

OT 102-3 Introduction to Old Testament Exegesis

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Spring 2019

Tues & Thurs 8:30 – 9:50 AM

Schlegel Hall 122

Prerequisites

OT 101-3 Elements of Biblical Hebrew

OT 100-4 Scripture 1

Instructor Contact

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Schlegel 304

Office Hours: email for appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to the methodologies, benefits, and difficulties of biblical exegesis of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Over the course of this semester, students will investigate various ways in which a reader can find meaning in a given biblical text, and students will practice applying these methodologies in the development of their own exegetical practices.

Learning Goals

By completing this course, students will:

1. Gain a greater ability to read (vocalize) and translate biblical Hebrew
2. Understand the various levels of agency wielded by every translator and interpreter of a biblical text
3. Be able to explain the major exegetical methodologies in the study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament insofar as they can be understood as applying to the world behind the text, the world within the text, and the world in front of the text
4. Be able to exegete a passage from their own social location while applying multiple methodologies involving the world behind, within, and in front of the text
5. Gain a stronger understanding of biblical interpretation by communities historically marginalized by White male perspectives in biblical studies

How Learning Happens

I have structured this course to follow an emancipatory model of education. This means that the goals and process of learning for us are geared toward creating a more just and democratic society. It also means that the process of learning is not based on a unilateral sharing of packaged information, but rather fostering critical thinking, creative thinking, and collaboration. Our thought and study will be problem oriented rather than positivistic and dogmatic; more perspectival rather than relativistic; and geared toward contextual collaboration with the belief that engaging with our differences can enrich our thought and life.

Required Readings

- William P. Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*
- Jo Ann Hackett, *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*
- An English translation of a study Bible. Options include those listed below (others are acceptable with approval):
 - *The Jewish Study Bible* (Published by JPS)
 - *The Harper Collins Study Bible*
 - *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*
 - *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*
- *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
- A Hebrew/English Lexicon:
 - BDB
 - *HALOT*
 - Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*

Contract Grading

The contract grading system below has been implemented in order to facilitate an environment that aligns with the emancipatory model of education. This system should foster more collaborative (rather than competitive) interactions and ease tensions about “making-the-grade.” Based upon your individual learning goals, each student can choose how much work to do for this course and expect a grade within the range displayed below.

C Level Work:

1. Active participation in class and group discussions
2. Completion of all translation and other assignments
3. Completion of all six stages of the exegesis paper

B Level Work:

1. All the requirements of the previous level
2. Class Notes Assignment (see guidelines on CAMS)

A Level Work:

1. All of the requirements of the previous level
2. Secondary Reading Notes Assignment (see guidelines on CAMS)

All students must submit a final exegesis paper that will be completed in six stages over the course of the semester:

1. Select a text from the book of Genesis for your exegesis paper and submit to professor for approval. (Due Feb 21)
2. Translate a minimum of four verses from your selected passage for your exegesis paper. Include at least 3 footnotes where you deem necessary. (Due Mar 5)
3. Submit a five-page (size 12, double-spaced) paper investigating the world behind the text that you have chosen. You will need to conduct research outside of the assigned readings to complete this assignment. (Due Mar 26)
4. Submit a five-page (size 12, double-spaced) paper investigating the world within the text that you have chosen. You will need to use your readings and notes for this assignment. You can, but you are not required to conduct research outside of the assigned readings to complete this assignment. (Due Apr 4)
5. Submit a five-page (size 12, double-spaced) paper investigating the world in front of the text that you have chosen. You will need to use your readings and notes for this assignment. You can, but you are not required to, conduct research outside of the assigned readings to complete this assignment. (Due May 7)
6. Submit a 15 – 20 page (size 12, double-spaced) paper that brings together the previous stages of exegetical research. (Due May 15; or May 17 for graduating students)
 - a. Your paper must have a thesis (see guidelines on CAMS)
 - b. Your paper must incorporate substantive feedback from the professor
 - c. If the professor advises you to produce a draft for the writing center, students must bring that draft to the writing center before submitting it

Please note: All the papers you submit for this course must meet substantive and formal requirements for a graduate level course in order to be accepted for a minimum A- or B- or C-grade. If a paper is not submitted on time or if it is unsatisfactory, you will receive a grade of a lower level depending on the work you have done.

