

DM 6462 (Seminar II) – The Minister as Biblical Interpreter
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
June 19-23, 2017

Instructors:

Susan R. Garrett
sgarrett@lpts.edu

Ann Laird Jones
annlairdj55@gmail.com

“As long as there are women and men who still read the Bible for its theo-ethical value . . . then there remains—for those of us who care to do so—the responsibility to help contemporary readers to read the Bible with a suspicious hope, careful of the Bible’s distortions and mindful of its possibilities.” Renita J. Weems in *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 123 n.7.

“All too often we equate piety and devotion with passive obedience to the biblical texts. Resistance, however, can be a sign of a deep piety. While devout people do certainly listen to and read the Bible, they also actively engage it.” Carol Hess in *Caretakers of Our Common House: Women’s Development in Communities of Faith* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 202.

“We get it all right, every exegetical jot and tittle but what does it matter? Whom does it save? We preach as if we were going to be graded by our seminary Bible professors, not as if we wanted to change the lives of our people. Perhaps by preaching biblically we can do as biblical writers did with the traditions they received. We can use the text as a fountain for our thought and not as a straitjacket.” David L. Bartlett in *Between the Bible and the Church: New Methods for Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 29.

Course Description

This seminar re-introduces students to critical biblical interpretation in order to strengthen biblical/theological reflection as a central practice of Christian ministry. Focusing on the specific topic of “trials of faith” as portrayed in various biblical texts, students will practice delineating hermeneutical frameworks; acquiring specific knowledge of biblical context and content; and using skillsets for application of their learning in specific ministerial contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Relate the theological discipline of biblical studies to the practice of ministry (preaching, pastoral care, teaching, administrative leadership, etc.) in their ministerial contexts, with explicit attention to hermeneutical frameworks (their own and those operative in their ministerial context).
Assignments #2 and #5.
2. Discuss their own methods for making learned use of biblical texts in the practices of preaching, pastoral leadership, and/or pastoral care. *Assignments #3 and #5.*

3. Correlate critical reflections on Scripture to their emerging DMin projects or to a particular situation in their current ministerial context. *Assignment #5*.
4. Describe and analyze ethical and theological problems presented by biblical portrayals of humans facing trials of faith. *Assignments #2 and #4*.

Books for Purchase

1. Bartlett, David Lyon. 1999. *Between the Bible and the Church: New Methods for Biblical Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 0687028256. *Available used*.
2. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1997. *Creation and Fall; Temptation. Two Biblical Studies*. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 0684825872.
3. Garrett, Susan R. 1998. *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 0802842593.
4. McAlpine, Thomas H. 2003. *Facing the Powers*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock. ISBN: 159244282X.
5. Stringfellow, William. 2004. *Instead of Death*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock. ISBN: 1592448739. (*Note: Be sure to purchase this edition.*)

Readings on CAMS

1. Garrett, Susan R. "Christ and the Present Evil Age." In *Interpretation* 57/4 (October, 2003): 370-83.
2. Garrett, Susan R. "James." 2009. www.TheThoughtfulChristian.com.
3. Johnson, Luke Timothy. 1995. *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday. 173-216 and 311-24.

Assignments and Grading

1. Read and take notes on all assigned books and articles. These notes will be for your personal use during the seminar and will not be turned in. **Attendance and informed participation will count for 20% of your final grade.**
2. Read the materials assigned for discussion on Monday, June 19th (Garrett, "Christ and the Present Evil Age"; Stringfellow; McAlpine). Write a 3-page essay in which you describe your own hermeneutical framework for making sense of biblical (especially NT) language about "principalities and powers." One approach (among many possible) would be to use McAlpine's typology of hermeneutical models to address the question, how do you characterize your own interpretation of the powers and the dominant interpretation of those in your ministerial context? **Due by March 3, 2017. This assignment will count for 20% of your final grade.**
3. Write a 2-page response to Bartlett's book in which you connect some aspect(s) of the book to your developing DMin project. How might Bartlett's work enhance your project as you begin to think biblically about your ministry setting and project? How does his understanding of the Bible and biblical preaching inform and enhance your ability to use the Bible for this project? *Note: if you have not yet decided what your project will be, then focus on how Bartlett's work can enhance your practice of preaching, pastoral leadership, or pastoral care in your ministry setting.* **Due by April 7. This assignment will count for 10% of your final grade.**

