

COS 121—Bible I, Introduction

Course Description: Goals and Objectives

The course introduces biblical interpretation. Attention will be given to the inspiration, formation, the function of the canon, and to the development of a methodology of interpretation consistent with the nature of scripture. Attention will also be given to the Bible as a witness to the life and faith of ancient Israel and earliest Christianity.

Students will begin to—

1. **Articulate the place and meanings of scripture stories** in the life of the Israelites and the early Church, as well that of the life of the present faith community.
2. Understand and begin to **apply historical, literary, theological, and pastoral approaches** to various types of literature in scripture **using Genesis, Hosea, Amos, Mark, Philippians**, and other selected scriptures.
3. Begin to **become comfortable with** using commentaries and work with a method of exegesis and hermeneutics in studying Biblical texts and stories.
4. Become more comfortable with articulating the meanings of faith stories, as well as **connecting those stories** to the present faith community's task in the culture and community of today.

Textbooks

REQUIRED TEXTS—

1. Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth, 3rd Edition*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 2003; 9780310246046.
2. Hayes, John and Carl Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, Westminster Press, Louisville, 2007; 9780664227753.
3. Anderson, Bernhard Anderson, *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2006; 9780800635602.
4. *The Interpreters One-Volume Commentary*, Ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2010; 9780687334117.
5. Powell, Mark A., *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary: Revised and Updated*, Harper Collins, New 2011; 9780061469060.
6. Harrelson, Walter J., *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2003; 9780687278329.

REFERENCE AND RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL RESOURCES—

1. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary in Twelve Volumes* (Volume 1, 7, and 8 for this COS 121 session)
2. *Interpretation--A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*; James Mays, series editor. (commentaries on Genesis, Amos/Hosea, Mark, Philippians this session)
3. *Feasting on the Word*, David Bartlett, Barbara Brown Taylor Editors (this is a series which follows the three year Common Lectionary Lessons for each Sunday of the three year cycle.

COS 121 Preparation Before Class times

- **Assigned readings** are essential and necessary for the student to complete prior to class. Start early and take your time in all readings as well as additional work with commentaries and dictionaries as needed and helpful.
- **Pay particular attention to the scripture readings in each assignment.** Use commentaries to help you understand the historical and cultural setting of the time when the scripture was written. **Ask the following questions, always:** what audience was the writer speaking to? What did the writers want to say about God, life, and the faith community? What would this then say to us now, today?
- **After (AND ONLY AFTER) reading and studying, write out** your answers to questions
- **Please use** Microsoft Word with Times New Roman font with 12 point size.
- **Number each page and include your name and session on each page.**
- **Use the Modern Language Association (MLA) format** for documentation.
- **Please e-mail a copy of your answers to questions 1 through 5 (of the September session only) to Mark Jarrett logosian1@gmail.com by August 20, 2018.** As the writing coach, Mark will evaluate your writing, composition, etc. from a written standpoint and then will provide feedback as it pertains to grammar, structure, proper formatting, etc. He will return your paper with comments and recommendations to help you with further written work. This exercise is intended to expose you to writing tools and to aid in the crafting of a higher quality of written work. **Revise your paper, as needed.**

Note—Important!

- **Have the originals marked and in a file folder with your name on the outside of the file to be turned in during class session.**
- **Include a self addressed and pre-stamped 9 x 12 manila envelope** for papers to be returned to you
- **Please make copies for your reference as well as for reference and discussions during our class sessions.**

COS 121 Session Readings and Assignments **2018 Fall, September 21-23rd Class Session**

Instructor and Contact Information

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The following are READING assignments for the September 21-23

- *The Bible*, Genesis, Hosea, and Amos
- *Biblical Exegesis*, Hayes and Holladay, **chapters 1 through 7**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, Bernhard Anderson, **chapters 1 through 4**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, **ALL Biblical lessons associated with each of the chapters' readings**

WRITTEN assignments for the September session September 21-23

(1 to 1 1/2 pages in length with the exception of numbers 7 and 10 with the * notations)

- 1)** After reading the Genesis creation accounts go out and 'engage yourself, involve, and embrace' creation in some manner and experience. Share your experience; did you learn and/or perceive anything new or different? What and where?
- 2)** What is the task of exegesis and why should a pastor be concerned about this in preparing lessons or sermons?
- 3)** What is the difference of 'history in the text,' and history of the text?
- 4)** Discuss the "truth" of the Biblical account of creation and that of the "truth" of the scientific research of the cosmos. Be careful here to make sure you have read material and then spent some time reflecting on this difference!
- 5)** After spending some time with the assigned readings and commentaries with Genesis 1, 2, and 3 give the meaning of Sin. Is that different that sins? Make note that the word "sin" does not appear in the stories.

