

COS 121 Bible I

2020 Fall, Sept. 12th-Nov. 30th

Instructor and Contact Information

Jonathan Dierdorff
815 Kanawha Terrace
St. Albans, WV 25177

304-444-3874

jonathan.wvumc@gmail.com

I. 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.

II. 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 York, 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 OR Interpretation--A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*; James Mays, series editor. (**Commentaries on Genesis and Mark**)
2. Goff, Bob. *Everybody Always: Becoming Love in a World of Setbacks and Difficult People*; Nelson Books 2018; 9780718078133
3. Keener, Craig. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*; 2014 0830824782
4. Walton, John. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*; 2000 0830814191

III. COURSE STRUCTURE

Near the bottom of the syllabus, you will find a grid with the due dates for all of your assignments as well as the instructions for how to submit written materials (each assignment will have a corresponding number in the grid highlighted in **red**). In preparation for each session, you will be expected to read the required texts, write papers, view informative videos, and engage with your classmates through discussion on questions posted in the Facebook group. Additionally, we will be meeting for five synchronous ZOOM sessions which will include lecture and class discussion. If you have not already, please mark the following dates and times on your calendar for our synchronous sessions:

October 3rd: 9:00 - 11:00 AM
October 17th: 9:00 - 11:00 AM
November 7th: 9:00 - 11:00 AM and 1:00 - 3:00 PM
November 21st: 9:00 - 11:00 AM

A. ZOOM SESSION ONE (October 3rd)

In order to prepare for our time together on October 3rd, you will need to complete the following:

1. Reading

- Bible, **Genesis 1-50**
- *Biblical Exegesis*, Hayes and Holladay, **chapters 1 through 3**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, Bernhard Anderson, **chapters 1 through 2**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, **ALL Biblical lessons associated with each of the chapters' readings**

2. Writing

- Write a one-page paper answering the question, “What is the task of exegesis and hermeneutics and why should a pastor be concerned about this when preparing lessons or sermons?” (**one**)
- In a two-page paper, discuss the “truth” of what the Biblical account of creation seeks to convey and that of the “truth” of the scientific research of our world and cosmos. Be careful here to make sure you have read material and then spent some time reflecting on this difference! (**two**)
- Prior to our time together, look for a discussion question posted by your instructor in the course Facebook page. The question will be based on the video links provided below. Please offer a minimum 100-word response to the question and engage in friendly, yet challenging, conversation with AT LEAST two other students.

3. Watching

- Dr. Sandra Richter “How to Read Genesis One in Context Part 1”: [video link](#)
- Dr. Sandra Richter “How to Read Genesis One in Context Part 2”: [video link](#)
- Dr. Sandra Richter “The Ancient Near East and Genesis 2”: [video link](#)

B. ZOOM SESSION TWO (October 17th)

In order to prepare for our time together on October 17th, you will need to complete the following:

1. Reading

- *Bible, Hosea, Amos, Haggai, and Zephaniah*
- *Biblical Exegesis*, Hayes and Holladay, **chapters 4 through 5**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, Bernhard Anderson, **chapters 3 through 4**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, **ALL Biblical lessons associated with each of the chapters’ readings**

2. Writing

- Using the skills and techniques you have acquired from required reading and other course work, write a two-page reflection focusing on a pericope in Hosea (**three**). Integrate the following items in your paper:
 - **Historical Context:** To whom is Hosea writing? What situation is his audience facing?
 - **Literary Context:** Are there patterns, thoughts, and ideas present in your pericope that appear in other places in Hosea? What is the connection?
 - **Critical Considerations:** How does your commentary help you understand the meaning of a key word, the history of interpretation, and other nuances that are not always apparent in English translations of the text?

- **Hermeneutical Considerations:** If you were going to preach or text this text, what are some modern-day inferences you could draw? How does this text speak to us today theological? How does it challenge both the individual and the community of faith?
- Based on your engagement with the required reading videos, and the biblical text, write a two-page paper about the character of prophetic literature. Include assumptions you may have brought to the text that you did not find to be true about prophetic literature, as well as major impressions and/or unexpected surprises. In other words, share your key learnings. **(four)**
- Prior to our time together, look for a discussion question posted by your instructor in the course Facebook page. The question will be based on the video links provided below. Please offer a minimum 100-word response to the question and engage in friendly, yet challenging, conversation with AT LEAST two other students.

3. Watch

- Dr. Sandra Richter “What is a Prophet?”: [video link](#)
- Dr. Ben Witherington “How Does Biblical Prophecy Work?”: [video link](#)
- Dr. Mark A. Powell “Social Location and Biblical Interpretation”: [video link](#)
- Dr. Ben Witherington III “Why Bible Background Matters”: [video link](#)

C. ZOOM SESSION THREE (Nov. 7TH A)

In order to prepare for our time together on November 7, you will need to complete the following:

1. Reading

- *Bible, Mark*
- *Biblical Exegesis*, Hayes and Holladay, **chapters 6 through 7**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, Bernhard Anderson, **chapters 5 through 6**
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, **ALL Biblical lessons associated with each of the chapters’ readings**
- *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*, **chapters 3 through 4**

2. Writing

- Using your commentary and a modern translation of the English Bible, write a two-page paper on the critical issues related to the ending of Mark’s Gospel. In the first page, demonstrate your knowledge of the textual problems. In the second page, explain how you might approach Mark 16:1-8 as your sermon text on Easter Sunday. **(five)**

- 80-95% of the population was illiterate when the Gospel of Mark was composed. No one had a Bible that they read in the comfort of their own home; instead, they gathered together in a worship setting and they heard the story of Jesus “performed” by a trained orator. Therefore, Mark was intended to be heard before it was intended to be read. After watching the Gospel according to Mark as performed by Max McClean (ideally in one sitting), write a 3-page paper reflecting on how listening and watching it be performed is different from reading the text. (**six**)
- Prior to our time together, look for a discussion question posted by your instructor in the course Facebook page. The question will be based on the video links provided below. Please offer a minimum 100-word response to the question and engage in friendly, yet challenging, conversation with AT LEAST two other students.