4. Write a 3-page essay on a theme treated in the Bonhoeffer work *Temptation*. In your paper, you should interact with Bonhoeffer, drawing on pertinent biblical passages related to the topic as well as human experience (yours or others'). You may choose the theme yourself, or you may use one of the following ideas:
- In times of temptation the Christian is abandoned by his or her powers—and, in a manner of speaking, by God (see p. 112 and elsewhere).
 - Satan is a deceptive seducer, who comes to us not from hell but in paradise (see pp. 116-117).
 - There are three types of temptation for the Christian: temptation of the flesh, spiritual temptation, and complete temptation (each correlated with one of Satan's temptations of Jesus in the accounts of Luke 4 and Matthew 4; this theme is introduced on pp. 118-20 and elaborated on pp. 131-42).
 - In the experience of lust (including but not limited to sexual lust), "powers of the body, the mind and the will, which were held in obedience under the discipline of the Word, of which I believed that I was the master, make it clear to me that I am by no means master of them" (132).
 - "Temptation of the flesh through desire and through suffering is at bottom one and the same" (134).

Due May 26. *This assignment will count for 20% of your final grade.*

5. A 10-page paper (give or take) in which you do *one* of the following:
- Discuss a particular ministry situation or issue of practice in your ministerial context that is related to the topic of the seminar. Analysis of this situation should draw on both practical reflection from Seminar I, and biblical and theological reflection from the assigned readings in Seminar II. It should also include suggestions for a redemptive response or approach to the situation or issue at hand, and discuss briefly any ideas you may have for possible project study questions that have been prompted by this exercise.
 - Discuss how you will use biblical resources in your ministry project. How do you currently envision your project? How will critical biblical reflection contribute to your execution of it? What specific texts will you be using? What is the hermeneutical framework you will be utilizing in your analysis of them? What historical, literary, or theological information or insights will inform your analysis? This is an opportunity for you to "try out" the biblical analysis portion of your final project; if you choose this option, you will be using interpretive skills gained in Seminar II, but may focus on biblical texts and themes different from than those covered in the seminar.

Due July 7. *This assignment will count for 30% of your final grade.*

Policies

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.

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.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the instructor and with the Director of the Academic Support Center in advance of the course, to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor. The Director of the Academic Support Center is the Rev. Beth Herrinton-Hodge (email bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu).

Citation Policy

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

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

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

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

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

Attendance Policy

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. Because this course is only one week long, a single unexcused absence may result in a lower grade in the course, and more than one absence (whether excused or unexcused) may result in a failing grade in the course.

Schedule

Time	Monday, June 19	Tuesday, June 20	Wednesday, June 21	Thursday, June 22	Friday, June 23
9:00–9:15	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer
9:15–10:45	1. Intro to Class 2. Renewing acquaintances	Biblical traditions about testing (read Garrett 1998, pp. 19-49)	Trials of faith in the Epistle of James (read the Epistle of James; Garrett 2009; Johnson)	Trials of faith in Mark (read Mark; Garrett 1998, pp. 51-end)	Discussion: Bonhoeffer (the book <i>Temptation</i> only)
10:45–11:00	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11:00–12:30	Discussion: McAlpine; Garrett 2003	Biblical texts about testing: Job 1–2; Mark; Luke 4:1-13; Rom 5:3-4; 1 Cor 7:5; 11:28-32; 2 Cor 12:7-10; Heb 2:14-18; 4:16; 5:7-10; 12:5-11; Jas 1:2-8; 4:7; Rev 3:10. Can you identify an agent of testing in each of these passages?	Trials of faith in the Epistle of James (continued)	Trials of faith in Mark (continued)	Bonhoeffer (continued)
12:30–1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30–3:00	Discussion: Stringfellow	Discussion of testing as it relates to views of (a) principalities and powers, and (b) the sovereignty of God	Trials of faith in the Epistle of James (continued)	Trials of faith in Mark (continued)	Wrap-up
3:00–3:15	Break	Break	Break	Break	Early dismissal
3:15–5:00	Articulating hermeneutical frameworks for talking about principalities and powers	Popular recent views of testing. In preparation, watch the movie <i>Michael</i> or the movie <i>City of Angels</i> . How is temptation viewed in these films?	Takeaways from James for Christians facing trials of faith today (esp. wrt pastoral care)	Takeaways from Mark's treatment of trials of faith (e.g., wrt Christology; ecclesiology; leadership)	Safe travels!

