Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
Course of Study School

SYLLABUS

COS 121 Bible I: Introduction  
Instructor: Rev. Dr. Karen E. Mosby

This course is designed to introduce the student to biblical interpretation. Attention will be given to the formation and function of the canon and to the development of a methodology of interpretation consistent with the nature of scripture. The importance of the Bible as a witness to the life and faith of ancient Israel and earliest Christianity is illustrated from a survey of representative biblical materials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES  
Students will be able to:
1. Articulate the place of scripture in the life of the congregation and the role of the pastor in interpretation.
2. Understand the inspiration and formation of the canon and its authority within the community of faith.
3. Understand and apply historical, literary, and theological approaches to various types of literature in scriptures using books from the Old and New Testaments, e.g., Genesis, Hosea, Amos, Mark and Philippians.
4. Develop a method of exegesis consistent with the nature and authority of the Bible.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS
• Homework assignments are due by June 15.
• Online hours (5) must be completed as indicated in syllabus.
• Daily attendance and class participation in Residential hours (15).

REQUIRED TEXTS
Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*.

Reference:
The Interpreters One-Volume Commentary  
Harper Collins Bible Dictionary  
New Interpreters’ Study Bible (New Revised Standard Version)

GRADING SYSTEM
Pre-Course Homework Assignments 45%  
Pre-Course Online Assignments 15%  
In-Class Assignments and Participation 40%
COS 121 BIBLE I: INTRODUCTION
PRE-COURSE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
*Due by June 15.

1. Read *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible*.
   • Write a summary of the author’s main ideas from chapters 2, 6, and 7. (1/2 page for each chapter)

2. Read *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*.
   • Write a summary of the authors’ main ideas in chapters 3, 4, 7, and 10 regarding things to consider for doing exegesis, e.g., historical context, literary context, major themes, problems, questions, etc. (1 page for each chapter)

   • Choose three of the exegetical methods discussed in Chapters 2-10 and summarize the main features of each. (1 page for each chapter)

4. Scan the book of Genesis in one sitting. Make notes of your initial impressions.
   a. List at least one initial impression from each chapter of the book. Your initial impressions can include questions, observations, possible sermon titles that arise, etc. (1 page)
   b. Discuss what Genesis 1-11 tells us about God’s relationship to humanity. (1/2 page)
   c. Discuss your understanding of Abraham’s faithfulness, specifically in light of what happens in Genesis 12-25. (1/2 page)
   d. Discuss your understanding of God’s faithfulness in the context of Genesis 12-25. (1/2 page)

5. Scan the book of Hosea. Make notes of your initial impressions.
   a. List at least one initial impression from each chapter of the book. Your initial impressions can include questions, observations, possible sermon titles that arise, etc. (1/2 - 1 page)
   b. Discuss the overall message and themes of the book. Consider the historical context of the book as a part of your response. (1 page)
   c. What does this book tell us about the prophet as a person?

   a. List at least one initial impression from each chapter of the book. Your initial impressions can include questions, observations, possible sermon titles that arise, etc. (1/2 - 1 page)
   b. Discuss the overall messages of the book. Consider the historical context of the book as a part of your response. (1/2 page)
   c. What does this book tell us about the role of the prophet and the prophet’s relationship with God and community? (1/2 page)
7. Read the article “gospel, Gospels” in the *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*.
   - How is your understanding of scripture as *inspired* informed by the theory that the Gospel of Mark was the earliest Gospel and that Matthew and Luke are based on Mark? (1 page)

8. Scan the book of Mark.
   a. Give each chapter a title of four to six specific, descriptive words. Imagine that you are writing sermon titles for each chapter. (1/2 page)
   b. Study your chapter titles and make an outline of Mark. Explain the rationale behind how you divide Mark in your outline. (1/2 page)
   c. Describe any unique characteristics of how Mark tells the story of Jesus. (1 page)

9. Consider the issue of whether or not the Gospel of Mark ends at 16:8 or 16:20.
   - Which of these endings makes the most sense to you? It is not necessary to examine commentaries or other resources. (1 page)

10. Scan the epistle to the Philippians.
    a. Give each chapter a title of four to six specific, descriptive words. You might imagine that you are writing sermon titles for each chapter. (1/2 page)
    b. Study your chapter titles and make an outline of Philippians. Explain the rationale behind how you divide Philippians in your outline. (1/2 page)

    a. Make a list of questions (no more than 10) that arise as you read the text. (1/2 page)
    b. Discuss the problems Paul is addressing in the Philippian church and the solutions he suggests. (1/2 page)
    c. Read the articles “Philippi” and “Philippians” in the *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* and summarize how they inform your understanding of Philippians 2:1-11. (1/2 page)
    d. What is Paul’s message about Jesus in Philippians 2:1-11 and how does it fit into the overall book? (1/2 page)

13. Write a sermon based on a text from Genesis, Hosea, Amos, Mark or Philippians. Incorporate some of your observations from the work you have done above into your sermon. Indicate your audience for this sermon. (3-4 pages)
INSTRUCTIONS FOR FORMATTING HOMEWORK

1. Adhere to the approximate length given for each item of written work.

2. Format your homework for 8 1/2 x 11, one side, double-spaced with one-inch margins all around. Use a 12-point font, either Times New Roman or Arial. One page equals approximately 250 words. Do not use script, condensed, or all caps print.