- 6) Does it make sense in our time to say that “God acts in history?” What meaning does Exodus 3: 7-8 have for the oppressed and exploited people today?
- 7) There is a widely held view that religion belongs in one sphere, the spiritual; and the political, social, and economic issues of our communities belong in yet another. Would Jeremiah and others you have begun reading agree with this? Give reasons for your answer and include what this may say about your role as a pastor and/or church in the community you serve. ***Please take up to 2 pages for this answer.**
- 8) After reading Hosea and Amos, as well as relevant chapters in the text books, describe your understanding of the interplay of judgment, grace, and responsiveness to grace as seen in the prophets’ message.
- 9) How and in what ways does this inform your role as a spiritual leader (pastor, teacher, preacher, and counselor) with folks in your community? Give examples.

10. * Important--STRETCH question!! Take the time and effort on this one

Pick one (1) of the following passages to reflect on and study. Read not only the Bible passages, but also commentaries and dictionaries. Then and then only, share what the story is about; **why** was this story written; **what** is the story seeking to convey about God, about humankind, about human nature, about our place in God’s creation? AND then, **how and in what ways** do you see this story being “played out” in people’s lives and/or in our communities today? **Give examples, take this question seriously and stretch!** * **Please take up to 4 pages for your answer.**

- Genesis 3, Adam and Eve, the fall from paradise
- Genesis 4, Cain and Abel
- Genesis 6, 7,8, 9 Noah and the Flood
- Genesis 11, Tower of Babel
- Genesis 39-45 Joseph stories

COS 121 Session Readings and Assignments

November 16-18th, 2018 Class Session

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READING assignments for the November 17-19 session:

- Review again *Hosea and Amos*
- *The Gospel of Mark* and the letter of *Philippians*
- *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, chapters 5,6,7,8
- *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*, chapters 3,4,7,8,9,10
- Any scriptures as noted in the written assignments and chapters sited above

WRITTEN assignments for the November 17-19 session: (each answer should be thought out responses which are reflective of and demonstrate that the student has done the reading assignments as sited above; no more than 1 to 1 ½ pages in length with the exception of #5 and #7 which has the * notation.

NOTE---The assignment for reading and answers to questions 1 through 8, should be e-mailed to me at erenrichds@aol.com no later than November 1, 2018.

NOTE---Please make special notice: #10 * will take the bulk of your time, study, and reflective work. Treat it accordingly. You may bring this assignment either to class on November 16th OR e-mail it to me at erenrichds@aol.com by and no later than November 26th. **HOWEVER**, whatever you do, please make your selection and begin working on it prior to class and have some of the commentary readings and notes with you at that time.

1. Psalm 1 would seem to imply, or at least strongly suggest, that people who obey the will of God will enjoy security, prosperity, and a long life. Give some reflection to this. Is it true, or not true? Has it been misused, how/why? Then compare this to the attitude in Psalm 73. Pay particular attention to 73:23.

2. In the Hebrew Scriptures one will often read that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” See from your reading chapters above Proverbs 9:10, 15:33, Job 28:28, Psalm 11:10. What does this mean? What is this “fear” seeking to communicate?
3. How was the cross a scandal and offensive to those DURING Jesus’ time? How and why is the cross scandalous today, **if at all anymore**? In what ways?
4. Do you think the breaking down of the “wall of separation” referred to between Jew and Gentile has any significance any implications for our present time for the church in the midst of today’s social changes? From readings and reflection: How and in what ways?
5. * From your readings, what does it mean for the Church to be in mission to the world today? Where does this start and how does it happen? What does it mean for the pastor and church to seek God’s “Shalom” of the community? Is there risk involved? Seek to be specific and give examples. ***Take up to 2 pages as needed.**
6. What does it mean to “think vertically” and also to “think horizontally” when studying a Scriptural text? Give an example.
7. *From your readings, why is it important to understand that the entire New Testament was written within the framework of eschatology? What does this have to do with the “Kingdom of God” as understood in Jesus’ day and the early Church? What does it mean for us in the Church today? ***take up to 2 pages as needed**

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8. *** NOTE:** This question will take extra study of the Bible text, commentaries, and Bible dictionaries and then reflective writing on your part. Length of answer 6-8 pages.

Remember that exegesis is involved so you will want to discover who is writing the text you are studying; WHAT issues seem to be vital AT THAT time; ARE THERE social, cultural, or historical matters impinging on the community; WHAT does the author want to see happen OR what is his goal (s) here in this selection, text, or story?

Then, and only then, will you reflect and do the hermeneutical work (Bridging) to the present time. With what I have learned from study, reflection, and prayer, what does this text say NOW to me and to the congregation I am serving? How do the key elements of this text/story speak to and challenge our lives and the church today? Is there something that is being asked of us?

Choose one (1) selection from the listing below.

Do an exegetical study and review of the selection. Share a summary of your learning's and findings. Then move on to the hermeneutical "Bridging" as discussed and illustrated in class. Remember that it sometimes helps to "see" the text within the context of the author's writings both prior to or after the text itself.

Mark 1: 9-20

Mark 4: 1-20

Mark 4:35-5:13

Mark 6:30-44

Mark 10: 17-31

Mark 14: 66-72

Mark 16: 1-8