

SYLLABUS: Basics of Biblical Content – Hebrew Bible

Fall 2013

Instructor: Johanna Bos

Wednesdays 1:30-2:20 GC 213

This two-course sequence is for students whose background in Bible needs a boost. You may have come to Seminary with less Bible knowledge than others, students who have majored in Religion and Bible in College, for example, or you may want help in preparing for the Bible Content Ordination Exam, if you are Presbyterian. Or, you may simply want to know more about the content of the Bible. The course will also be useful to take alongside Scripture I and pick up some of the content that is not addressed or addressed only lightly in that course.

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

1. Name in correct order (and spell correctly) all the books of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.
2. Identify and briefly describe each book by genre, canonical placement, and basic contents.
3. Differentiate thematically among similar books, such as the Minor Prophets.

We will meet once a week for one hour. Although the course is intended for junior M.Div. students, those in other years or degree programs may also take it.

Assessment will be based on objective quizzes, two before the study break and two following. Quizzes, class attendance together with participation will each count for 8% of the final grade. A final exam at the end of the course will count for 60% of the grade. Grading will be pass/fail, with 75% as the minimum passing grade. Reading from a study Bible and from a study guide outlining biblical content will be assigned.

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)

Bible Content Study Guide prepared by Johanna W.H.van Wijk-Bos (posted on CAMS)

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.

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) 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.

Class Schedule

Unit I: Torah

Preparation for first class: Read through the introductory pages of the Study Guide and the Book of Genesis in your Study Bible (Oxford Annotated; Harper Collins; Jewish Study Bible; New Interpreters Bible all accepted).

Make sure to use one Bible for marking up.

For each book you are reviewing read the Introduction in your Study Bible. For this class it may be helpful to read ahead so when you come to the preparation for a session, you are reviewing for the second time.

9/11: Introduction to the biblical Canon; Genesis

Preparation for 9/18:

Memorize the names of the books of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in the order following the Christian Canon, and be able to spell them correctly and identify them by section; Exodus as reviewed in the Study Guide.

9/18: Literary genre in Genesis and Exodus; Content of Exodus.

Preparation for 9/25:

Review content of Genesis and Exodus, using study guide and your own highlighting. Highlight content of Leviticus and Numbers.

9/25: Short quiz on Genesis and Exodus according to the Bible Content exam format.

Content of: Leviticus and Numbers

Preparation for 10/2:

Read through Deuteronomy, highlight content; use review in Study Guide.

10/2: Deuteronomy

Preparation for 10/9: Review the content of the entire Torah.

Unit 2: The Historical Books or Former Prophets

10/9 Short quiz on Torah;

The books of the Hebrew Bible according to the Hebrew canon; Joshua and Judges

Research and Study Week

Review the content you have studied so far; make outlines for yourself. Test yourself by going through previous Content Exams. Read through and highlight Samuel and Kings.

Memorize the names of the collections according to the Hebrew Canon. Know the names of the books in the Torah, the Former and the Latter Prophets in order; know how to spell them. By a process of elimination put everything else in the Writings, know a rough order.

10/23: Samuel and Kings

Preparation for 10/30:

Review the content of the Historical Books or Former Prophets. Test yourself with previous content exams. Read through and highlight Isaiah.

10/30: Short quiz on the Former Prophets; Isaiah.

Preparation for 11/6: Read through and highlight Jeremiah and Ezekiel

11/6: Jeremiah and Ezekiel

Preparation for 11/13:

Read through and Highlight the Twelve Minor Prophets. Memorize names and order of the Latter Prophets.

11/13: The Twelve.

Preparation for 11/20: Review the content of the Latter Prophets (Isaiah through Malachi, minus Lamentations and Daniel), testing yourself with previous content exams. Read through and highlight Ezra and Nehemiah.

Unit 3: The Writings

11/20: Short quiz on the Latter Prophets; Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

***Bible Content – Hebrew Bible
Fall Semester 2013***

Preparation for 11/27:

Read through and highlight the Five Scrolls: Song of Songs; Ruth; Lamentations; Ecclesiastes; Esther.

11/27: The Scrolls

Preparation for 12/4:

Use the Study Guide to review the content of Psalms, Proverbs, Job

12/4: Psalms, Proverbs, Jobs

Preparation for Final: Test yourself using previous content exams. Repeat going over weak spots until you have memorized them.

Final: Content of the Hebrew Bible on one of the Final Exam days.