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BS 503 Introduction to Inductive Bible Study

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DRAFT

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY School of Biblical Interpretation and Proclamation

BS 503 Introduction to Inductive Bible Study 3 hours credit
No Prerequisites; Enrollment Limit: 32
Spring, 2008

Instructor: Dr. Joseph R. Dongell
BC 337
Office Hours: TBA

I. Course Description

This course offers a concise introduction to inductive Bible study for students enrolled in the professional Masters of Arts programs. The purpose is to introduce students to a systematic, comprehensive approach to Bible study. The course will treat the entire Bible study process from initial observation and interpretation of texts in their literary, historical, and canonical contexts to the contemporary appropriation of these texts. In accord with the principle that students can best understand hermeneutical issues and develop exegetical skills as they engage in rigorous study of specific texts, the course will focus upon the application of Bible study method to three biblical books that represent both testaments and a range of literary forms and theological perspectives within the canon. Attention will be given to the significance of the interpretation and appropriation of the biblical text for the ministerial vocations represented in the various professional Masters of Arts programs.

II. Course Objectives

The student will acquire a basic understanding of biblical hermeneutics and will demonstrate the ability to observe, interpret, and engage in contemporary appropriation of the biblical text and to discuss in specific and concrete ways the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text for his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will be able

- 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 individual passages within the book and of the book-as-a-whole;
- To engage in a “close reading” of individual passages so as to make relevant observations useful for interpretation;
- To become conversant with and employ in practice various kinds of exegetical determinants, e.g., literary context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, the history of interpretation, for the interpretation of the biblical text;
- To make use of considerations from the interpretation of the passage for specific and creative contemporary appropriation;
- To discuss 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 appropriation of the biblical text.
- To articulate the issues involved in the integration of the study of the biblical text for the life of the community of faith and demonstrate rudimentary ability to integrate the study of the Bible with the area of his/her vocational interest.

III. Course Texts:

A. Required

1. **English Bible:** (NRSV)
2. **Bibliography:** Bauer, David R. An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003. 1-56563-723-2
3. **Dictionary:** Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds. Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992. 0-8308-1777-8
4. **Commentary:** Edwards, James R. The Gospel According to Mark. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 0-8028-3734-4

IV. Requirements:

- A. **Assignments:** Lessons must be finished by class time on the dates given in this Syllabus. Lessons may be typed or may even be handwritten, provided the handwriting is legible. Please use the cover sheet provided, and securely staple together.
- B. **Readings and Responses:** Weekly readings will be assigned from the resources listed in the bibliography, and written responses should be made (again, weekly), in the student's notebook. The quality of these readings and responses will be judged largely by the student with review from the professor.
- C. **Attendance:** It is expected that students will punctually attend every class session unless detained by illness or other emergency.
- D. **Participation:** It is expected that students will participate meaningfully and creatively both in the regular small group discussions and in plenary class discussion.

V. Grading Policies:

A. Grade Calculations:

The final grade for the course will be the numerical average of the six (6) graded assignments with a seventh grade, the self-assigned class participation grade. [The six graded assignments will constitute 6/7ths of the grade, and the class participation grade will constitute 1/7th of the grade.] A grading rubric for determining class participation is supplied in this syllabus.

The class participation grade will be filled out by the student at the close of the semester, and will reflect the student's own assessment of the quality of his or her class attendance (including tardiness), weekly reading and written responses to those readings, participation in plenary class discussion as well as in small group discussion, contribution to the morale of the class, and quality of note-taking during the semester.

B. Related Matters:

1. The ATS Catalog's description of grades and their values will apply (see pp. 30-31).

The letter grades within this course will be averaged arithmetically by converting them to the numerical values below:

A 97; A- 92; B+ 88; B 84.5; B- 81; C+ 78; C 74.5; C- 71; D+ 68; D 64.5; D- 61;

F 50 (if an assignment is completed, but at a failing quality); F 0 (if no work is submitted).

The final numerical average will be assigned a final letter grades according to this range of values:

A 100-95; A- 94-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D+69-67; D 66-63; D- 62-60; F 59-0

2. Exceptional work will exhibit these characteristics:

•precision, accuracy, specificity, depth, insight, clarity, freshness, thoroughness, and balance. It must be remembered that merely “good and accurate” work does not necessarily merit an “A”. Also, exceptional work must engage the Biblical texts (to some degree) in their original languages, and must manifest a balanced use of time.

