

BI110-3: Introduction to Scripture for MFT Students
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Spring 2024 | Tuesday | 1:30pm – 4:20pm
Dr. Tyler Mayfield

Description:

This course introduces the Bible to students enrolled in the Marriage and Family Therapy program at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. It is intended to prepare students to be more biblically literate and spiritually competent pastoral care givers and marriage and family therapists in a world in which the Bible continues to be a culturally relevant voice. This course helps students clarify their own hermeneutic and relationship with the Bible and to make meaningful connections between contextual biblical interpretation and the practice of marriage and family therapy. Students will read and interpret selected portions of the Bible for themselves and engage with a variety of alternative perspectives.

Student Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the general content and organization of the Christian Bible – Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and New Testament.
2. Examine a biblical text from at least three critical perspectives: historical, literary, and theological.
3. Use a clinically appropriate theological/spiritual framework in the practice of marriage and family therapy [and pastoral care] (MFT SLO5).

Assignments & Evaluation:

Assignments are listed here as summaries of the work required along with their due dates. Students will have access on Canvas to a more detailed explanation with grading rubric.

1. Attendance and Class Participation. (20% of final grade)

Students should come to class each day eagerly ready to discuss the assigned readings. Active participation includes, but is not limited to, activities such as listening carefully to others' presentations and thoughts, taking notes, asking relevant questions, responding to others' comments, and inviting others into the conversation. It does not include dominating a group or class discussion by constant talking. Monitor and vary your forms of participation; introverts will want to speak more than they think necessary; extroverts will want to speak less than they think necessary. Students will be expected to take notes (jot down questions, write up summaries, etc.), while reading the assigned texts outside of class so that they have resources in class to use to speak.

2. Bible Content Assignment. Due via Canvas by midnight Sunday, **February 25.**

(10% of final grade)

Students will read 10 biblical books in their entirety and create a content outline for each book. One line of textual summary per biblical book chapter.

3. "HLT Reference Sheet" on Biblical Passage. Due via Canvas by midnight Sunday, **March 17** (25% of final grade)

Students will create a 3-page reference sheet that addresses 1 historical, 1 literary, and 1 theological issue within a given biblical passage.

4. Group Conversation with Professor about *The Flawed Family of God*. **April 10-12**

(25% of final grade)

Students will meet in assigned groups (of 3 people maximum) with me for an hour to present on, and converse about *The Flawed Family of God*.

5. God Image / Caregiver Image Assignment. Due via Canvas by midnight Sunday, **May 10**

(20% of final grade)

Students will complete Carolyn Bohler's God Belief Checklist and the God Metaphor Checklist that are available on Canvas. Describe your primary image(s) or metaphor(s) of God. If an image or metaphor is biblical, which biblical texts support it? In addition, choose a metaphor that expresses your pastoral/therapeutic identity. Describe how your image(s) of God supports, challenges, or complicates your pastoral/therapeutic identity.

Grading Scale

95-100	A	73-76	C
90-94	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-67	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	0-59	F

Course Books: (available for purchase and on Library Reserve)

Used versions are perfectly fine.

1. A NRSV Study Bible. Choose among 3 options:

A) *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*.

Edited by Walter Harrelson. Nashville: Abingdon. ISBN: 0687278325.

B) *The HarperCollins Study Bible*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge, Society of Biblical Literature. HarperOne, 2006. ISBN: 978-0061228407.

C) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. Edited by Michael Coogan, Marc Brettler, Carol Newsom, Pheme Perkins. Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0190276041.

2. Eric Barreto and Michael Chan, *Exploring the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016)

3. *The Flawed Family of God: Stories about the Imperfect Families in Genesis*. Carolyn B. Helsel and Song-Mi Suzie Park. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-0664265984.

4. *Grounded in the Living Word: The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices*. By Denise Dombkowski Hopkins and Michael S. Koppel. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN: 978-0802863683.

In addition to these books, there will be required readings (articles, book chapters) placed on Canvas.

Course Policies:

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.

Citation 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.

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. ***Two or more absences may result in a failing grade in the course.***

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu) during the first few days of the course 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 instructors.

Use of 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. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

Policy on late work: All written assignments are due on the date given in the syllabus. Assignments submitted late will be penalized in the grading.