3. Watch

- Max McClean “The Gospel of Mark Chapters 1-3”: [video link](#)
- Max McClean “The Gospel of Mark Chapters 4-6”: [video link](#)
- Max McClean “The Gospel of Mark Chapters 7-10”: [video link](#)
- Max McClean “The Gospel of Mark Chapters 11-13”: [video link](#)
- Max McClean “The Gospel of Mark 14-16”: [video link](#)

ZOOM SESSION FOUR (November 7th B)

In order to prepare for our time together on Nov. 7th, you will need to complete the following:

- *Bible, Mark*

Writing

- Using the skills and techniques you have acquired from required reading and other course work, begin writing a five-page exegesis paper on one of the following passages in the Gospel of Mark:
 - Mark 1: 9-20 Baptism and Call of Disciples
 - Mark 4: 1-20 Sowing Seeds
 - Mark 4:35-5:13 Storm at Sea and Crossing to the Other Side
 - Mark 6:30-44 Teaching and Feeding
 - Mark 10: 17-31 Rich Young Ruler
 - Mark 14: 66-72 Disowning Jesus

Although this paper is not due until the end of the semester, I want you to take your time and begin working on it prior to our ZOOM gathering. During our time together I will expect for you to share with the class the text you have chosen, observations you have made, and key learnings from your research. (**FINAL**)

- Prior to our time together, look for a discussion question posted by your instructor in the course Facebook page. The question will be based on the video links provided below.

Please offer a minimum 100-word response to the question and engage in friendly, yet challenging, conversation with AT LEAST two other students.

Watch

- Dr. Joe Dongell “The Gospel of Mark”: [video link](#)
- Dr. David Bauer “The Gospel of Matthew”: [video link](#)
- Dr. Terrence C. Mournet “How Did we Get the Gospels?”: [video link](#)

D. ZOOM Session Five (Nov. 21st)

In order to prepare for our time together on Nov. 21st, you will need to complete the following:

1. Reading

- *Bible, Philippians*
- *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*, chapters 7 through 10
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, Bernhard Anderson, chapters 7 through 8
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, ALL Biblical lessons associated with each of the chapters’ readings

2. Writing

- After studying the text and using your commentary, write a one-page paper on the significance of Paul’s use of plural pronouns in Philippians 2:5 “let this mind be in **you** that was also in Christ Jesus...” (**Seven**)
- After studying the text and using your commentary, write a one-page reflection paper on how critical biblical studies has informed your understanding of Philippians 4:13. (**Eight**)
- Prior to our time together, look for a discussion question posted by your instructor in the course Facebook page. The question will be based on the video links provided below. Please offer a minimum 100-word response to the question and engage in friendly, yet challenging, conversation with AT LEAST two other students.

3. Watch

- Dr. Tim Mackie “The Bible Project: Philippians”: [video link](#)
- Dr. Ben Witherington III “Paul’s Narrative Thought World”: [video link](#)
- Dr. John Barclay “The Radical Grace of God in Paul’s Letters”: [video link](#)

IV. Submission

Please e-mail a copy of your written work to Mark Jarrett logosian1@gmail.com by the dates listed in the rubric below. As the writing coach, Mark will evaluate your writing and composition 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 before the final submission date (jonathan.wvumc@gmail.com)**

In terms of formatting your papers, please use Times New Roman font with 12-point size and number each page. Include your name and class session on each page. Use the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

Assignment	Deadline for Writing Coach	Deadline for Course Instructor
One	September 12 th	September 19 th
Two	September 12 th	September 19 th
Three	September 28 th	October 5 th
Four	September 28 th	October 5 th
Five	October 16 th	October 23 rd
Six	October 16 th	October 23 rd
Seven	November 2 nd	November 9 th
Eight	November 2 nd	November 9 th
Final	November 20 th	November 27 th

V. Grading

Students will be graded using a letter grade system. “A”, “A-” –The requirements of the course have been met with exceptional levels of excellence and creativity. “B+”, “B”, “B-” –Good work. “C+”, “C”, “C-” –Work meets minimum standards. “D” –Substandard, but passing work. “F” – All the requirements of the course have not been adequately fulfilled and no credit can be given; failing work. “WD” –Student did not attend course. Grades of B+ or higher may be transferable into other educational programs (e.g., Advanced Course of Study, seminary level work, etc.)

Note –National policy stipulates that a person cannot miss more than 20% (or 3.5 hours) of a course and still receive credit. Please note that there are no “Incompletes” in Course of Study School of Ohio or the West Virginia Extension. **Since pastors constantly need to meet deadlines in their work**, and since work due is clearly outlined in syllabi ahead of time, there is no need for any incompletes. Grade sheets are sent to the student, Annual Conference Registrar, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The student is responsible for giving a copy to the District Superintendent or District Committee on ministry. Instructors give indications as to how the student engaged the material and learning process, as well as skills observed. Evaluations appropriately include any concerns about the student as well as highlight strong gifts for ministry.