

Old Testament Exegesis – Spring, 2010

Dr. Patricia K. Tull

Exegesis is “a thorough, analytical study of a biblical passage done so as to arrive at a useful interpretation of the passage.”¹ An exegete is a person who does exegesis, exegetically.

This course is designed to teach the basics of biblical exegesis in preparation for teaching and preaching. You will become acquainted with the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and with several other resources for study and will develop skill in using them. You will also complete the remaining lessons from *The First Hebrew Primer* and continue to build your knowledge of Hebrew. Each week you will be introduced to new lines of questions that illuminate biblical texts, so that by the end of the course you will have begun to develop a systematic, theologically and intellectually responsible, ethically and pastorally sensitive exegetical method that may be applied to any text of the Old Testament.

The class will be taught pass-fail as agreed upon by the Area on an experimental basis. Students who wish to take the course for a grade may do so, but must let me know in writing (email is fine) by the second class session. To pass the course, it is necessary to:

1. Attend Bibleworks training in the library in February and regularly attend and participate in class sessions (see policy below).
2. Show competence in Hebrew by passing two quizzes (Feb 12; Feb 24) with a grade of 70% and by successfully reading and translating biblical passages in small groups.
3. Complete the readings and brief (50-100 word) reading journal responses (turned in at mid-term and end of course). Questions for the reading journal will be listed after each reading on the full course schedule.
4. Satisfactorily complete the weekly exegetical assignments, turning them in on time. It is better to turn in incomplete work and revise if necessary than to miss the deadline.
5. Satisfactorily complete the final exegetical project, turning it in on time.

Up to four homework assignments that do not receive a passing grade may be revised within one week for credit. It's not advisable to use up this “bank” of revisions on the first four assignments.

Class Preparation and Submission of Written Assignment

The class will meet in different configurations on different days. The first two weeks I will meet with all classes to conclude our Hebrew lessons. After that, the general weekly plan will be as follows:

Mondays: All together for introduction of new material. There will be reading, journal, and sometimes research assignments in preparation. Bring BHS, NRSV, and any other materials referred to in the assignment.

Wednesdays: Small groups for Hebrew translation. Bring BHS, Scott's Simplified Guide, lexicon, and translation notes.

Fridays: We will meet in two groups to discuss the results of your weekly exegetical assignment. Bring BHS, NRSV, and any other materials referred to in the assignment. Notes on your work will be turned in by email by Thursday evening at 7:00 and brought to class for your use in discussion. Assignments turned in on time with ****proper bibliographical citation**** will receive full credit. Those turned in up to a week late will receive half credit only. Assignments more than a week late will receive no credit, though we will read and respond to them for your benefit. We will mark and return your work electronically.

You may work with other students on your translations and daily assignments, with these stipulations: 1) You must write up your own research notes; 2) You must cite at the top of your assignment who else you worked with. *You must work alone, however, on the final project.*

¹ Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd edition (Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001) 1.

****Please Note:** All assignments *must* include proper **footnote references** to all sources beyond the BHS and the lexicon. For English Bibles, a reference to the name of the version (e.g., NRSV) and verse citation (e.g., Isa. 2:4) is adequate, unless what you are citing is the study material at the bottom of the page. For that, commentaries, dictionaries, and other reference works, you *must* include all proper bibliographic data and page numbers according to Turabian style. For seminary policy on plagiarism and source citation, see below.

Books and Resources

The following should be purchased if you do not already have them:

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

An NRSV Study Bible (HarperCollins or New Interpreter's), and second modern translation (such as Tanakh, NIV, New Jerusalem)

Ethelyn Simon, et al. *The First Hebrew Primer*. Albany, CA: EKS, 1992.; *Answer Book*.

Brotzman, Ellis. *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

Davis, Ellen. *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Hayes, John, and Carl Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.

