomy: Theological Reflection, Preaching & Liturgy	Deuteronomy 4-6
Session 6: 11/ 1	Prophets: Covenant, Call & Identity	I Samuel 1-4:1 & Jeremiah 22:24-23:8
Session 7: 11/8	The Book of the Twelve: Oracle & <i>Riv</i>	Micah, Zephaniah OR Malachi
Session 8: 11/15	The Writings: Poetry, Prayer & Wisdom	Your Favorite Psalm, Psalm 77 & Book of Lamentations
Session 9: 11/29	Apocalyptic: Endings & Hope	Isaiah 65-66 & Daniel 7
Session 10: 12/6	Final Projects, Presentations & Reflective Evaluations	

3. Final Project: This project will collect and demonstrate what you have learned about Hebrew Scripture in relation to some specific aspect of your location as a reader and user of biblical texts. In the first session we will begin planning for your final projects. You may revise your initial proposal, but you need to begin your planning now so that you will have the opportunity to use the weekly work in support of your longer term goals.

Format(s): Written work is to observe the STM Guidelines as found in the Handbook. Papers are not to exceed seven double-spaced pages, plus back mater, (i.e. endnotes and bibliography). Each project should also include an additional one paragraph abstract describing the work. Each person must arrive at the final session ready to offer a one-minute verbal summation of the learning. Visuals (or audios if very brief, 1 min.) in the form of images, photos, artwork, etc. are most welcome accompaniments to final projects!

Topics: Identify a proposed future ministry (or theological question) in which your reading of Hebrew Biblical texts will play a role. Describe that role. Briefly list five specific features or challenges of that ministry and then select one Hebrew Bible text, six to sixteen verses in length that you deem pertinent to those issues in that ministry. (This text must not be one that is already listed in the course readings.) If you need help in the selection of your text, just ask.

Methods: Using “The Modern Study of the Bible”, pp 2084-2096 of the *Jewish Study Bible* **select two different methods that interest you as potentially valuable for your exploration of your chosen pericope.** Each week for six weeks, weeks #2-#7 in addition to doing the close reading of the week’s text, you are also building the bibliography for your final project. Use this part of the Weekly Work to explore the resources listed and those that you seek out in support of your final project. One of the weeks you will need to select Musa Dube’s book, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, pp 3-124.

(If you find and read one article or chapter a week that (plus the two study bibles) will give you a bibliography of at least eight sources. That is enough!)

Text: the Hebrew Scriptures (both a Jewish <u>and</u> a Christian translation are required)
--

The Jewish Study Bible: Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation.
Adele Berlin, et al. editors. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

One of the most recent editions of Christian Study Bibles based on the NRSV translation: E.g. *HarperCollins Study Bible*, *Oxford Annotated Study Bible*, *New Interpreter’s Study Bible*, or the most recent edition of the New American translation as found in the *Catholic Study Bible*.

TEXTBOOKS: three are required

Required:

Walter Brueggemann. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.

Musa W. Dube (Shomanah). *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible.* St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2000.

Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe. *Biblical Interpretation: A Road Map.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Recommended:

James A. Sanders. *Torah and Canon.* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972, reprinted.

On Three-Hour Reserve at the Seattle University Library:

A.K.M. Adam, editor. *Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible—A Reader.* St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001.

Steven L. McKenzie & Stephen R. Haynes, editors. *To Each Its Own Meaning: Biblical Criticisms and their Applications.* (Revised editions). Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999.

Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, editors. *Reading from this Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, Vol. I. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

----- . *Social Location and Biblical Perspective in Global Perspective*, Vol. 2. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

R.S. Sugirtharajah, editor. *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* Vol. 1 & 2. London: SPCK, 1991.

Gail A. Yee, editor. *Judges & Methods: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

On-Line Resources:

1. Lemieux Library Web Page →Data Bases → Theology & Religious Studies Databases
 Start here: See also:

- [Academic Search Premier](#) 
- [ATLA Religion](#) 
- [Religious Periodicals](#) 
- [Catholic Periodical and Literature Index](#) 
- [Old Testament Abstracts](#) 
- [Routledge Religion Resource Online](#)
- [Theology & Religious Studies Subject Resource Guide](#)
- [Theology/Religion and Ecology Subject Resource Guide](#)

Other useful databases:

- [Humanities Abstracts](#) 
- [JSTOR](#) 
- [POIESIS](#) 
- [Project Muse Journals](#) 

2.



 [Scholar](#) Search scholarly papers

3. An on-line resource for determining your denomination's use of various biblical texts:

<http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/lectionary/> Follow the useful links at the bottom of first page to find out which texts are used when.

If your denomination is not addressed by this web page, please consult with your denominational mentor as to how Hebrew Biblical texts are chosen and used in your tradition. Be prepared to share this with the class by the third week of the course. If you do not have a denominational mentor yet, find one! (If your tradition is not yet clear to you, then select one *provisionally* for the purposes of this course.)