

SYLLABUS - J TERM 2015 – January 5-16, 2015.

Title of Course:

PROPHETS, HARLOTS, WITCHES AND WARRIORS

Interpreting Biblical Text through Song and Story.

Instructors: Johanna Bos

Sherry Cothran

Course Description

This course will engage students in creative methods of biblical exegetical interpretation utilizing women's stories from the Hebrew Bible. Students will engage in a multi-faceted approach of examining biblical narrative including literary, theological and imaginative inquiry. Utilizing women's stories within the biblical narrative that are somewhat lesser known, the intent is to expand the student's knowledge of biblical text, focusing on the agency (or lack thereof) of the feminine actors in the text. The course will aid the student in gaining the ability to interact more skillfully with somewhat complicated texts. The goal is to provide an immersion into creative methods of biblical interpretation, including a review of the canon of popular culture, to move to song-writing, poetry and story-telling. Basic outlines of each method will be introduced utilizing textual as well as modern examples of each. The class invites the student to bring imagination to the world of ancient biblical text and explore new forms of theological interpretation.

Objectives and outcomes

By means of biblical inquiry and the study of creative exegetical techniques, students will learn:

1. Through literary and theological inquiry of specific passages of biblical text, students to develop a deeper knowledge of the selected stories including contextual, narrative and historical elements.
2. Through exposure to feminist studies in biblical narrative, to develop a broader knowledge of women's issues within the text as well as how these issues relate to and are explored in contemporary interpretation.
3. Beginning with exposure to the writing of a sermon from conventional methods of exegetical interpretation, how to apply those principles to the

- construction of songs, stories and poems based on biblical text. Students will learn how to find or create a “hook” in the sermon, song, poem or story. Students will be exposed to textual as well as contemporary examples of such work using sermons, songs, poems and stories.
4. To create their own original work from one or more of the chosen texts utilizing one or more creative methods including songwriting, poetry, storytelling or the re-imagination of the sermonic form. Basic outlines of each method will be introduced.
 5. At the end of the course, students will be invited to share/perform/present their works in front of an audience.

Method:

Maximum number of class participants: twelve, in order to allow for productive discussion and engagement with all the material.

Each day will be broken up into the following sections:

9-11 – Bible Study

11:00 – 11:15 – break

11:15-12:15 – Interactive Workshop

12:15-2:00 – lunch

2:00 – 4:00 – Interactive Workshop

Each day will focus on a specific story from the Hebrew Bible. The text from the story will be studied in the morning sessions, led by Johanna Bos. (list below) In the interactive workshops, students will be learning exegetical methods and techniques for moving from text to song, poem or story based on a conventional sermonic form that utilizes a “find the hook” method. The goal is for each student to write an original song or story, incorporating the exegetical methods they will be learning. Students will present their song or story as sermon in a performance at the end of the course. Students will also be interacting with an original composition, written and performed by Sherry Cothran, based on the text for the day.

Requirements and evaluation

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Students will be required to produce one song or story (of a minimum length to be determined); final product to be performed on the evening of the last day of the course.

Students will be required to keep a journal of their work, show the interpretive steps taken to arrive at the creative work, including citing resources used for interpretive methods.

Students will be required to write a 3-5 page essay describing their process from start to finish, how theological/biblical content was applied, what theological emphasis/impact they hope their creative work will achieve, define the audience for which it is intended and describe the “hook” or disclosure of their creative piece.

Journal and short essay will be handed in to the instructors on Tuesday January 20 for comments by instructors.

Assessment

Through keeping a daily journal, the student will document the process from reading the passages, learning the context (and any new information the student will be adding to either familiar or unfamiliar stories) to interpreting the stories through one of the chosen creative mediums (song or story). The journal will be a record of the student's steps taken to arrive at the final project in completion. From text, to interpretation to song or story. These steps will include the body of each day's curriculum. The student is not required to document each step, but rather a summary of what was useful and meaningful in the day's learning for their chosen project. Since the student will be learning a basic exegetical process involving sermon writing in addition to the application of this basic method to more unconventional forms of interpretation, the journal will reflect a day to day journey of how the student arrived at the final product and what methods were utilized in the process.