3. Lessons Entirely Omitted If a *graded* lesson is omitted entirely (i.e. never turned in), then it will be calculated as a “0” in the numerical averaging of the final grade. If a *credit-no credit* lesson is omitted (never turned in), then the final course grade will be reduced by a full letter (e.g. from B+ to C+).
4. Late Lessons: A lesson turned in late (any time after the due date) will be received, but reduced one and a half letter grades (e.g. from B+ to C-). Of course, if there is an appropriate reason (serious illness, family emergency) then no penalty will be assessed.
5. Independence: Assignments must reflect the independent work of each student unless otherwise specified in an assignment as a “group assignment.” Study groups (which are encouraged) must exercise special care to preserve the independence of each member. Group members may encourage each other and provide accountability for study, but may not produce group projects, nor nurse each other along with specific content-related guidance and suggestions.

VI. The Calendar

Week 1-2	[Introduction and Orientation]	
Week 3	<u>Project</u> in Detailed Observation	<u>Readings and Responses</u> •Mark 1:9-15
Week 4	<u>Project*</u> in Detailed Observation	<u>Readings and Responses</u> •Jonah 2:1-10; •I Cor. 13:8-13
Week 6	<u>Project</u> in Segment Survey	<u>Readings and Responses</u> •Mark 4:35-6:6a
Week 8	<u>Project*</u> in Segment Survey	<u>Readings and Responses</u> •Hebrews 11
Week 10	<u>Project</u> in Book Survey	<u>Readings and Responses</u> •Amos
Week 12	<u>Project*</u> in Book Survey	<u>Readings and Responses</u> •Ephesians
Exam Period	<u>Project*</u> in Interpretation in Canonical Synthesis in Appropriation	<u>Readings and Responses</u>

Class Participation Grading Rubric

Student Name _____

Each student begins with the score of 100, which should reflect (in principle) excellent class participation. Such excellence will involve full involvement in all class sessions (attendance), promptness in attendance, acceptable completion of all (credit/ no-credit) assignments, positive small group participation, and compilation of a usable and organized notebook. From the initial score of 100, subtractions will be made according to the following factors:

I. Un-excused Absences: Excused absences are those caused by sickness, serious family emergency, death in the family, or required meeting with ordaining boards. All other absences, including those related to ministry responsibilities or other class assignments, are generally not excusable.
[5 points subtracted for first unexcused absence; 8 points for each additional] _____

II. Tardiness constitutes not being present and “ready to start” when the class period officially begins. This is not a judgment call based on “when I feel the class business really begins” but rather is measured by the official (clock) starting time of the class.
[2 points subtracted for first tardiness; 4 points for each additional tardiness] _____
Note: *Tardiness is not a subjective matter determined by whether the student judges that “nothing really important” was missed, or whether “only prayer, or devotions” was missed. Tardiness is determined by the clock alone.*

III. Flagged (credit/ no-credit) Lessons: On occasion a credit/ no-credit lesson is not poor enough to receive a “no-credit,” but shows obvious signs of being casually, carelessly, or incompletely produced. Such lessons will be “credit” but also “flagged.”
[10 points subtracted for each of a flagged lesson] _____

IV. Group Participation: [points subtracted by student’s self-evaluation for...]
•weakness in encouraging other group members with a positive and open attitude toward learning
•weakness in entrusting one’s best thoughts, insights, and ideas to others
•weakness in listening to and valuing the contributions and ideas of others
•weakness in expressing disagreement without becoming hostile or demeaning
•weakness in the quality and depth of the content of one’s contribution to the group
•weakness in receiving comments of disagreement without becoming defensive or hostile
•weakness in valuing communal reflection as a necessary component of healthy Christian living
•weakness in making room for the contributions of others in the group

V. Notebook Compilation: [points subtracted by student’s self-evaluation for...]
•lack of calendar dates marking each class period
•weakness in neatness or organization
•weakness in completeness
[points subtracted according to the judgment of the student]
(note: two pages of notetaking need to be Xeroxed and
attached to this grade sheet to illustrate quality of the student’s notebook) _____

.....(OVER).....

VI. Readings and Responses: [points subtracted by student’s self-evaluation for...]
•lack of calendar dates for the completion of each reading and each response
•lateness on completion of readings and responses (see calendar)
•poor quality in the depth, thoughtfulness, and clarity of written responses
[points subtracted according to the judgment of the student]
(note: two pages of notetaking need to be Xeroxed and

attached to this grade sheet to illustrate the student's notebook)

VII. Total Number of Points Subtracted (add I through VI above)

VIII. Resulting Numerical Score for Class Participation (subtract VI from 100)
