

# **DM703X Biblical and Theological Foundations for Practical Theology**

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Doctor of Ministry Program

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This online course builds and broadens the biblical and theological bases from which the practice of ministry grows. Through exposure of various models of biblical interpretation and theological reflection, this course seeks to help students natural move between theological reflection and praxis.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Knowing –
  - To assist students in developing an ethical approach to biblical interpretation which considers both the historical contexts in which texts were written and the contemporary contexts in which they are to be applied.
  - To familiarize students with the prominent approaches to theological reasoning (e.g. narrative, process, correlational, political) as well as key methodological questions (e.g. determining a proper use of social scientific information) involved in the practice of theology in the present.
- Doing –
  - To increase proficiency in ethical biblical interpretation through the use of multiple methodologies: historical-critical, literary, and post-modern methods and in consideration of historical and contemporary contexts; and
  - To increase proficiency in thinking, communicating, and acting theologically about the many pastoral, congregational, and socio-political issues facing ministers today.
- Being –
  - To deepen personal knowledge of and faithfulness to the God who is Father/Mother, Son, and Holy Spirit.
  - To become more aware of the biblical and theological constructs of faith and practice that undergird the work of ministry in the church ecclesially and beyond into non-traditional areas of ministry.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

### At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Better exegete Scripture from both the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and the New Testament utilizing multiple methodologies: historical-critical, literary, and post-modern methods and through learning more contextual techniques.
2. Articulate at least three contemporary approaches to theological reasoning, documenting both strengths and weaknesses in their applicability to ministry.
3. Describe a theological method appropriate to your anticipated research project taking into consideration contextual strengths and weaknesses so as to demonstrate appropriate use.
4. Demonstrate the ability to engage fellow ministers in theological reflection through careful listening, respectful questioning, and helpful suggestion.
5. Document personal spiritual engagement in the practice of theology through reflection on the theological issues raised in your context of ministry.

## COURSE TEXTS

Anderson, Cheryl B. *Ancient Laws and Contemporary Controversies: The Need for Inclusive Biblical Interpretation 1st Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009 (ISBN-13: 978-0195305500. 256 pp.). Price: \$30.37 (Hardcover); \$13.79 (Kindle).

Brown, William P. *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017 (ISBN-13: 978-0664259938. 428 pp.). Price: \$14.79 (Paperback); \$14.05 (Kindle).

Carter, Warren. *Seven Events That Shaped the New Testament World*. Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2015 (ISBN-13: 978-0801039164. 182 pp.). Price: \$16.96 (Paperback); \$13.20 (Kindle).

Gooder, Paula. *Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-0664231941. 230 pp.). Price: \$16.02 (Paperback).

Graham, Elaine, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, eds. *Theological Reflection: Methods*. London: SCM Press, 2005 (ISBN-13: 9780334029762 (300 pp.). Price: \$25.78 (Paperback).

Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008 (ISBN-13: 9780802817655. 256 pp.). Price: \$18.37 (Paperback); \$14.16 (Kindle).

### Bible (One of the Following):

*The Cambridge Annotated Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, notes and references by H. C. Kee. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Price: \$9.99 (Hardcover).

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, NRSV*, edited by B. M. Metzger and R. E. Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991 (or newer edition). Price: \$20.85 (Hardcover); \$10.99 (Kindle).

*The Harper-Collins Study Bible. Fully Revised and Updated: NRSV*. General editor, revised edition, Harold W. Attridge. HarperSanFrancisco, 2006. Price: \$27.32 (Paperback); \$25.32 (Hardcover); \$17.99 (eTextbook).

*The People's Bible. New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha.* General editor, Curtiss Paul DeYoung. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009. Price: \$30.98 (Hardcover).

### SUGGESTED READINGS

Bailey, Randall C. "Were All Together in One Place? Toward Minority Biblical Criticism," *Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies*, 2009. (ISBN-13: 978-1589832459. 412 pp.)

Berlin, Adele and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible: Second Edition 2nd Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. (ISBN-13: 978-0195297546. 2000 pp.)

Brueggemann, Walter, Bruce C., Birch, and Terrance C Freithem. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: 2nd Edition*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2005 (ISBN-13: 978-0687066766. 504 pp.)

Cahalan, Kathleen and Mikoski, Gordon. *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowan and Littlefield, 2014. (ISBN-13: 9780742561267. 332 pp.)

DeYoung, Curtis Paul et al. *The People's Companion to The Bible*. Fortress, 2010 (ISBN-13: 978-0800697020. 320 pp.)

