



Instructor: Kathryn Rickert Fall, 2006, 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.) 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

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 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 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 person. The proposal should be submitted 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

2. Weekly Work: Each week (2-9) we will be reading appointed sections of the Hebrew Bible. (They are listed on page 5.) It is imperative that you read the text as it is on the page without consulting the footnotes or commentaries 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 the deep 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 and reflection upon the texts, you are to submit **500 Words +** as a Word Document attached to an email, by Midnight Wednesday. 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.

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 and how they are addressed, 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* questions about this text?
- 3.) Which resources were 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.

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

- 1.) how many hours you have spent on the work
- 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

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

Session 1: 9/21 **Introduction:** Methods, Reading From Here & There, Where is “Here “? & Planning the Final Project

Session 2: 9/28 **Genesis:** Beginnings, Myth & Narrative

Genesis 1-2 & Gen 12

Session 3: 10/5 **Exodus:** Journey & Law

Exodus 1-3 & 19-24

Session 4: 10/12	Leviticus & Numbers: Torah & Grace Numbers 10:11-12:16 & Leviticus 11
Session 5: 10/19	Deuteronomy: Theological Reflection, Preaching & Liturgy Deuteronomy 4-6
Session 6: 10/26	Prophets: Covenant, Call & Identity Samuel 1-4:1 & Jeremiah 22:24-23:8
Session 7: 11/2	The Book of the Twelve: Oracle & Riv Micah, Zephaniah OR Malachi
Session 8: 11/9	The Writings: Poetry, Prayer & Wisdom Your Favorite Psalm, Psalm 77 & Book of Lamentations
Session 9: 11/16	Apocalyptic: Endings & Hope Isaiah 65-66 & Daniel 7
Session 10: 11/ 30	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 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 matter, (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 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 two different methods that interest you as potentially valuable for your exploration of your chosen pericope. Each week for six weeks, weeks #2-#7 explore the resources listed for things of interest to you as they pertain to your questions about the selected text. 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 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.

The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha. Walter J. Harrelson, et al., editors. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003

TEXTBOOKS: three are required

Required:

Michael D. Coogan. *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

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.

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

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.

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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](#) 
 - [New Testament Abstracts](#) 
 - [Old Testament Abstracts](#) 
 - [Routledge Religion Resource Online](#)
 - [Theology & Religious Studies Subject Resource Guide](#)
 - [Theology/Religion and Ecology Subject Resource Guide](#)
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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.)