Scott, William. *A Simplified Guide to BHS*. 3rd edition. Berkeley: BIBAL, 1995.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. (Not required to purchase but must be consulted)

One of three current Hebrew lexicons, in either print or electronic version:

Holladay, W. L. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972. (An abridged lexicon, cheap and easy to use. Included with Bibleworks.)

The Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997. (A fuller lexicon, with more information, the standard for many years. Included with Bibleworks.)

Koehler, L., and W. Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2001. (Newer than BDB and more complete than Holladay, but expensive. Available in print or as BibleWorks add-on module.)

We will also read articles from Leander Keck et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible (NIB)*, vols. 1 and 4, Nashville: Abingdon, 1994-96. This is one of the best complete commentary sets. I recommend acquiring the whole set, either in print or CD-ROM version.

Other readings as listed in the syllabus and will be available on library reserve and/or through the Internet. Several are available from *Interpretation* journal through the ATLA Religion Database. If you do not know how to access them, check with the LPTS library.

Bible commentaries and Bible dictionaries will be important tools. You may consult other resources, but you *must* use the excellent recommended recent commentaries and dictionaries, which can be found in the library reference room. See *Reference Tools for Old Testament Study* for "professor's picks."

Bibleworks

Bibleworks software is available in the library's computer lab, and is recommended for this course. You will be asked to sign up for an instruction session if you have not already had one. It can and should serve to aid translation. Overreliance on its point-and-click capabilities can be harmful to your Hebrew skills, just as driving a car to go 100 feet can be to your leg muscles. Don't let it do for you what you can do for yourself! Your brain is the fastest tool you have!

Use discernment in using Biblework resources. Several unhelpful reference books are included that are out of copyright and **out of date**. See instead the recommended *Reference Tools*.

Class Communication

We will use electronic means to communicate between classes. It is each student's responsibility to check LPTS email regularly, and to access course information through CAMS and other sites as they are made available.

Electronics in the Classroom

Students will be provided printed outlines of lectures and other materials needed for classes on which to take written notes. Those who wish to access Bibleworks during the Hebrew Reading groups may bring their laptops to those sessions. Otherwise, unless you have an accommodation authorized by the Academic Support Center, please store all computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices during class time, and bring in hard copy what you wish to consult. This will minimize distraction and encourage the culture of the learning community.

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.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides: Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

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. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

Schedule

Below for your quick reference are the daily topics and readings. The separate schedule of assignments gives more detailed information and should be consulted frequently.

Fri, Feb 12 8:30/10:00	Course Introduction Brief Hebrew quiz: translating 1 sentence First Hebrew Primer (FHP) chapter 24: The Hiph'il Verb Pattern <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Davis, Introduction and chapter 1.
Mon, Feb 15 8:30	FHP chs. 25 and 26: Hiph'il Variations and Hollow Verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FHP ch 24; Jacqueline Lapsley, "Am I Able to Say Just Anything? Learning Faithful Exegesis from Balaam," <i>Interpretation</i> 60 (2006): 22-31.
Wed, Feb 17 3:30/4:30	FHP chs. 27 and 28: Verbs with Object Suffixes and The Niph'al Verb Pattern <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FHP chs 25-26; Brotzman, chapter 2.
Fri, Feb 19	FHP ch. 29 and review: The Hitpa'el Verb Pattern <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FHP chs 27-28; Brotzman, chapters 3-4.
Mon, Feb 22	Introduction to exegesis First Reading and Observations (Assignment 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FHP ch 29; Hayes/Holladay (H/H), chapter 1; Davis, chapter 2.
Wed, Feb 24	Last Hebrew quiz covering chapters 24-29 and vocabulary.
Fri, Feb 26	Discussion: Assignment 1 Introduction to BHS, lexicons and other translation helps Determining the beginning and ending of a text (Assignment 2a) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FHP ch. 30; Krim, "Modern English Versions of the Bible" (<i>New Interpreter's Bible</i> 1: 22-32); Scott, <i>Simplified Guide</i>, Preface and chapters I-III.
Mon, Mar 1	Discussion: Assignment 2a Textual Criticism (Assignment 2b) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H/H chapter 2; Brotzman, chapters 6-7; Scott, part IV
Wed, Mar 3	Translation: Genesis 4:1-8. Features of the BHS page. Locating and deciphering textual notes.
Fri, Mar 5	Discussion: Assignment 2b (Text-critical Issues) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brotzman pp. 133-142

