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BS 502 Introduction to Biblical Studies

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BS502: Introduction to Biblical Studies

Spring 2003

Bauer

Course Description

The two-course sequence of BS501-502 comprises three interrelated sections: (1) an introduction to the concept and significance of the canon of Scripture, the discipline of hermeneutics and a contextual, text-centered approach to biblical interpretation; (2) an introduction to the Old Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and (3) an introduction to the New Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts. Course participation, reading, and projects will be configured in part so as to reflect the character of the degree specialization's represented among the course participants. In order to achieve credit for either course, the full, two-course sequence must be completed successfully. Required of all M.A. (Professional), M.A. in Theological Studies, and M.A. Counseling degree students.

Course Objectives

1. The student will be able to trace the development of canonization, discuss the meaning and significance of the canon and of canonicity, especially the canon and canonicity of the New Testament, and articulate the major issues involved in the relationship between the testaments.
2. The student will be able to discuss the historical background of the Bible, including the historical setting of the biblical story, and especially the story of the New Testament, and the critical historical issues surrounding the production of the various New Testament books, and will demonstrate the ability to make appropriate use of this historical information in the interpretation of the biblical text.
3. The student will be conversant with the major issues in hermeneutics (i.e., will be able to identify these issues, articulate the main contemporary positions surrounding these issues, and present in a reasonable and informed fashion his/her own perspective regarding these issues), and will demonstrate the ability to make use of these hermeneutical insights in the actual interpretation and application of the New Testament text.
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to observe, interpret, and apply the New Testament text, and to show the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text for the tasks of his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will be able (a) to identify the macrostructure of a biblical book (including the structural development of the book in terms of its units and sub-units, and major structural dynamics within the book) and show the significance of these insights for the interpretation of the New Testament text; (b) to engage in a "close reading" of individual passages so as to make relevant observations useful for interpretation; (c) to employ various kinds of exegetical determinants, e.g., context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, the history of interpretation, for the interpretation of the New Testament text; (d) to move from interpretation of the New Testament passage to specific and creative application to contemporary Christian life, including the ability to exemplify principles that must be kept in mind in the use of the New Testament for Christian application.
5. The student will demonstrate the ability to show how the teachings of individual passages within the New Testament contribute to the flow of biblical revelation in the large, and to trace, in at least a general way, the development of major biblical themes and motifs throughout the whole of scripture so as to articulate a biblical theology of these major biblical themes and motifs.
6. The student will be able to articulate the issues involved in integration and demonstrate rudimentary ability to integrate the study of the Bible with the area of his/her vocational interest.

Course Texts

1. The Bible (NRSV)
2. *Biblical Resources for Ministry*, Bauer
3. *Bible Study That Works*, Thompson
4. *Introduction to the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*, Achtemeier, Green, Thompson
5. *The World That Shaped the New Testament*, Roetzel

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance, preparation, and participation in the class are necessary. Students missing more than three course sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade.
2. Assignments involving the methodological practice of the structural analysis of New Testament books, the close reading of individual New Testament passages, and the interpretation and application of New Testament passages to contemporary Christian life. (50% of final grade.)
3. Short quizzes on the reading. (10% of final grade.)
4. Paper to be presented on a critical method and its application to the study of a New Testament text. (15% of final grade.)
5. Final exam (25% of final grade.)

Course Schedule

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| 2/12 | Orientation |
| 2/14 | Review of Method
Introduction to the New Testament
Read Achtemeier 1-13, 589-608 |
| 2/19 | Review of Method, Continued
New Testament Background
Read Achtemeier 15-52; Roetzel 1-107 |
| 2/21 | Review of Method, Concluded
Introduction to the Gospels
Read Achtemeier 53-87 |
| 2/26 | Survey of Matthew |
| 2/28 | Gospel of Luke
Presentations on Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism
Read Gospel of Luke
Read Achtemeier 149-174 |
| 3/5 | Survey of Mt. 13:1-52
Presentations on Sociological Criticism, Narrative Criticism |
| 3/7 | Interpretation of Parables |
| 3/12 | Interpretation of Mt. 13:3b-9 |
| 3/14 | Gospel of John
Read Achtemeier 175-205 |
| 3/19 | Survey of the Book of Acts
Presentations on Historical Criticism, Jesus of History |
| 3/21 | Survey and Analysis of Acts 9:1-31 |
| 3/26 | Interpretation and Evaluation/Application of Acts 9:1-31 |
| 3/28 | Introduction to Paul and the Epistle to the Romans
Read Romans
Read Achtemeier 283-326 |

- 4/2 Survey of Galatians
Analysis of Galatians 2:1-21 (in class)
Read Achtemeier 355-375
- 4/4 The Thessalonian Epistles
Read 1 and 2 Thessalonians
Read Achtemeier 427-446
- 4/7 - 4/11 **SPRING BREAK**
- 4/16 Interpretation and Evaluation/Application of Galatians 2:20
- 4/18 **GOOD FRIDAY**
- 4/23- 4/25 Ephesians and Colossians
Read Ephesians and Colossians
Read Achtemeier 377-389
- 4/30 Survey of 1 Peter
Read Achtemeier 515-527
- 5/2 Hebrews
Read Hebrews
Read Achtemeier 465-490
- 5/7 Survey of 1 Peter 2:11-3:6
- 5/9 James
Read James
Read Achtemeier 491-512
- 5/14 Interpretation and Evaluation/Application of 1 Peter 3:1-6
- 5/16 Read Revelation
Read Achtemeier 555-587
- Final Exam**