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MS 650 Tutorial: Biblical Study and Formation in Mission

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Course Description
Contextualization is concerned with the processes engaged in by a Christian community to authentically experience Jesus Christ in its situation and to bring into community expression the ongoing transformational call of the gospel to their life issues. This seminar will explore a framework for utilizing an inductive approach to Bible study in a group setting as a means for critically evaluating specific life issues and reshaping existing life worlds in response to the call of the gospel. Prerequisite: BS501 or NT 510 or 511. Enrollment limited to 25 students.

Learning Objectives
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. identify and articulate biblical examples of contextualization and biblical warrants for contextualization.

2. articulate a group conversation framework for interacting with biblical texts that incorporates elements from:
   - Carley H. Dodd’s model of intercultural communication
   - Joel B. Green’s approach to discourse analysis
   - William E. Paden’s structures of religious world construction
   - Paul G. Hiebert’s model of critical contextualization

3. use the above hermeneutical strategy to formulate a critical response to a contemporary issue.

4. construct a ritual that expresses their response to the contemporary issue

5. articulate a vision of how the hermeneutical strategy could be employed in their own local church communities or ministry setting
Course Requirements
1. Involvement in Class Activities: This includes regular attendance and engagement with in-class discussions and exercises. 10%

2. 12 brief (1 to 2 page) Reflection Papers over Assigned Reading 20%

3. 10 brief reports (1 to 2 pages) on Conversational Exercises 20%

4. Midterm Essay (5 pages for MS650/BS650, 10 pages for MI740) that identifies and articulates some biblical examples of contextualization and biblical warrants for contextualization. 15%

5. Group construction of and participation in a ritual response to a particular contemporary issue that interweaves biblical texts with that issue. 15%

6. Final Essay (10 pages for MS650/BS650, 20 pages for MI740) that articulates the hermeneutical strategy learned in this course and a vision of how it might be employed in their own local church communities or ministry setting. 20%

*late work will receive a maximum grade of “C”

Required Textbooks

Bradshaw, Bruce

Brown, Gillian and George Yule

Donovon, Vincent

Snyder, Howard

Zahniser, A. H. Mathias

Course Packet (and/or online reserves) containing required readings from selected works listed under Required Reading.
Required Reading (Tentative list)

Bosch, David J.  

Chang, Peter S. C.  

Dodd, Carley H.  

Dyrness, Willam A.  

Gilliland, Dean  

Goldingay, John  

Green, Joel B.  

Hatcher, Mark J.  

Hiebert, Paul G.  


Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, Tite Tiénou

Küng, Hans

McKinney, Lois

Mesters, Carlos

Nichols, J. Randall

Paden, William E.

Shaw, R. Daniel

Thomas, Nancy

Thompson, David L.
Turner, Victor

Weerstra, Judy

Wheeler, Ray

Whiteman, Darrell L.

**Recommended Textbooks**

Dodd, Carley H.

Green, Joel B., Ed.

Green, Joel B. and Max Turner, Eds.

Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, Tite Tiénou

Paden, William E.

Turner, Victor
Course Outline

Day 1
Class topic: What is contextualization? Course Introduction.

Class outline: a. Opening song
b. Comparing Exodus 19:1-6 with 1 Peter 2:9-12
c. The context of the term “contextualization” (Shoki Coe)
d. Concerns with the nuances of the term “contextualization”
e. Evangelical definitions of “contextualization”
f. Issues calling for contextualization
g. Reviewing course syllabus
h. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
i. Personal introductions
j. Instructor/student conversation schedule
k. Closing Song

Gilliland (2000:225-227)
Thompson (1996:326-349)
Whiteman (1997:2-7)
Wheeler (2002:77-80)

Biblical Texts: Deuteronomy 6-8; Psalm 78; Matthew 3-7; Psalm 2; Acts 3:1-4:31

Exercise: Luke 1:46-55. Interweaving OT text and Mary’s context

Day 2
Class topic: Biblical examples of contextualization.

Class outline: a. Opening Song
b. Matthew 5:17-20 Discuss the meaning of fulfillment
c. Discussion of issues raised by the Day 1 readings
d. Psalm 78 Discuss the call of the narrative to the present
e. Matthew 4:1-11 and the Exodus (Deut 6-8, Psalm 78)
f. The Bible interweaves older narratives with new situations
g. Luke 1:46-55. Discuss Mary’s song
h. Acts 4:23-31 & Psalm 2 (narrative, ritual, interaction with God)
i. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
j. Closing Song

Thomas (2002:155-169)
Snyder (1995:247-276)
Zahniser (1997:1-57)

Exercise: 1 John 3:10-18. Paradigmatic narratives, Torah, and contemporary context

Day 3

Class topic: Structures of religious world construction, communication modes and contextualization

Class outline:

a. Opening Song
b. 2 Samuel 12:1-14 Discuss the capacity/power of narrative
c. Discussion of the Day 2 Readings
d. Discussion of 1 John 3:10-18 Inter-relating narrative, instructions, and contemporary context
e. The call of different modes of communication – narrative, torah, prophecy, apocalyptic, poetry/wisdom
f. Structures of religious world construction – narratives, rituals, interactions with God, boundaries
g. Modes of communication call for responses in these structures
h. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
i. Closing Song

Readings: Bradshaw (2002:11-37)
Chang (1984:113-123)
Goldingay (2000:123-142)
Paden (1994: 51-65)
Shaw (2000:836)
Weerstra (1999:135-140)

Exercise: Jude. Using the four structures of religious world construction in a conversation with Jude. Interacting with Jude in accord with the communication modes.

