

COS 121—Bible I Hybrid Class, Fall 2023

David Erenrich, Instructor
21601 O' Toole Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21742

304-638-1948
derenrich@outlook.com

Introduction to the Class

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.

OPTIONAL RECOMMENDED 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

PREPARATION Before Class Times

1. **Assigned readings** are essential and necessary for the student to complete **prior to class**.
 - **Pay particular attention to the scripture readings in each assignment.** Use commentaries to help you understand the historical and cultural setting of the time 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 using Microsoft Word with Times New Roman, with 12-point font size, double spaced. Please **number each page and include your name and class session on each page.** Use the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.
2. **YouTube video segments and/or Discussion Board will be placed on Teachable for weeks between Zoom classes.**
3. **E-mail the instructor (derenrich@outlook.com) written assignments by designated date for each session.** ALWAYS make copies for your reference for class sessions.

Readings AND Assignments

COS Zoom Sessions #1 and #2 September 16th (9 am AND 1pm)

READINGS

- *The Bible*, Genesis 1-12; 12-22; 26-37; 45-49
- *The Bible, Hosea, Amos*
- *How to Read the Bible, Fee and Stuart*, chapters 1, 2, 5
- *Biblical Exegesis*, Hayes and Holladay, chapters 1-2-3
- *Unfolding Drama of the Bible*, Bernhard Anderson, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and *ALL* Biblical lessons associated with each of the chapter's readings.

WRITTEN assignments for Saturday, September 16th.

From your readings and reflections, write answers for questions, 1,2,3, and 4. 1 to 1 ½ pages each due to me by September 9th.

- 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, how, and where?
- 2) Discuss the "truth" of what the Biblical account of creation seeks to convey to us and what the "truth" of the scientific research of our world and cosmos is. Is there a difference we should be cautious of? Be careful here to make sure you have read material and then spent some time **reflecting on this difference**.
- 3) After spending some time with assigned readings and a commentary with Genesis 1,2, and 3, give the meaning of Sin. What do these opening stories point to in human nature? Is Sin different than sins? Make note of the fact that the word "sin" does not appear in the stories.
- 4) What is the task of exegesis and hermeneutics that you have discovered from the readings? And why should a pastor be concerned about this in preparing lessons and/or sermons?

5) POST Class Sessions--Pick one (1) of the following stories to study, reflect on. Read not only the Bible passages, **but also commentaries and dictionaries.** Then and then only, **in 2-3 pages** share what the story is about; **why** was this story written, **what** is the story seeking to convey about God, about human nature?

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!**

(Due post class by E-mail by September 23rd)

- a** Adam and Eve, the fall from paradise
- b** Genesis 4, Cain and Abel
- c** Genesis 11, Tower of Babel
- d** Genesis 18, Abraham and Sarah have visitors.
- e** Genesis 45 +, Joseph and his brothers

October 14th COS 121 Zoom Sessions #3 and #4 (9 am and 1 pm)

READINGS

- The Bible Exodus 1,2,3,4, 5 and 19,20; Hoses, Amos
- Hayes and Holladay: chapter 4, 5, 6
- Fee: Chapters 9, 10, 11
- Anderson: chapter 4, 5 and all Biblical passages associated with each chapter.

YouTube video segments and/or Discussion Board will be placed on Teachable for weeks between Zoom class sessions.

WRITTEN assignments

(1 to 1 ½ pages in length, for each question. Due by e-mail Word Document to instructor by October 7th

- 1.** Does it make sense in our time to say that “God acts in history?” What meaning does Exodus 3: 7-8 have for oppressed, exploited, or abused people today who can see no intervention on their behalf?
- 2.** There is a widely held view that religion belongs to one sphere of life, the spiritual. the political, social, and economic issues/concerns belong in another. Would Hosea, Amos, Jeremiah you are reading agree with this? Give reasons and scriptures to make your case.

3. Two-part question: a) What was a prophet's role in the Israelite community? b) What were the key matters (issues) that Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah seem to be most concerned about? Do those appear as concerns today? **If so how and give examples.**
4. Briefly, from your reading in Hayes and Holladay, what is **Historical Criticism in Biblical study?**

COS 121 Sessions on site at Spring Heights November 17-19th

READINGS

- The Bible, Gospel of Mark, Philippians
- Hayes and Holiday, chapters 7-8
- Fee, chapters 3,4, 7, 8, and 13
- Anderson, chapters 6, 8

VIDEO SELECTIONS and/or Board discussion questions will be sent or placed on Teachable.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS from your readings (Due by e-mail by November 15th)

1. How and why 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?
2. From your readings, why is it important to understand that the entire New Testament was written within the framework of eschatology? How was this understood by those in Jesus' day and then for the early Church? What does it mean for us in the Church today?
***Take up to 2 pages as needed on this question.**
3. Mark ends his Gospel at 16:8. The rest was added by later writers. What is Mark saying? What does he mean to convey to the churches he is writing to? What might that say to us and our churches?
4. From your readings in Hayes and Holladay, what is Redaction Criticism in Biblical study?

POST CLASS ASSIGNMENT---BEGIN to work on this assignment now.

It will be due by E-mail by November 30th

This will be your final assignment for COS 121. (3-4 pages). Begin working on it beforehand and treat it as a compilation of your readings, learnings, class discussions and the importance of commentary exegetical/hermeneutical work.

Choose one (1) selection from the listing below. NOTE: Do exegetical work on understanding the text or story as well as its placement by Mark in the particular “place” he has it.

What does the author want to communicate about Jesus, the disciples and/or the audience, Kingdom life? Share your summary AND learnings. **THEN move to the hermeneutical** “bridging” as discussed in class. Where and how might this text “speak” to situations today?

Mark 1: 9-20 Baptism and Call of Disciples

Mark 4: 1-20 Sowing Seeds, Lamps, Mustard 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