

OT 421-3 Biblical Interpretation after the Holocaust  
(Post-Shoah Christian Biblical Hermeneutics)  
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary  
Fall 2016: Mondays 2-4:50PM

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**Course Description:**

This seminar-style course critically examines Christian biblical interpretation in light of the Shoah. The course focuses successively on major topics involved in a Post-Shoah biblical hermeneutics. Students examine several long-standing hermeneutical traditions that have flourished in Christian theology, preaching, and popular conceptualization as a means to consider alternative understandings of Judaism and its relationship to Christianity.

**Course Objectives:**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Reflect critically on the Holocaust as a historical event with profound ethical and theological implications for Jewish-Christian dialogue, the human relationship to God, but especially biblical interpretation.
2. Identify anti-Judaism in Christian history and anti-Judaic readings of the Bible in a Christian context.
3. Articulate own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry.
4. Demonstrate a capacity for ecumenical and interreligious relations.
5. Produce and evaluate alternative and Post-Shoah readings of biblical texts.

## Assignments & Evaluation for a Seminar Style Class:

***\*\*I have limited the assignments in order to focus on pre-class readings and in-class discussions.\*\****

### 1) **Attendance & Participation.** (40% 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 should force themselves to speak more than they think necessary; extroverts should force themselves 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 about various subjects. I expect that students will need at least 6 hours each week to prepare for our approx. 3 hour class; you should not expect to prepare in one setting per week.

### 2) **Weekly 2-page Papers.** (40% of final grade)

Students will write a 2-page paper (not 1.5 or 2.5 pages) in preparation for each class session (excepting the first class); so, 10 papers total. These papers respond to a specific question or prompt given in the syllabus. A **hardcopy** of the paper is **due in class** each week. Students will often use the paper in class to contribute to class participation (in addition to their notes; see above) and will turn it in for grading at the end of each class.

### 3) **Attend 3 Shabbat services.** (20% of final grade)

Students will simply attend 3 Jewish worship services over the course of the fall semester. Students are required to attend The Temple at least ONCE (both Torah Study and Shabbat services) to become acquainted with Reform Judaism and to attend either KI or AJ ONCE to get a feel for Conservative Judaism. The third visit choice is at your discretion. If your schedule does not accommodate these Saturday visits, see me for a more arduous, alternate assignment.

A) The Temple, Congregation Adath Israel Brith Sholom, is Kentucky's oldest and largest Jewish congregation. Chartered in 1843, The Temple was the sixth Reform congregation established in America. <http://www.thetemplelouky.org/>  
Saturday Morning Services: 9:00 am Torah Study; 10:30 am Shabbat Services.

B) Keneseth Israel Congregation, 2531 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40205.  
<http://www.kenesethisrael.com/> Services: Saturdays @ 9:30am.

C) Congregation Adath Jeshurun. 2401 Woodbourne Avenue, Louisville, KY 40205.  
[www.adathjeshurun.com/](http://www.adathjeshurun.com/) Services: Saturdays @ 9:30am.

## **Course 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 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.

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

### 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 by one letter grade increment for every day (a B+ paper becomes a B if one day late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted.

### Use of electronic devices in class

This course is a seminar-style one based on deep engagement with the readings and colleagues. Do not send or read text messages during class. Cell phones should be silenced. 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 and CAMS reading. You may not 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.

### **Required Course Books:**

- 1) R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).
- 2) Elie Wiesel. *Night* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).
- 3) Mary C. Boys, ed. *Seeing Judaism Anew* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

Additional readings are available on CAMS and Library Reserve. See Course Schedule for notifications.

## Course Schedule:

### Part I: The Holocaust as Theological Rupture

Monday, September 12

1. Introductions to Course, Syllabus
2. What is the Holocaust?
3. Why does the Holocaust matter?

#### *Required Readings:*

Read (or reread) Eli Wiesel, *Night*

Robert P. Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 1-23 [CAMS]

Walter Brueggemann, "Reading from the Day 'In Between'" in *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (ed. Tod Linafelt; New York: Routledge, 2002), 105-116. [Library Reserve only]

*Seeing Judaism Anew*, 3-14.

#### *Further Recommended Readings:*

Stephen R. Haynes, "Beware Good News: Faith and Fallacy in Post-Holocaust Christianity," in *"Good News" After Auschwitz? Christian Faith within a Post-Holocaust World* (eds. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth; Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001), 3-20. [CAMS]

*No Paper Due Today*

Monday, September 19

1. Their Brother's Keepers: Christians during the Holocaust

2. Genesis 4

*Required Readings:*

Mary C. Boys, "Christianity's Complicity in the Shoah: Continuities and Discontinuities," *Journal of Inter-Religious Studies* 15 (2014): 30-36.

