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BS 502 Introduction to Biblical Studies

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BS502 Introduction to Biblical Studies

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Spring 2002
Tues/ Thurs 9:30-10:45am
Office Hours: Tu/Th 2:30-4pm
Other hours by appointment

Course Description: The two-course sequence, 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 represented among the course participants.

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 contributes 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 themes and motifs.
6. The student will be able to articulate the issues involved in the integration of biblical studies and ministry.

Course Requirements:

On matters of style consult Carole Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, and Theses* (11th ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14th ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Turning in assignments on time is a high priority. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per day (i.e., A paper becomes A-, B paper becomes B-, etc.). Any late papers **must** be handed to me in person OR turned into Melanie Feltner-Reichert, the faculty secretary in BC 226. She will note the day and time that they are turned in.

1. **Preparation, Attendance, and Participation:** Attendance is expected and will be recorded. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that they record their attendance in class. The professor will not record attendance at a later time. Students who miss more than 6 class sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade. Students should come to class prepared by completing reading and assignments prior to the beginning of the class period. Each student will have the opportunity to participate in group discussions and projects during class time.
2. **DeSilva & Green Integrative Reflections:** (2 x 5% = 10%)
3. **Interpretive Assignments:** On four of the seven interpretive assignment days the student will prepare a close reading of the passage under discussion. This

should be between 750-1,000 words (3-4 pages), typed, double spaced. It is due at the beginning of class. Interpretive assignments will not be accepted after class. For more information on interpretive assignments see the file in the course folder on the T drive. (4 x 12.25% = 50%)

4. **Quizzes:** Periodic quizzes on the assigned reading from Achtemeier, Green, and Thompson (10%).
5. **Final Exam:** The final exam will be a take home essay exam. Answers to the questions should demonstrate familiarity with the course materials (textbooks, lectures, discussion, etc.), facility with the text of the New Testament, and awareness of one's own interpretive location. (30%)

Grading:

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: substantial achievement of course objectives

C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives

D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F= Unacceptable work: failure of course work

A plus (+) or minus (-) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C- = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

Required Reading:

The New Testament (RSV or NRSV)

Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson. *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Bauer, David. *Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Nappanee, IN: Evangel, 1995.

DeSilva, David A. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.

Green, Joel B., ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995.

Thompson, David. *Bible Study that Works*. Nappanee, IN: Evangel, 1994.

Recommended Reading:

Achtemeier, Paul J. *Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.

Schedule:

Feb 12 Introduction to the Course and the Nature of Canon
Required: Achtemeier, pp. 1-51; DeSilva, pp. 17-42

Feb 14 The Empire and Judaism
Required: DeSilva, pp. 43-156

- Feb 19 The First Century from a Sociologist's Perspective
Required: DeSilva, pp. 157-239
- Feb 21 Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text
Required: Green, pp. 1-9; 175-221
- Feb 26 Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text
Required: Green, 222-255; 278-300
- Feb 28 Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text
Required: Green, pp. 301-328; 370-427
- Mar 5 4 Gospels – Genre
Required: Achtemeier, pp. 53-87
- Mar 7 Mark's Gospel – Determining Boundaries
Required: Mark; Achtemeier, pp. 123-147
Interpretive Assignment 1: Mark 1:1-15
- Mar 12 Matthew's Gospel – A Theological Approach
Required: Matthew; Achtemeier, pp. 89-121
- Mar 14 Stories in Context I – Parables
Required: Green
Interpretive Assignment 2 : Matthew 20: 1-16
- Mar 19 Luke-Acts: The story in two volumes
Required: Luke-Acts; Achtemeier, pp. 149-174 and 245-269
- Mar 21 Stories in Context II – Vignettes
Interpretive Assignment 3: Luke 19: 1-10
- Mar 26 John's Gospel
Required: John; Achtemeier, pp. 175-205
- Mar 28 Sayings and Signs – Tracing Themes
Interpretive Assignment 4: John 9:1-41

READING WEEK

- Apr 9 The Ministry of Paul and the Book of Acts
Required: 1-2 Thessalonians, Achtemeier, pp. 271-297
- Apr 11 Epistles – Genre: Philemon – A Sample Study of an Epistle
Required: Romans, Colossians, Philemon; Achtemeier, pp. 299-326; 407-426
Interpretive Assignment 4: Philemon
- Apr 16 Paul and the Church at Corinth
Required: 1-2 Corinthians; Achtemeier, pp. 327-354
In Class Project: 1 Cor 8

Apr 18 The Corinthian Correspondance
Interpretive Assignment 5: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Apr 23 Women in the New Testament – Reading in the Whole Canon
In Class Project: Gospels & Epistles

Apr 25 Women in the New Testament – Reading in the Whole Canon
Required: Ephesians; Achtemeier, pp. 377-389
In Class Project: Gospels & Epistles

Apr 30 The Pastoral Epistles – Ethics in Community
Required: 1-2 Timothy, Titus; Achtemeier, pp. 447-464
Interpretive Assignment 6: **1 Timothy 2:8-15**

May 2 2 Peter & Jude – The NT's use of the OT, metaphor, and allusion
Required: 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude; Achtemeier, pp. 513-534

May 7 John's Apocalypse
Required: Revelation; Achtemeier, pp. 555-587

May 9 Revelation
Interpretive Assignment 7: **Revelation 13**

May 14 The New Testament and the MA Programs – Articulating Integration
Required: Achtemeier, pp. 589-608

May 16 New Testament Canon and Implications

Final Exam