

BI 222 Hebrew Bible Exegesis for Mission and Ministry (Part 1)

Instructor: Beth E. Elness-Hanson and Samuel Giere

Required for MDiv and MA-DM students

Grading options: Letter grade, Credit/No credit options

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is “part one” of a two-semester introduction to the Hebrew Bible. Students will become acquainted with the Pentateuch of the Hebrew Bible, socio-historical contexts, themes, and interpretive issues. The course will focus on how certain themes and issues are recast to meet changing socio-historical contexts. Large group lectures will give student an opportunity to work through the texts of the Pentateuch. Successful completion in the fall semester course is a pre-requisite for admission to the second semester course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- 1) to gain sufficient knowledge of the history and content of the Pentateuch;
- 2) to understand the process whereby the living conversation is recast within and outside the HB for the sake of addressing changing community contexts, as well as how that process continues today;
- 3) to grow in appreciation of the nature, function, and power of language in the biblical text and in interpretations of it;
- 4) to develop a working knowledge of the multi-cultural and religiously pluralistic contexts of the HB;
- 5) to develop understanding of the scholarly aspects and current research related to the Pentateuch and to discern the implications for interpretation;
- 6) to develop skills as Biblical interpreters, able to read the books of the HB as rhetorical literary documents and to teach/preach texts from the HB cognizant of their contextual contours as well as those of the interpreter and the community hearing the interpretation.

PROCEDURE:

The class will consist of lectures with small group discussion time during the lectures. The focus will be on offering a framework with which to read the Hebrew Bible and developing skills in various criticisms (i.e., historical, narrative, post-colonial). Exegesis, rather than content knowledge, will also be the focus of the class.

EVALUATION:

Students will be primarily evaluated on four writing assignments and class participation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Required:

- Bible, in a standard “formal” translation (~195 pages)
- Coogan, Michael D., and Cynthia R. Chapman. *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. 4th edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. (182 pages)
- Other readings and articles available via open-source Internet or through DTL.