<http://irdialogue.org/journal/>

Skim "Chronology" from *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 1993): 22-33 [CAMS]

Richard L. Rubenstein and John K. Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and Its Legacy Revised Edition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 249-265, 280-282, 286-290. [CAMS]

John K. Roth *Ethics During and After the Holocaust: In the Shadow of Birkenau* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 45-53. [CAMS]

<https://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/speakers-and-events/all-speakers-and-events/cain-and-abel-a-story-of-family-friends-and-genocide-in-one-rwandan-village>

*Paper Topic:*

Based on all the readings, comment on and explore John Roth's contention: "...while Christianity was not a sufficient condition for the Holocaust, Christianity was a necessary condition for that disaster." (47)

## Part II: A Brief History of Christian-Jewish Relations

Monday, September 26

1. Pre-Shoah Christian Biblical Hermeneutics
2. *Adversus Iudaeos* literature: Augustine, etc.
3. *Judensau*
4. The Reformation and the Jews: Luther and Calvin

### *Required Readings:*

Kessler, Edward. *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 45-54, 61-64, 119-123. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

Robert Chazan. "Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (eds. Frymer-Kensky et. al.; Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2000), 10-21. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000): 39-57, 67-70. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

<http://www.ccsr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/272-luther-1523> Luther's *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*

<http://www.ccsr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/273-luther-1543> Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies*

Kirsi Stjerna, "The Jew in Luther's World," in *Martin Luther, The Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader* (eds. Brooks Schramm and Kirsi I. Stjerna; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012): 17-35. [CAMS]

### *Further Recommended Readings:*

R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 25-56.

### *Paper Topic:*

Write a 2-page paper on the basic Christian understandings of Judaism as presented in the *Adversus Iudaeos* literature from Augustine to Luther. How did the Christian tradition portray Jews and their beliefs and practices?

Monday, October 3

Post-Shoah Christian Ecumenical/Interfaith Statements

1. Nostra Aetate
2. Post World War II Protestant Statements
3. Contemporary Dialogue: *A Sacred Obligation; Dabru Emet*

*Required Readings:*

Kessler, Edward. *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 140-144. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

*Seeing Judaism Anew*, 241-262.

Read carefully *Nostra Aetate* (1965) <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/second-vatican-council/293-nostra-aetate>

If you are PCUSA, read *A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews* (PCUSA, 1987); *Christians and Jews: People of God* (PCUSA, 2010) at this website: <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources>

If you are not PCUSA, then find and read your denominational statement about Judaism at the following site: <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/protestant-churches>

*A Sacred Obligation* (located in *Seeing Judaism Anew* textbook, pages xiii-xix)

*Dabru Emet* (google it!)

*Further Recommended Readings:*

Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000): 247-266. [Library Reserve]

*Paper Topic:*

Your 2-page paper should address how your denomination's post-World War II statements have addressed the need for a different approach to Jewish-Christian relations. What theological issues are being addressed? How does your denomination present Jews and Judaism today?



### **Part III: Post-Shoah Christian Biblical Hermeneutics: Topics and Texts**

Monday, October 10

1. Topic: Non-Supersessionist Christian Theologies of Judaism, Part I: Soulen
2. Texts: Biblical Covenants: Sinai and the “New” Covenant in Jesus

*Required Readings:*

R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 1-21, 109-155. [read the whole book, if you have time and interest!]

Peter Ochs, “Judaism and Christian Theology,” in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918* (third edition; ed. David F. Ford; Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 645-662. [CAMS]

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*Seeing Judaism Anew*, 17-25.

Kessler, Edward. *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 170-79. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

Clark Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 107-138. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

*Further Recommended Readings:*

Marvin R. Wilson, *Exploring Our Hebraic Heritage: A Christian Theology of Roots and Renewal* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 245-257 [Library Reserve]

*Paper Topic:*

Your 2-page paper should first briefly summarize (1/2 - 3/4 page maybe) and then mostly analyze/critique/praise Soulen’s theological formulations of a non-supersessionist Christian theology. Does he succeed in being non-supersessionist? Is this theology attractive to you? What does he emphasize within the Christian tradition? What does he neglect?

Monday, October 24

1. Topic: Non-Supersessionist Christian Theologies of Judaism, Part II: Williamson
2. Topic: The Problem with “Judeo-Christian” / Judaism within Comparative Theology
3. Text: Genesis 22

*Required Readings:*

1. Clark Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 1-26, 202-232. [CAMS and Library Reserve]
2. Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, “Comparative Theology and the Status of Judaism: Hegemony and Reversals,” in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation* (ed. Francis Clooney; T&T Clark, 2010), 89-108. [CAMS]
3. Kessler, Edward. *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 81-101. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

*Further Recommended Readings:*

Edward Kessler, *Bound by the Bible: Jews, Christians and the Sacrifice of Isaac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

*Paper Topic:*

Begin your paper by comparing and contrasting Jewish and Christian readings of Genesis 22 using the Kessler chapter (1 page). Then, move into a discussion of how Christians might be able to learn from Jewish interpretations of biblical passages while remaining rooted in the Christian tradition (1 page).