The 3-5 page essay will be a summary of the insights from the journal and will also include the "hook" or the disclosure of the song or story. The essay will reflect a synthesis of method and final product.

The final product, 2-3 page story or complete song utilizing a basic verse/chorus/verse/chorus/bridge/chorus structure will reflect a theme or "hook" - the disclosure of the biblical story, and will represent some original insight of the student's work with the biblical passage. It will be evident from the final product, evaluated alongside the journal and essay, that the final product is an outcome of the daily work within the class.

Evaluation

A - 100% attendance, active class participation, on time for class, all assignments (essay, journal, song or story) not only meet criteria set out in syllabus but are exceptional representations of original work. All assignments are on time, student shares final product in end of class performance.

B - One absence, little class participation, student does not perform final product in end of class performance. All assignments completed but do not reflect the method outlined in syllabus.

C - Multiple absences or student fails to satisfy the criteria fully for essay, essay and final product are incomplete.

D - Student does not participate in class, multiple absences and does not fulfill one of the stated criteria (essay, journal, song or story) completely.

F - More than three absences, incomplete final product, incomplete essay, incomplete journal according to syllabus criteria.

Class Attendance

Class attendance is expected at all times and students should prepare to take part in discussions and other assigned activities. Absences should be cleared with the instructors ahead of time. Evaluations will take place on a non-competitive basis. Everyone begins the course with an A grade. Devaluation takes place if assignments are not met or on the basis of lack of participation, absences, etc.

Language use

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 more information, see:

<http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>

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. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

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 (or before the semester begins) 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.

Citations Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Electronic Devices

All electronic devices, laptop computers, i-pads, i-Phones, cell-phones, etc, are to be turned off during class time. Exceptions may be requested from the instructors. Taping of a class may take place only with permission by the instructor.

Required Books:

The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003) or any other Study Bible (Oxford Annotated, Harpers etc) with an NRSV translation.

The Jewish Study Bible. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler eds. (Oxford University Press, 2004.)

Frymer-Kensky, Tikva. *Reading the Women of the Bible – A New Interpretation of their Stories*. New York: Schocken, 2002. ISBN: 0-8052-4121-3

Ogden Bellis, Alice. *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes – Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible – Second Edition* -Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994, 2007.

Selected readings from the following:

Bal, Mieke. *Death and Dyssymetry – The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988 (chs.1 and 2).

Blanchard, Kathryn D. *Lady Parts: Biblical Women and the Vagina Monologues*. Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 2012.

Bos, Johanna W.H. van Wijk. *Reading Samuel: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2011 (pp. 141-154; 168-171).

Brenner, Athalya. *The Israelite Woman, Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative*. Winona Lake: Eisenbraun, 1985. ISBN: 0905774843

Camp, Claudia V. *Wise, Strange and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible*. Bloomsbury: T&T Clark, 2009.

Craddock, Fred B. *Craddock on the Craft of Preaching*. St. Louis, MO, 2011.

Fuchs, Esther. *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Bible as a Woman*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, 2003 (chs. 1 and 6).

Gafney, Wilda. *Daughters of Miriam – Women Prophets in Ancient Israel*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 2009 (chs.1 and 2).

Hemmes, Fokkelien van Dijk. *The Double Voice of her Desire*. Deo pub, 2004.

Jones, Kirk Byron. *The Jazz of Preaching: How to Preach with Great Freedom and Joy*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2010.

| Lunceford, Joe E. *Biblical Women – Submissive?* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009 (pp.36-41; 42-45; 79-83 and 147-149).

McClure, John S. *Mashup Religion: Pop Music and Theological Invention*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011.