Use of electronic devices in class: We ask that we create a time and space to set aside such distractions as email, Facebook, and texting in order to engage our minds and hearts. Do not send or read text messages during class. Cell phones should be silenced and/or turned off and put away. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask me for an exception to this rule. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking (but have you seen [this study?](#)) and looking at CAMS readings. There is no need to access the Internet during class time. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for dismissal from the session and will negatively affect the course grade. If you wish to reflect more on the role of technology in our conversations and ability to connect, perhaps start here: <https://nyti.ms/2jAp81D>

COURSE SCHEDULE

BIBLE CONTENT

Tuesday, February 13

Today's Topics

1. Introductions to class, syllabus, each other
2. Canons; structure of the Bible
3. What is the Bible?

Readings for Today:

Eric Barreto and Michael Chan, *Exploring the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016): 3-50.

Tyler Mayfield, *A Guide to Bible Basics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018): 2-5. [Canvas]

Tuesday, Feb. 20

Today's Topics:

1. Old Testament Content
Pentateuch/Torah, Prophets, Writings
2. New Testament Content
Gospels and Paul

Readings for Today:

Eric Barreto and Michael Chan, *Exploring the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 59-62, 71-78, 87-111.

CRITICAL APPROACHES

Tuesday, Feb. 27:

Today's Topics:

Introduction to interpretation/exegesis

HLT: 3 Chairs and a Couch

Reading the Bible Historically

Ancient family as case study

Readings for Today:

Sandra L. Gravett, Karla G. Bohmbach, F. V. Greifenhagen, Donald C. Polaski, *An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008): 53-77, 95-114. [Canvas]

Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Biblical Interpretation and the Social Location of the Interpreter: African Women's Reading of the Bible," in *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (edited by Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, Vol. 2 of *Reading from This Place*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995): 33-51. [Canvas]

Douglas Knight and Amy-Jill Levine, *The Meaning of the Bible: What the Jewish Scriptures and Christian Old Testament Can Teach Us* (New York: HarperOne, 2011): 53-64. [Canvas]

Tuesday, March 5:

Today's Topics:

Reading the Bible as Literature

Poetry and Narrative, Structure and Genre

Reading the Bible Theologically

Introduction to contextual biblical scholarship

Test Case: Genesis 2:4b-25 in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspectives

Readings for Today:

Renita Weems, “Reading Her Way through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible,” in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Cain Hope Felder; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991): 57-77. [Canvas]

Mitzi Smith, *Womanist Sass and Talk Back: Social (In)Justice, Intersectionality, and Biblical Interpretation* (Wipf and Stock, 2008): 7-27. [Canvas]

Genesis 2:4b-25

Tuesday, March 12:

Today’s Topics:

HLT Summary

Exegetical HLT Practicum on two biblical texts

Isaiah 58:1-12

Luke 1:26-38

Readings for Today:

Tyler D. Mayfield “Isaiah 58:1-12: Exegetical Perspective,” in *Feasting on the Word Year A Volume 2* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 3-7. [Canvas]

Barbara E. Reid and Shelley Matthews, *Luke 1-9* (Wisdom Commentary; Liturgical Press, 2021), 15-35. [Canvas]

Amy-Jill Levine and Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Luke* (New Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 32-37. [Canvas]

FAMILY MATTERS

Tuesday, March 26:

Today's Topics:

Biblical Families

Singleness

Sibling Rivalry

Readings for Today:

The Flawed Family of God, 1-33.

Tuesday, April 2:

Today's Topics:

Infertility

Blended Families

Readings for Today:

The Flawed Family of God, 59-86.

Tuesday, April 9:

Today's Topics:

Near sacrifice of Isaac

Competitive parenting

Visit from 2024 Grawemeyer Winner in Religion, Charles Halton

Readings for Today:

The Flawed Family of God, 87-114.

Charles Halton, *A Human-Shaped God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021),

TOPICS

Tuesday, April 16:

Today's Topics:

1. Intersections of Pastoral Care and Bible
2. Telling Our Stories
3. Listening Well

Readings for Today:

Grounded in the Living Word: The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices, pp. 1-17, 28-49.

Tuesday, April 23:

Today's Topics:

1. God Images and Caregiver Images

Readings for Today:

Grounded in the Living Word: The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices, 53-88.

Bohler, Carolyn Jane. "The God Belief" and "The God Metaphor" checklists. In *God the What? What our Metaphors for God Reveal about our Beliefs in God*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2008, pp. 133-139 [Canvas]

Tuesday, April 30:

Today's Topics:

Pain, Grief, Lament

Readings for Today:

Grounded in the Living Word: The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices, 120-152.

Tuesday, May 7:

Today's Topics:

Wrapping-up

The Doctrine of Scripture

Readings for Today:

Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006): 161-185. [Canvas]

Karen Armstrong, "Post-Scripture," in *The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts* (New York: Knopf, 2019): 451-481. [Canvas]