Monday, October 31

1. Topic: Sharing Scriptures
2. Topic: The “Old Testament” as Equally the Word of God – But what should we call it?
3. Topic: Prophecy and Fulfillment: The Relationship Between the New Testament and Old Testament
4. Text: Isaiah 7

*Required Readings:*

Read Sections I and II of *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2001) <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/vatican-curia/282-pbc-2001>

*Seeing Judaism Anew*, 115-123.

Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 193-199. [CAMS]

Patricia K. Tull, “‘Isaiah ’Twas Foretold It’: Helping the Church Interpret the Prophets,” in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* edited by Tod Linafelt (New York: New York University Press, 2000): 192-207. [CAMS]

*Further Recommended Readings:*

John Pawlikowski, “Preaching in Advent: Rethinking the Fulfillment Theme,” *Christian Jewish Relations* 15.4 (1982): 12-16.

*Paper Topic:*

For this 2-page paper, select 2-3 salient points from the Catholic document *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* Sections I and II and summarize them. Why are they important to you and to Christian-Jewish dialogue?

Monday, November 7

1. Topic: Old Testament Theology in a Post-Shoah World: A Jewish Perspective
2. Text: The Exodus story: Universality and Particularity

*Required Readings:*

Marvin A. Sweeney, "Reconceiving the Paradigms of Old Testament Theology in the Post-Shoah Period," in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (ed. Alice Ogden Bellis & Joel S. Kaminsky; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 155-166. [CAMS]

Pixley, Levenson, and Collins articles in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (ed. Alice Ogden Bellis & Joel S. Kaminsky; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 215-275. [CAMS and Library Reserve]

*Paper Topic:*

This 2-page paper should summarize and analyze the major arguments of Pixley and Levenson. What are they arguing about? Which positions do they take? What do you think about each of their arguments?

Monday, November 14

1. Topic: Old Testament Theology in a Post-Shoah World: A Christian Perspective
2. Text: Job

*Required Readings:*

Walter Brueggemann, "A Fissure Always Uncontained," in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* edited by Tod Linafelt (New York: New York University Press, 2000): 62-75. [CAMS]

Steven Kepnes, "Job and Post-Holocaust Theodicy," in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* edited by Tod Linafelt (New York: New York University Press, 2000): 252-266. [CAMS]

*Paper Topic:*

Why do you think Brueggemann uses the phrase "a fissure always uncontained" in the title of his article? What does he mean by it? According to him, what is the Christian response to the Shoah with regard to biblical interpretation?

Monday, November 28

1. Topic: Jesus, the Jew
2. Texts: The Gospels' Telling of the Death of Jesus

*Required Readings:*

*Seeing Judaism Anew*, 29-45, 70-79, 138-147 (127-137 optional)

Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 17-52. [CAMS]

Susannah Heschel, "Reading Jesus as a Nazi," in *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (ed. Tod Linafelt; New York: Routledge, 2002), 27-41. [Library Reserve Only]

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Mary C. Boys, *Redeeming Our Sacred Story: The Death of Jesus and Relations Between Jews and Christians* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 51-64, 161-177, 221-227. [CAMS]

*Further Recommended Readings:*

Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000): 87-174. [Library Reserve]

Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

Peter J. Tomson, *Presumed Guilty: How the Jews Were Blamed for the Death of Jesus* (trans. Janet Dyk; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005)

*Paper Topic:*

This 2-page paper should examine the 2-3 major theological/historical/interpretive issues concerning Jesus that need clarification/examination in order to construct a Christian understanding of Jesus the Jew.

Monday, December 5

1. Topic: New Testament and Anti-Judaism

2. Text: Luke 13:10-17

*Required Readings:*

Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 87-117, 124-25. [CAMS]

Luke T. Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108/3 (1989): 419-441. [CAMS]

Terence Donaldson, *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010): 1-29; 151-59. [Library Reserve]

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Listen to the following sermon: <https://hbclouisville.org/2016/08/21/august-21-gift-standing-tall-joe-phelps/>

Francois Bovon, *Luke 2* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 279-284, 290-292. [CAMS]

Cynthia A. Jarvis and E. Elizabeth Johnson, *Feasting on the Gospels: Luke, Volume 2, Chapters 12-24* (Louisville: WJK, 2014), 32-37 [CAMS]

*Further Recommended Readings:*

Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000): 177-198. [Library Reserve]

Paula Fredriksen and Adela Reinhartz, eds. *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

Peter J. Tomson, *"If this be from Heaven...": Jesus and the New Testament Authors in their Relationship to Judaism* (Sheffield Academic Press)

*Paper Topic:*

Your paper should respond to the question: "Is the New Testament Anti-Judaic?" What's the evidence or argumentation behind your answer? What issues are important to focus on when responding to this question?