



Instructor: Kathryn Rickert, Ph.D.
 Section 1 Tuesdays 1:30 PM – 4:20 PM & Section 2 Thursdays 5:45-8:35 pm
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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.) To engage in an aware & attentive reader-to-text encounter with the three sections of the Hebrew Bible; Torah, Prophets and Writings
- 2.) To acquire enhanced biblical reading skills through close, aware, daring reading which balances head & heart
- 3.) To keep in mind four-wayness: to read from an identified orientation which acknowledges other directions, orientations, interpretations, and applications of the biblical text
- 5.) To acquire an appreciation of the Jewish origins of Scripture which leads to an informed sensitivity to Christian uses of Jewish biblical texts
- 6.) To gain biblical research skills which allow the learner to efficiently identify, locate and use scholarly resources to address the reader’s questions and practical needs for using the 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 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 question and comments on the week’s reading and your assessment of the most “helpful” approach to that question. Be specific!

Note: If, for some very good reason, you miss a class, you must either come to the other section of this course, or you will need to propose, conduct and document a three-hour interactive learning event for yourself and at least one other human person. The proposal for this event should be submitted to the instructor 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 EVERY CLASS

2. Course Sessions: Themes and Topics (may be adjusted as needed & substitutions considered)

Session 1: 9/25 & 9/30	Introduction: Methods, Reading From Here & There, Where is "Here" ? & Preparation for the Final Project	
Session 2: 10/2 10/7	Genesis: Beginnings, Myth & Narrative	Genesis 1-2 & Gen 12
Session 3: 10/9 10/14	Exodus: Journey & Law	Exodus 1-3 & 19-24
Session 4: 10/16 10/21	Leviticus & Numbers: Torah & Grace	Numbers 10:11-12:16 & Leviticus 11
Session 5: 10/23 10/28	Deuteronomy: Theological Reflection, Preaching & Liturgy	Deuteronomy 4-6
Session 6: 10/30 11/04	Prophets: Covenant, Call & Identity	I Samuel 1-4:1 & Jeremiah 22:24-23:8
Session 7: 11/06 11/11	The Book of the Twelve: Oracle & <i>Riv</i>	Micah, Zephaniah OR Malachi
Session 8: 11/13 11/18	The Writings: Poetry, Prayer & Wisdom	Your Favorite Psalm, Psalm 77 & Book of Lamentations
Session 9: 11/20 11/25	Apocalyptic: Endings & Hope	Isaiah 65-66 & Daniel 7
Session 10: 12/04 12/02	Final Projects, Presentations & Reflective Evaluations	

3. Weekly Work:

Each week (2-9) we will be reading appointed pericopes in the Hebrew Bible. (They are listed above.) **It is imperative that you first read the text aloud as it is on the page without consulting the footnotes or commentaries (at first) and allow your heart and head 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 for their contributions to your exploration of the text, including your questions. (The detailed reading method is explained below and is based upon Tiffany and Ringe's *Biblical Interpretation*.)

The 500 Words + Is a written reflection in demonstration of your deep reading of 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, research, and reflection upon the texts, you are to submit **500 Words +** as a Word Document (using .doc) attached to an email (krickert@covad.net) by midnight of the day 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. I will respond only to those emails which arrive on time.

Preparation for Writing the 500 Words +

The **500 Words+** is a condensed slice of your reading, research, and reflection each week. You will read, think and write much more than can be included in the **500 Words +**. So, please write as much as you wish; the more the better. But sift through what you write, and send me the best 500 words.

Since this course employs an adult learning model, you are in charge of determining the exact reading that you do. And you will determine what to read based upon two things:

1. Your location as a reader and identified goals for ministry
2. The questions that you generate from repeated reading aloud of the pericope of the week in both the Jewish and Christian study bibles.

The steps to be followed for this process are spelled out in *Biblical Interpretation* by Tiffany & Ringe, pp 25-125.