All Assignments with Due Dates

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Due Dates</u> (bring to class unless otherwise indicated) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Self-Inventory Questions | Feb 14 |
| Select Exegesis Text | Feb 21 (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |
| Translate Gen 1:1 – 2 | Feb 21 |
| Trans. Gen 4:1 – 9 w/ footnotes | Feb 28 |
| Trans. 4+ verses for exegesis paper | Mar 5 (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |
| Trans. Jer 20:7 – 9 w/ fn.'s | Mar 12 |
| 5-pages on world behind text | Mar 26 (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |
| Trans. Gen 25:21 – 28 w/ fn.'s | Mar 28 |
| 3 Literary Questions on Gen 25 | Mar 28 |
| Trans. Ps 13:1 – 6 w/ fn. | Apr 2 |
| 5-pages on the world within text | Apr 9 (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |
| 5-pages on the world in front of text | May 7 (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |
| | |
| Final Exegesis Paper | May 17 (or May 15 for graduating students) (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |
| | |
| Class Notes Assignment (for B) | May 15 (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |
| Reading Notes Assignment (for A) | May 15 (Submit via email by 11:59 PM) |

Course Schedule

1. Feb 7: **Introducing our course**
 - a. Reading(s): none
 - b. Assignment(s): none
2. Feb 12: **Introduction to Exegesis**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 3 – 10, 21 – 22
 - ii. Tiffany and Ringe, 14 – 22, 89 – 93, 95 – 102
 - b. Assignment(s): none
3. Feb 14: **Self Exegesis**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 11 – 19
 - ii. Tiffany and Ringe, 25 – 27, 41 – 48, 53
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. The People's Companion to the Bible Self Inventory Questions [CAMMS]
4. Feb 19: **Translation**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 25 – 40, 42 – 44
 - ii. Gravett, Bohmbach, Greifenhagen, and Polaski, 42-45
 - b. Assignment(s): none
5. Feb 21: **Translation**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Seidman, 157 – 175
 - ii. Gafney, "Appendix B," 281 – 292
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Select a text from the book of Genesis for your exegesis paper. Submit to professor for approval.
 - ii. Translate Genesis 1:1 – 2
6. Feb 26: **Text Criticism**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 45 – 62
 - ii. Hendel, 3 – 5
 - b. Assignment(s): none
7. Feb 28: **Translation with Text Criticism and Translation issues in mind**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Genesis 4:1-16
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Translate Gen 4:1 – 9 with footnotes
8. Mar 5: **Historical Analysis and Redaction Criticism**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 161 – 171
 - ii. Brown, 113 – 126
 - b. Assignment(s):

- i. Translate a **minimum of four** (you are free to translate more) verses for your exegesis text.
- 9. Mar 7: **Source Criticism**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Baden, 13 – 33, 246 – 249
 - b. Assignment(s): none
- 10. Mar 12: **Form Criticism**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 95 – 112
 - ii. Schlimm, 160 – 179
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Translate Jeremiah 20:7 – 9 with footnotes
- 11. Mar 14: **Ancient Southwest Asian and Northeast African Parallels**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 127 – 143
 - b. Assignment(s): none

READING WEEK

- 12. Mar 26: **Literary Analysis: Prose**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 1 – 24
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Submit a five-page paper on the world behind the text that you have selected for your exegetical paper (historical background, text criticism, source criticism, form criticism, ancient parallels, ect.)
- 13. Mar 28: **Literary Analysis in Practice**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Genesis 25:19 – 34
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Translate with footnotes Genesis 25:21 – 28.
 - ii. Develop three literary questions that can draw you deeper into the narrative of Genesis 25:19 – 34. Just questions, no answers.
- 14. Apr 2: **Literary Analysis: Poetry**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 1 – 28
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Translate Ps 13:1 – 6 with footnotes
- 15. Apr 4: **Canonical Perspectives**
 - a. Reading(s):
 - i. Childs, 46 – 55
 - ii. Sanders, 21 – 45
 - b. Assignment(s): none
- 16. Apr 9: **Theological Interpretation**

- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Brown, 317 – 326
 - ii. Collins, 196 – 214
 - iii. Optional: Moberly, 1-20
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Submit a five-page paper on the world within the text that you have selected for your exegetical paper (literary perspectives and final form criticism)
17. Apr 11: **Jewish Interpretations and Theological Concerns**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Perdue, 183 – 194 (194 – 238 suggested)
 - ii. Wijk-Bos, 78 – 82
 - b. Assignment(s): none
18. Apr 16: **Feminist Interpretations**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Bach, xiii-xxiv
 - ii. Loades, 81 – 94
 - b. Assignment(s): none
19. Apr 18: **Reading with Gender and Sexuality in Mind**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Hendel, Kronfeld, and Pardes, 71 – 91
 - b. Assignment(s): none
20. Apr 23: **Black and Womanist Interpretations**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Smith, 1 – 21
 - ii. Brown, 265 – 269
 - iii. Gafney, “Introduction,” 1 – 11
 - b. Assignment(s): none
21. Apr 25: **Latinx and Mujerista Interpretations**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Guardiola-Sáenz, 11 – 34 [<https://www.lextheo.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/File-3-Guardiola-S%C3%A1enz-1.pdf>]
 - b. Assignment(s): none
22. Apr 30: **Asian and Asian American Interpretations**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Yee, 152-163
 - ii. Yeong, “A Political Reception of the Bible,” [<http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=457>]
 - b. Assignment(s): none
23. May 2: **Native American Indian Interpretations**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Warrior, 277 – 285
 - b. Assignment(s): none
24. May 7: **Reading with Disability in Mind**

- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Junior and Schipper, 21 – 38
 - b. Assignment(s):
 - i. Submit a five-page paper on the world in front of the text that you have selected for your exegetical paper (theological issues and the reader/reading community)
25. May 9: **Bringing Things Together**
- a. Reading(s):
 - i. Tiffany and Ringe, 205 – 224
 - b. Assignment(s): none

***Final exegesis paper (with substantive revisions and a thesis) due **May 17**. For those graduating this spring, final draft is due **May 15**.

Bibliography

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3. Baden, Joel. "The Documentary Hypothesis" and "Conclusion." Pages 13-33, 246-249, and 255-261 in *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
4. Bach, Alice. "Introduction: Man's World, Woman's Place, Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible." Pages xiii-xxiv in *Women in the Hebrew Bible*. Ed. Alice Bach (New York: Routledge, 1999).
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6. Collins, John J. "Modern Theology." Pages 196-214 in Hendel, Ron, ed. *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
7. Elliot, Neil. "Self-Inventory Questions", Pages xxx-xxxii in DeYoung, Curtiss Paul, Wilda C. Gafney, Leticia A. Guardiola-Sáenz, George "Tink" Tinker, and Frank M. Yamada, eds. *The People's Companion to the Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.
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15. Loades, Ann. "Feminist Interpretation." Pages 81-94 in Barton, John, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
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17. Moberly, R. W. L. "Introduction: What is a Theology of Genesis?" Pages 1-20 in *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
18. Perdue, Leo G. "From Jewish Tradition to Biblical Theology." Pages 183-238 in *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology, After the Collapse of History*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.
19. Sanders, James A. "Canonical Process." Pages 21-45. *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
20. Schlimm, Matthew Richard. "Drowning in Tears and Raging at God." Pages 160-179 in *This Strange and Sacred Scripture: Wrestling with the Old Testament and Its Oddities*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.
21. Seidman, Naomi. "Translation." Pages 157-175 in Ron Hendel (ed.) *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
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27. Yeong Mee Lee, "A Political Reception of the Bible: Korean Minjung Theological Interpretation of the Bible," *SBL Forum*, n.p. [cited Oct 2005]. Online: <http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=457>

Course Policies

Inclusive and Expansive Language

Whether you are aware of this fact or not, Louisville Seminary emphasizes the use of inclusive and expansive language with regards to people in our written and oral communications. This intentionality of language should be representative of the span of humanity with respect to gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, as well as physical and intellectual capacities. With gender, for example, “humankind” is an inclusive alternative to the androcentric term “mankind.” For many of us, this type of writing, speaking, and thinking may be new or different and we encourage you to continue to work with it as one aspect of proclaiming the truth of the gospel for all people.

In this course, we will also discuss God with this intentionality of language in mind. While it is clear that the Bible often uses masculine forms to refer to God, the Christian faith has always taught that God is beyond male and female. In keeping with the Christian conviction that God is neither male nor female and the attempt to remain intentional with our language, you are encouraged to either avoid gendered pronouns when referring to God or use pronouns that intentionally reflect the metaphors, theology, or claims you are making. Part of this expectation is that members of this community will be intentional with what we say rather than complicit in perpetuating biases (especially those we do not agree with) based upon our ignorance or lack of effort. To help us remain intentional with our language, the instructor may encourage students, on occasion, to remain cognizant of the language that we use.

Direct quotations and translations from the biblical text need not be altered to conform with this policy; but, you may alter these as well if you so choose.

Attendance

Prompt attendance is mandatory. Excessive tardiness (in time or frequency) constitutes an absence. Two unexcused absences negate your grading contract. If absences become a problem, students must meet with the instructor regarding the possibility of passing this class.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to submit their own work—or their own group's work in the cases where we have group assignments. The use of any ideas or words from an outside source must be acknowledged by an appropriate citation of the author and source. Failure to follow these guidelines constitutes plagiarism and may result in failure of this 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 at 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 Director of the Academic Support Center 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.

Policy on Late Work

All assignments must be turned in on time. Students may be offered grace with regards to one late assignment during the course of the term. This grace does not apply to the final submission of the exegesis paper.