In Preparation:

Listen to “Sunland” CD by Sherry Cothran (link will be made available), pick one of these stories to use as the basis for your final project of story or song.

Ahead of time: All biblical passages will be posted on CAMS in Johanna’s translation. Read through these ahead of time and in addition consult a traditional translation in one of your Study Bibles.

In addition: Read as much as possible of the relevant material in *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes*.

Required Biblical Texts:

2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34

Judges 3,4,11

Joshua 2, 6

Proverbs 1-9

Song of Songs

1 Samuel 28:3-25

Day 1

Bible Study 9-11

Medium of Endor: Text: 1 Samuel 28:3-25

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15-12:15

Song – “Virgin Mirror”

Overview of method: Sermon, Song, Poem, Story

Finding the Hook

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00- 4:00

Overview of Method and Application:

Text to Sermon

Introduce: “Finding the Hook”

Text to Song

Text to Poem

Text to Story

Day 2

Bible Study 9-11

Rahab, Joshua 2,6

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15-12:15

Song – “Circling the Godless City”

Focus on method focusing on Song

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00- 4:00

Focus on method using story

Example stories, Rahab, Medium of Endor

Creative dialogue with the text using extra biblical resources

Examples: “Darkness, Darkness” by Robert Plant
Poems by Elizabeth Bishop and Lorca

Fitting it all together in song or story

Day 3

Bible Study 9-11

Song of Songs: selected passages

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15-12:15

Song: “Ten Thousand Charms”
Focus on method using poetry

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00- 4:00

Interactive dialogue, “finding the hook” exercise
Application of hook to sermon, song, poem, story
Examples, Rahab song and story; Medium of Endor song and story
Students work either in small groups or alone at one of the three methods
introduced

Day 4

Bible Study 9-11

Strange Woman: Selected Texts from Proverbs

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15-12:15

Strange Woman/Wise Woman Interactive Dialogue/Exercise

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00- 4:00

Students work on chosen format piece

Have the opportunity to share insights with group

Day 5

Bible Study 9-11

Reading the Bible as a Woman – Suggested “Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative” by Esther Fuchs or something similar, various selections

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15-12:15

Discussion, Reading the Bible as a Woman

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00- 4:00

Discussion/Questions

Review formats

Open

Day 6

Bible Study 9-11

Women of Judges, overview

Focus on Deborah, Jael, Jephthah’s Daughter

Suggested text: “Death and Dyssemety: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges” – Mieke Bal

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15 – 12:15

Readings from: "Lady Parts: Biblical Women and The Vagina Monologues"
Discussion, Women of Judges

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00-4:00

Work on projects

Day 7

Bible Study 9-11

Deborah & Jael Judges 4,5

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15 – 12:15

Songs, "The Stars Fought From Heaven"
"Steady My Prey"
Matching Song to Text – Creative License

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00-4:00

Sharing of work on projects/feedback from group
Small Group Discussion with Creative Interp questions based on Deborah/Jael stories

Day 8

Bible Study 9-11

Jephthah's Daughter: Judges 11

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15 – 12:15

Song, “In My Lover’s Arms”
Handel’s Oratorio – Jephthah
Discussion, Jephthah’s Daughter

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00-4:00

Working on projects,
Creative Interp Questions in small groups
More project feedback

Day 9

Bible Study 9-11

Huldah: 2 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 34

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15 – 12:15

Song: “Seen Through”
Discussion, Huldah & Prophets in the OT

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00-4:00

Performance Rehearsal
Creative Interp questions in small groups

Day 10

Bible Study 9-11

The Text and You
Speech Ontology (perhaps)

Break – 11-11:15

Interactive Workshop 11:15 – 12:15

Song: Prophecy
Eudora Welty's "Circe"
Short discussion

Lunch – 12:15-2:00

Interactive Workshop 2:00-4:00

Performance Rehearsal and wrap up