3. On each page of your work, include a header with your name, the class number, and the page number. Begin each numbered item on a new sheet of paper, writing that number at the beginning of your answer. Do not type the questions before your answers.

4. Do not quote extensively from the texts you read. Digest the ideas and information, and then put them in your own words. You can disagree with the authors, but make sure that you understand and have articulated their main insights.

5. If you quote from a printed text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including pages) in parentheses at the end of each usage. Quotations should never be more than a sentence or two long. Ideas and information should be stated in your own words, not in the words of the authors you have read. For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the first letter of each word in the title. For example, if the source is Harper’s Bible Dictionary, then use (HBD, p. 34-35). If you refer to books that are not listed on the class reading list, then you must give full bibliographic information.

6. The due date for written work is listed on the COS homework main page. Late work is only accepted with prior approval of the Director of the Course of Study School.

7. Bring a copy of your homework with you for your own use during the residential portion of COS.

NOTE: Using other people’s materials without documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. Such activity, otherwise known as plagiarism usually means failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry. Professors will report all instances of plagiarism to the Director of the Course of Study. The Director will arrange for a meeting with the professor and the student, and the student will be given opportunity to explain the situation. The Director in consultation with the professor will make a decision about what action is appropriate for a first instance of plagiarism. Such action could include, rewriting the material, or failure of the course. A brief summary of the meeting will be prepared by the Director and placed in the student's file in the Course of Study Office and kept there until the student completes the Course of Study Curriculum. If a second instance of plagiarism is documented, the student will fail the course and the Director will determine what other consequences may apply.
ONLINE HOURS (5 hrs)

I. “Location, Location, Location”

A. Complete Student Self-Inventory on Biblical Hermeneutics.
   • The Student Self-Inventory will be available on the Moodle Site for course.

B. Fill in your responses Complete the Self-Inventory by April 29.

C. After completing the inventory, reflect on the following questions:
   a. Did any of your responses surprise you?
   b. Were there any categories that you had not considered before?
   c. What factors influence you the most in your interpreting of the Bible?
   d. What factors do you think have the least influence on your interpreting?
   e. What are your takeaways from completing this inventory?

D. Share your responses to at least two of the questions under “C” and respond to at least two responses shared by other class members in a Group forum using the Moodle Course Site. Complete your participation in the Group forum by May 31.

III. "Can Anything Good Come Out of Moab?"

A. View the lecture on the Book of Ruth by Rev. Dr. Judy Fentress-Williams (A Year of the Bible Series, Trinity Church, Boston) using the following YouTube link: http://youtu.be/iYcx1iqVFzA

B. After viewing the lecture, prepare a Children's sermon on a passage from Chapters 1 or 2 of Ruth, drawing from the Fentress-Williams lecture.

   1. Your Children's sermon should be no longer than 3-5 minutes.
   2. Utilize a point(s) from the Fentress-Williams to frame your Children's sermon.
   3. Submit your Children's Sermin via the Course Moodle site.
   4. Viewing of Lecture and emailing of your Children’s Sermon should be completed by June 30.

III. “From Exegesis to Proclamation”

A. View each of the three sermons below using the YouTube links provided. Sermons can be viewed at times that you determine prior to June 15.
Sermon #1: Rev. Dr. James Forbes, The Riverside Church (New York)
Sermon: “Hannah Rose” (May 12, 2014)
http://youtu.be/VUbP_adFYtU

Sermon #2: Barbara Brown Taylor, The Riverside Church (New York)
Sermon: “The Right Answer” (July 14, 2013)
Deut. 30:9-14; Luke 10:25-37
http://youtu.be/wds3OxzHNAI

Sermon #3: Rev. Dr. Walter Bruggemann, Duke University Chapel (North Carolina)
Sermon: "Continuing Through The Disruptive Conjunction" (April 5, 2009)
Psalm 31
http://youtu.be/IwPhn546uQs

B. After viewing each sermon, record your responses to the following questions:
   1. What key messages did you hear?
   2. Do you think the preacher utilized any of the exegetical approaches discussed in
      Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook (Hayes and Holladay) If so, which ones?
      What did he or she say that led you to this observation?
   3. How did the preacher help listeners connect the biblical text to their personal and/
or social contexts?

C. We will participate together in a video conference after June 15 to discuss our
   responses to the three sermons. You will be contacted via email regarding the date.