Once you have your own set of responses to and questions about the text, then you may turn to some combination of the following in order to *consult* with these scholars to see what they have to say:

- > the pertinent introductions, footnotes, and articles in the study bibles
(Always read both the Jewish and the Christian resources in order to compare them.)
- > Brueggemann's *Intro to the OT*
- > Dube's *Other Ways of Reading*
- > recommended texts at the end of the syllabus
- > on-line resources as suggested at the end of the syllabus
- > articles and books in the Seattle University (Lemieux) Library, including those on 3 hour reserve

Simply because a scholar writes something does not mean that you have answered your question. Once you find a scholar's input, keep going and determine *how* the scholar's contribution is useful to *your* questions. (Your questions may not be the same ones that scholar is using for her work.) The point of this work is to arrive at your own answers based upon your reading of the text and with the insights from other scholars as they are useful to *your* questions.

In addition to seeking out resources to help with your exploration of the pericope of the week, each week you will also locate at least one resource that will be used in your final project. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE QUARTER.** These sources do not include anything listed in the syllabus; these are to be additional articles, chapters, etc.

The **500 Words +** are a *reflection and summation of your work*; not every detail of your work. (That will take many more words. I will only be able to read 500 of them.)

The important points for the 500 Words:

- 1.) Where are you located as a reader of this text?
- 2.) What kind of text is this? Who is it for? What does it do for the first readers? How does it do that?
- 3.) What are *your* questions of and responses to this text?
- 4.) Which resources from biblical scholars are helpful to you for your questions? How so?
- 5.) *So, what* difference does this reading and reflection make to your learning, work, life & faith?

Most of the 500 Words should address #2 - #3. And #4 needs to be a thick, distilled *reflection* on what you have found and experienced in the week's work.

After the **500 Words** +, please add in the briefest form possible: (words not sentences)

- 1.) How many hours you have spent on the work (8-10 hours is about right)
- 2.) List the one resource that you have chosen for this week **in support of your final project.**
- 3.) The verse of Hebrew Scripture that you wish to embody, i.e. to memorize for this week

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 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 2-3-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 in which your reading of Hebrew Biblical texts will play a role. Describe that role. Briefly, list five specific features of that ministry and then select one Hebrew Bible text, six to sixteen verses in length that you deem pertinent to that ministry. (*This text must not be one that is already listed in the course readings.*)

Methods: Using "The Modern Study of the Bible", pp 2084-2096 of the *Jewish Study Bible* select one additional method (in addition to the literary method we have been using in class) that interests you as potentially valuable for your exploration of your chosen pericope. Include a one paragraph example of what could be learned about your pericope using this other method. E.g. a canonical comparison between your text and some other part of the Hebrew Bible, or an ideological reading, (e.g. feminist, liberation theology) that differs radically from your own reading.

Each week for six weeks, weeks #2-#7 explore the resources listed for articles and chapters of interest to you as they pertain to your questions about the selected text. On at least two of the weeks you will need to select chapters from Musa Dube's book *Other Ways of Reading*.

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

Texts: the Hebrew Scriptures (both a Jewish and 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.

And one of the following Christian Study Bibles:

The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha. Walter J.

Harrelson, et al., editors. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003

The Catholic Study Bible, 2nd Edition. Donald Senior & John J Collins, eds., Oxford University Press.

The HarperCollins Study Bible. Wayne Meeks, eds. HarperSanFrancisco, 2006.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 3rd Ed. Michael Coogan, ed. Oxford University Press.

TEXTBOOKS: three are required

Required:

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

Musa W. Dube, editor. *Other ways of Reading: African women and the Bible*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature; Geneva: WCC Publications, c2001.

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.

Musa W. Dube, editor. *Other ways of Reading: African women and the Bible*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature; Geneva: WCC Publications, c2001. BS521.4 .O84 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, 2007.

On-Line Resources:

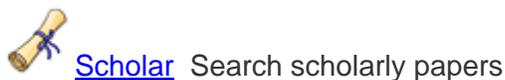
1. Lemieux Library Web Page → Data Bases → Theology & Religious Studies Databases
 Start here: See also:

- [Academic Search Premier](#) 
- [ATLA Religion](#) 
- [Religious Periodicals](#) 
- [Catholic Periodical and Literature Index](#) 
- [New Testament Abstracts](#) 
- [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. (See the next page (7) for additional resources.)



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.)