

Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures

Fall Quarter 2009

Online Course

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Course Description: A survey of the Hebrew Scriptures, emphasizing their historical and thematic connections as well as the main message of each book. The books are viewed both individually and collectively. We will explore topics of authorship, chronological setting, and canonical formation. Attention will be given to the methodologies employed in biblical studies.

Course Objectives:

To apply critical thinking skills to the reading of biblical texts by learning to discriminate among their respective historical, literary, and contemporary dimensions.

To interpret biblical texts using historical-critical, postcolonial, literary, and feminist methodologies.

To explore through personal application the potential for these texts to enrich contemporary theologies, ministries, and faith journeys.

Course Requirements: Each student will read through the entire Old Testament in a modern version (i.e., a translation, not a paraphrase: JPS, NIV, NRSV, etc.). The reading of the biblical material should correspond with the weekly schedule. As with the readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, our secondary texts are considered to be essential for instructional and participation purposes.

- (1) Consistent contribution to our online dialogue that demonstrates careful, attentive readings of both primary and secondary texts. The quality of each student's contribution to our discourse should not be confused with dominant, lengthy, or gratuitous writing; we are, rather, seeking to foster meaningful, thoughtful and engaging dialogue (25%)
- (2) Midterm Quiz (25%)
- (3) A creative, personal expression inspired by a biblical text (ex. liturgy, poem, sermon, short story) (15%)
- (4) A final exegetical paper of a biblical passage, 7-10 pages in length, employing one of our methodologies studied (35%)

Required Textbooks:

Michael Coogan, ed. The Oxford History of the Biblical World, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press, 2001).

Gale Yee, Judges and Method, 2nd edition (Fortress Press, 2007).

Walter Brueggemann, An Introduction to the Old Testament (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).