Day 4

Class topic: Intercultural conversation and contextualization

Class outline:

a. Opening Song
b. Genesis 12:1-9 Conversing with its co-text and call
c. Discussion of the Day 3 Readings
d. Richardson’s story of the “Peace Child” – hearing the gospel story in relation to two different cultural stories
e. Acts 8:4-25 Hearing in relation to two different stories
f. Dodd’s model of intercultural communication
g. Conversing with Jude
h. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
j. Closing Song

          Donovan (1978:1-64)
          Bradshaw (2002: anything of interest in chs. 4-10)

Bible Texts:  Isaiah 6:1-13; Mark 4:1-20; 8:14-21

Exercise:  1 Peter 2:13-3:7.  Intercultural conversation via structures of
          religious world construction, cotext, and intertextuality.

Day 5

Class topic:  Inductive Bible study, discourse analysis and contextualization

Class outline:  a. Opening Song
          b. Discussion of the Day 4 Readings
          c. Seeing and hearing – Isaiah 6; Mark 4:1-20; 8:14-21
          d. Overview of discourse analysis
          f. Small group conversation with 1 Peter 2:13-3:7
          g. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
          h. Closing Song

          Green (1995:175-196)


Day 6

Class topic:  Inductive Bible study, discourse analysis, and contextualization

Class outline:  a. Opening Song
          b. Luke 3.  Conversing with relationships via context, co-text,
                      staging, socio-linguistics
          c. Discussion of the Day 5 Readings
          d. Hermeneutical strategy for critical contextualization
          e. Selecting pressing issues in our communities
          f. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
          g. Introduction to the essay that identifies biblical examples of and
              biblical warrants for contextualization
          h. Closing Song

Day 7
Class topic: Intercultural conversation and the hermeneutical community

Class outline: a. Opening Song
b. Conversing with Mark 11:11-26
c. Discussion of the Day 6 Readings
d. Group work – Conversing with an issue and relevant biblical texts
e. Introduction to the Readings and Exercise
f. Closing Song

Donovan (1978:65-98)

Exercise: Continuing the conversation with selected biblical texts

Day 8
Class topic: The question of God and contemporary issues
Continuing the community conversation

Class outline: a. Opening Song
b. Ephesians 4:1-16: Perspectives on Christian community
c. Discussion of the Day 7 Readings
d. Considering what understanding of and relationship to God is implicit in existing behavior and language options
e. Group work – For what kind of responses do the biblical texts call?
f. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
g. Closing Song

Readings: Zahniser (1997:91-123)
McKinney (1993:55-64)
Brown and Yule (1983:223-272)
Bradshaw (2002:67-91)

Exercise: Identifying the responses to the issues called for by the biblical texts
Day 9

Class topic: Constructing responses and revisiting biblical texts

Class outline:
- a. Opening Song
- b. Ephesians 4:17-32 Christian community and contextualization
- c. Discussion of the Day 8 Readings
- d. Ritual process and discipleship
- e. Revisiting texts and your interpretations
- f. Group work – Brainstorming community responses to the issue
- g. Introduction to the Readings
- h. Closing Song

Readings:
- Bradshaw (2002:217-247)
- Zahniser (1997:124-156)
- Hatcher (2001:475-487)
- Turner (94-106, 125-130)
- Nichols (1985:401-407)
- Küng (1965:41-61)

Exercise: Complete the essay that identifies biblical examples of and biblical warrants for contextualization

Day 10

Class topic: Ritual and contextual responses

Class outline:
- a. Opening Song
- b. Ephesians 3:14-21 Paul’s prayer and contextualization
- c. Discussion of the Day 9 Readings
- d. Conversing with Ephesians 5:21-33
- e. Brainstorming possibilities for ritual responses to issues
- f. Introduction to the Readings and the Exercise
- g. Introduction to the Final Essay
- h. Closing Song

Readings:
- Donovan (1978:99-128)

Exercise: Begin the construction of a ritual response
Day 11

Class topic: Contextual responses, syncretism, and communal process

Class outline:
  a. Opening Song
  b. John 13:1-17 Imagining yourself in the ritual process
  c. Discussion of the Day 10 Readings
  d. Syncretism – the importance of critical communal process
  e. Group work – Constructing a ritual response
  f. Closing Song

Readings: Donovan (1978:129-200)

Exercise: Constructing a ritual response (group work)

Day 12

Class topic: Evaluating Contextual Responses

Class outline:
  a. Opening Song
  b. John 9 Different responses to an act of God
  c. Criteria for evaluating contextual responses
  d. Discussion of Day 11 Readings
  e. Group work – constructing and evaluating ritual response
  f. Closing Song

Exercise: Constructing a ritual response (report on group work)

Day 13

Class topic: Participating in rituals created by groups

Class outline:
  a. Opening Song
  b. Participating in Group A’s ritual
  c. Participating in Group B’s ritual
  d. Initial responses to the rituals
  e. Closing Song

Exercise: Evaluating the rituals (group work)
Day 14
Class topic: Participating in rituals created by groups

Class outline:  
a. Opening Song  
b. Participating in Group C’s ritual  
c. Participating in Group D’s ritual  
d. Initial responses to the rituals  
e. Closing Song

Exercise: Evaluating the rituals (group work)

Day 15
Class topic: Evaluating Contextual Responses

Class outline:  
a. Opening Song  
b. Rituals, ongoing life, further discussion  
c. Turn in Final Essay that articulates the hermeneutical strategy learned in this course and a vision of how it might be employed in your own local church communities or ministry setting”  
d. Closing Song  
e. Class evaluation forms