

**Basics of Biblical Content**  
**Fall 2010 – Spring 2011**  
**Sue Garrett; Trisha Tull**  
**Friday 10:00-10:50; Schlegel 123**

This two-course sequence is intended for students whose background in Bible needs an extra boost, either because they enter seminary with less Bible knowledge than those who have attended Bible studies or who have taken Bible courses in college, or because they are Presbyterian students who need more help preparing for the Bible Content Ordination Exam. It is also a helpful course for students who need one more credit per semester in order to be in the halftime (six credit) program or to take the minimum fulltime load of nine hours.

By the end of the two-course sequence, students will be able to:

1. Name in correct order (and spell correctly) all the books of the Bible.
2. Identify and briefly describe each book by genre, canonical placement, and basic contents.
3. Differentiate thematically among similar books, such as the Synoptic Gospels or minor prophets.

Each course will meet one hour per week. Students are encouraged to take both courses in the sequence (in the fall and spring semesters), but may take only one if they choose. Although the course is intended for junior M.Div. students, those in other years or degree programs may also take it.

The instructional method will be lecture and discussion. Assessment will be based on objective quizzes (3 per semester, each 10% of the final grade for the semester), a final exam at the end of each course (60%), and class attendance and participation (10%). Grading will be pass/fail, with 75% as the minimum passing grade. Reading from a study Bible and from a basic textbook outlining biblical content will be assigned. There will be one make-up day for missed quizzes (only for those quizzes missed for legitimate reasons, approved by one of the instructors).

Students who do not wish to take a full-semester course but would like to review certain sections of the Bible are welcome to sit in (for no credit) on any of the three-week units.

**Course Readings**

NRSV Study Bible (HarperCollins or New Interpreter's)

Duncan Ferguson, *Bible Basics: Mastering the Content of the Bible* (Louisville: WJK, 1995).

Other articles as assigned below.

**First semester**

Unit 1: Introduction to the Biblical Canon

9/10: Course Introduction; The Biblical Canon

Preparation: Ferguson 3-16

9/17: Forms and Genres of Biblical Literature

Preparation: Following up on last week's class, memorize the names of the books of the Bible in order, and be able to spell them correctly and identify them by section (Pentateuch; Gospels; etc.)

9/24: The History of the Biblical Text

Preparation: Following up on last week's class, examine a list of texts provided as handout on 9/17, and identify their literary genre.

Unit 2: The Pentateuch

10/1: Quiz on Unit 1; Overview and Genesis

Preparation: Study for quiz. Read Ferguson 19-25. Read the introductions to the books of the Pentateuch in your NRSV study Bible, and the overview provided on CAMS. Begin using study guide to research information about the Pentateuch and its contents.

10/8: Exodus-Deuteronomy: Narratives

Preparation: Continue working with study guide. For a sense of the biblical stories you may read or skim the following: Gen 1-4, 12, 16, 18, 21-22, 27-29, 37; Exod 1-3, 15-16; Num 11-12; Deut 34. If you are taking Scripture 1, follow the Pentateuch readings assigned in that course instead.

10/15: Exodus-Deuteronomy: Teachings

Preparation: Continue working with study guide. Read or skim as needed: Exod 20; Lev 1, 19, Deut 5-7.

Unit 3: The Gospels

10/22: Quiz on Unit 2; Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

Preparation: Study for quiz. Read Ferguson 57-68, Tuckett, "Synoptic Gospels" (on CAMS), and Garrett, "Narratives of the NT" (on CAMS).

11/5: The Synoptic Gospels, continued.

Preparation: Read the following: introductions to Matthew, Mark, and Luke in your study Bible; Gospel of Mark in its entirety; Matthew 1-7, 24-25; Luke 1-4; 12-16.

11/12: Gospel of John and the Acts of the Apostles

Preparation: Read the Gospel of John in its entirety along with the introduction in your study Bible. Read at least five chapters from the book of Acts, along with the introduction in your study Bible.

Unit 4: The Historical Books

11/19: Quiz on Unit 3; Overview; Joshua; Judges; Ruth

Preparation: Study for quiz. Read Ferguson 26-33; 48. Read the introductions to the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth in your NRSV study Bible, and the overview of the story lines provided on CAMS. Begin using study guide to research information about the Historical Books.

12/3: 1-2 Samuel; 1-2 Kings

Preparation: Read the introductions to the books of 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings in your NRSV study Bible and the overview of the story lines provided on CAMS. Continue working with study guide. As needed, read or skim Josh 1-3, 6, 15; Jdg 1-4, 11, 13-14; Ruth 1-4; 1 Sam 1, 4, 8-9, 15-16, 18, 31; 2 Sam 1, 6-7, 11-12; 1 Kings 1-3, 12, 15, 17, 21; 2 Kings 2, 9, 17-19, 22, 25. Again, if you are taking Scripture 1, follow the readings assigned in that course.

12/10: 1-2 Chronicles; Ezra; Nehemiah; Esther

Preparation: Read Ferguson 48-49; 51-54. Read the introductions to the books of 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther in your NRSV study Bible and the overview of the story lines provided on CAMS. Continue working with study guide. As needed, skim parts of 1-2 Chronicles to get a sense of the story. Read or skim Ezra 1, 4; Neh 1-2, 8; Esther 1-10.

### **Final exam (Dec 15 or 16)**

### **Second semester** (full syllabus available in spring)

#### **Unit 5: The Pauline Epistles**

2/11: Quiz; Introduction to Paul and the Pauline epistles  
2/18: Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Philemon  
2/25: Ephesians, Colossians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus

#### **Unit 6: The Prophets**

3/4: Overview; Isaiah  
3/11: Jeremiah; Lamentations; Ezekiel  
3/18: The Book of the Twelve; Daniel

#### **Unit 7: The Other Books of the New Testament**

4/1: Quiz; Hebrews and James  
4/8: 1-2 Peter and Jude, 1 John  
4/15: 2-3 John, Revelation

#### **Unit 8: The Psalms and Wisdom Literature**

4/29: Quiz; Overview; Psalms  
5/6: Proverbs; Job  
5/13: Ecclesiastes; Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)

### **Final Exam: May 18 or 19**

### **Seminary Policies**

#### **Inclusive Language**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance: [http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp).

#### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center ([kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments.

Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

**Attendance Policy**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Three or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.