

STMA 593 TEACHING SCRIPTURE TO ADULTS

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June 23-July 3, 2008
5:35 pm - 8:25 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore various methods for both engaging and teaching Scripture as a resource for religious faith and spirituality. Topics to be explored include the authority and role of the Bible in faith journeys, the interconnections between diverse theological understandings of the Bible and educational practice, and a repertoire of methods and models for teaching Scripture primarily to adults.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

-Active Participation: Education requires the active involvement of those who seek to learn. Such involvement will be expected and will have the following form: attending classes, reflective reading of assignments, preparation for and participation in class discussions and activities.

-Preliminary Assignment: After reading the required textbooks, each student is asked to create a 50 minute Bible study that is based on a specific Biblical text, designed for a specific context, and illustrative of a method discussed in one of the textbooks. A description of the Bible study, with a discussion of which method it embodies and how, is due at the beginning of the first class session.

-Bible Study Exercise: On each day of the class we will explore a distinct approach or context to Bible study. (These are underlined in the syllabus under the daily topics.) During or shortly after these sessions different participants from the class will lead their small group in a brief (approximately 20 minutes) Bible study or activity. Each participant is asked to lead one such Bible study exercise. The exercise should be an activity that can be used in a parish setting as a portion of a Bible study and it should embody the principles and assumptions of the distinctive approach being studied. The exercise should be typed up and distributed to each member of the small group in such a way that it might be a resource for others. The write-up should include the exercise, the context for which it is designed, and a description of the ways in which it embodies and nurtures the assumptions of the distinctive approach.

-Bible Study Lesson Plan and Analysis: Each participant is asked to create a Bible study session for a particular group of people in a specific ministerial context and to reflect analytically on the Bible study using the 15 categories for analysis used in class. The plan and analysis are due at the end of class on Friday July 3. The study may include the same exercise used in the small group presentation. The lesson plan should consist of the following features:

- Context: A description of the context for which this study is designed. This description should include a discussion of how this congregation currently engages the Bible according to the different forms of engagement discussed in the course and the needs which are present within this context regarding their study of and engagement with the Bible as illuminated by your analysis and reflection.

-Learners: A description of the life circumstances and concerns of the particular persons for whom your proposal is designed.

-Theme: A statement of the central theme and topic of the study including the text being engaged.

-Materials needed: A list of the necessary materials for this study.

-Lesson Outline: A description of the study's flow including the method (e.g. Introduction, Presentation of text, Engagement of text, Application of text, Conclusion), the activities designed for each movement of the flow, and the estimated time allotted for each movement.

The analysis should address the following categories as developed throughout the course:

I. The Content of the Study

1. What text is made present (and what text is absent)?
2. What theological interpretation of the text is made present (and are kept absent)?

II. Engagement between Text and Human Experience

3. What are the educational movements that guide this process?
4. What is the purpose of this study as guided by its method?
5. What dimensions of knowing or engaging the Bible are directly nurtured?
6. What questions are asked of the text?
7. What questions are asked of human experience?
8. What is the direction of interaction between text and human experience?
9. What forms of response are nurtured?

III. Authority within the Study

10. Where is the locus of authority?
11. How is the authority of the text respected or violated?

12. How is the authority of human experience respected or violated?

IV. Summary Observations

13. What are the unique contributions of this method?

14. What are the vulnerabilities and limits of this method?

15. In what settings and ways would this be a useful method?

COURSE SCHEDULE:

June 23 Introduction to the Course

June 24 Charting Coordinates in Bible Study: A Variety of ways of Engaging Scripture

sources: Roberta Hestenes Using the Bible in Groups ch. 4-6

Renita Weems Just a Sister Away chapter entitled 'A Mistress, a Maid, and No Mercy'

Phyllis Trible Texts of Terror ch.1

June 25 Teaching and Engaging the Bible for Functional Literacy

reading: Roberta Hestenes Using the Bible in Groups

June 26 Teaching and Engaging the Bible for Critical Reflection

reading: John Hayes & Carl Holladay Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook (Read chapters 1 and 10. Skim the seven forms of Biblical criticism in chapters 2 through 8 to become familiar with them.)

Maas, Robin Church Bible Study Handbook pp.194-5

June 27 Teaching and Engaging the Bible for Depth Reflection

reading: Walter Wink Transforming Bible Study

June 30 Teaching and Engaging the Bible for Depth Reflection (continued)

source: Peter Pitzele Scripture Windows

July 1 Teaching and Engaging the Bible for Cultural Reflection

reading: Norman Gottwald & Richard Horsley The Bible and Liberation
chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 13, 31

July 2 Teaching and Engaging the Bible for Cultural Reflection (cont.)

Sources: Joseph Crockett Teaching Scripture from an African-American Perspective
Renita Weems Just a Sister Away
Renita Weems 'Reading Her Way through the Struggle: African-American
Women and the Bible' in Cain Felder Stony the Way We Trod
Chan-Hie Kim 'Reading the Bible as Asian-Americans' in The New Interpreter's
Bible Volume 1
Robert McAfee Brown Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World
Eyes
Phyllis Tribble Texts of Terror
Letty Russell Feminist Interpretation of the Bible

July 3 Teaching and Engaging the Bible with Children and Course Conclusion

source: Dorothy Furnish Experiencing the Bible with Children