Mon, Mar 8	Literary Analysis: Reading Narrative (Assignment 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alter, <i>The Art of Biblical Narrative</i>, chapters 1, 4, and 6; Davis, chapter 4.
Wed, Mar 10	Translation: Genesis 4:9-16
Fri, Mar 12	Discussion: Assignment 3 (Literary Analysis)
Mon, Mar 15	The Language of the Text; Literary Context (Assignment 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H/H chapter 4; Roy Howard, "Isaiah 64:1-9," <i>Int</i> 62 (2008): 418-42
Wed, Mar 17	Assignment 4: Smooth translation of Gen 4:1-16
Fri, Mar 19	Discussion: Assignment 5 (The Language of the Text; Literary Context) Turn in reading journal
March 22-26	Research and Study Week Translation and textual notes: Psalm 30:1-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Davis, chapter 3.
Mon, Mar 29	Literary Form and Genre (Assignment 6a) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H/H, chapter 6; Davis, chapter 5
Wed, Mar 31	Translation: Psalm 30:1-9 and discussion of text-critical issues
Fri, April 2	Easter Recess
Mon, Apr 5	Poetic Analysis (Assignment 6b) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adele Berlin, "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry" (<i>NIB</i> 4: 301-315); Davis, chapter 7; Richard Nelson, "Psalm 114," <i>Int</i> 63 (2009): 172-174.
Wed, Apr 7	Translation: Psalm 30:10-12; discussion of text-critical issues; smooth translation
Fri, Apr 9	Discussion: Assignment 6 (Literary Form and Genre; Poetic Analysis)
Mon, Apr 12	Historical Background and Redaction Criticism (Assignment 7) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H/H chapters 3 and 8; Davis, chapter 8
Wed, Apr 14	Translation: Isaiah 36:1-21
Fri, April 16	Discussion: Assignment 7 (Historical Background; Redaction Criticism)
Mon, Apr 19	Tradition Criticism and Canonical Criticism (Assignment 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H/H chapters 7 and 10; Davis, chapter 9
Wed, Apr 21	Translation, cont.: Isaiah 36:1-21
Fri, Apr 23	Discussion: Assignment 8 (Tradition Criticism and Canonical Criticism)

- Mon, Apr 26** Reading Scripture in Particular Contexts, Past and Present (Assignment 9)
- John Thompson, *Reading the Bible with the Dead*, pp. 185-227; Elsa Tamez, "Reading the Bible Under a Sky Without Stars" (Dietrich and Luz, *The Bible in a World Context*).
- Wed, Apr 28** Translation: Isa 11:1-9
- Fri, Apr 30** Discussion: Assignment 9 (Reading Scripture in Particular Contexts)
- Mon, May 3** Integrating Exegesis
- H/H chapters 11, 12; Sally Brown, "2 Kings 23:1-20," *Int* 60 (Jan 2006) 68-70, Kathy Beach-Verhey, "Exodus 3:1-12," *Int* 59 (2005): 180-182, Susan Ackerman, "Amos 5:18-24," *Int* 57 (2003): 189-193.
- Wed, May 5** Translation: Jonah 1:1-17
- Fri, May 7** Discussion: Assignment 10 (Integrating Exegesis)
- Mon, May 10** Using Exegetical Study
Final Assignment given
- H/H chapter 13
- Wed, May 12** Translation: Jeremiah 7:1-7
- Fri, May 14** Course Conclusion
Turn in reading journal
- Thurs,
May 20** Final assignment due