Foley, Edward. *Theological Reflection Across Religious Traditions: The Turn to Reflective Believing*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2015. (ISBN-13: 9781442247192. 180 pp.)

Gafney, Wilda C. *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017. (ISBN-13: 9780664239039. 342 pp.)

Graham, Elaine, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, eds. *Theological Reflection: Methods*. London: SCM Press, 2005 (ISBN-13: 9780334029762 300 pp.)

Hornsby, Teresa J. and Ken Stone. *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*. *Society of Biblical Literature*, 2011. (ISBN-13: 978-1589835528. 372 pp.)

Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. (ISBN-13: 978-0190461850. 856 pp.)

Sugirtharajah, R.S. *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the World: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*. Orbis, 2016 (ISBN-13: 978-1626982055. 496 pp.)

Sugirtharajah, R.S. *The Postcolonial Bible*. Sheffield Academic Press, 1998. (ISBN-13: 978-1850758983. 204 pp.)

Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996 (ISBN-13: 9780687002825). (306 pp.)

### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) Students will post two documents that help to explain their ministry context at the beginning of the semester:
  - a. A description of the student's ministry setting, including their role, length of time there, and a general sketch of regular pastoral/leadership activities (2-3 pages)
  - b. A brief outline of the student's anticipated research project (1-2 pages)

2) Students will provide three (2) critical book reviews (3 – 5 pages//1500 – 2500 words) on the following texts based on the instructions in the syllabus:

- Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*; and
- Anderson, Cheryl B. *Ancient Laws and Contemporary Controversies: The Need for Inclusive Biblical Interpretation 1st Edition*.
- **Instructions for Critical Summaries**

Critical summaries should:

- a) Provide a narrative overview of the whole of the book. Strive for balance throughout rather than focusing your summary on one or two chapters of the book. The primary aim is to set out the big picture.
- b) Do not use lengthy quotations from the book. Rather summarize them in your own words and footnote the reference. The purpose of the summaries and papers are to add your voice to an ongoing conversation and to increase your learning, they are not to “proof-text” your point.
- c) If you do reference specific pages in the book, include those page numbers in parenthesis (do not include the title and/or author). No other sources should be consulted or referenced.
- d) In the last ½ to 1 page, you may raise questions and make critical observations about the book.
- e) Remember: Avoid “church-eze” or “sermonizing” in your summaries. Your papers are not sermons, but academic papers that demonstrate you understand the author’s main argument from her point of view and then critically engage the argument from your perspective.

3) In consultation with the instructor and likely your advisor, **students will exegete two biblical texts that will serve as conversation partners in writing the final paper. For the Old Testament text, students must use at least 2 methods from *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis* by William P. Brown. For the New Testament text, students must use at least 2 methods from *Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament* by Paula Gooder. Students must also utilize diverse (i.e., racial, ethnic, gender, class, sexual orientation) as a part of their analysis while also keeping in mind their own social location and the social location of the people of their proposed project. The exegesis of both texts will be in one (1) paper (10-15 pages).**

4) In consultation with the instructor and likely your advisor, students will choose a book from a contemporary or recent major theologian to serve as a conversation partner in writing the final paper.

5) An initial draft of your theology chapter will be due March 16 (5 – 10 pages). This paper is an early attempt at constructing the ideas that will form your writing. Based on our commitment that practical theology is a set of communal practices, each student must find a classmate to be in conversation with regarding their theology paper. More instructions will be given in advance of that assignment. **Students must also utilize at least 1 – 2 of the theological methods from *Graham’s Theological Methods*.**

- 6) A final paper that will serve as an initial draft of the biblical and theological framework for your final thesis project (20-25 pages). In this paper, students should demonstrate an ability to utilize at least three of the theological approaches discussed in class (Outcome #1 above); the ability to articulate a clear theological rationale and framework for your own research (Outcomes #2 & 4 above); the ability to exegete a Biblical periscope that is pertinent to your final project. Further guidelines for this paper will be provided during the class. **This paper should utilize the analysis from the previous papers.**

## COURSE CALENDAR

### February 3 – 9, 2020: Introduction to Practical Theology (Part 1)

#### Read:

- Osmer, Practical Theology, Intro – Chap. 2

#### Due:

- Introductory documents outlined above (See Assignment #1 above)

### February 10 – 16, 2020: Introduction to Practical Theology (Part 2)

#### Read:

- Osmer, Practical Theology, Chap. 3 – 4

### February 17 – 23, 2020: Introduction to Methods of Theological Reflection (Part 1)

#### Read:

- Graham et al., Theological Reflection, Intro – Chap. 3

#### Due:

- Critical Book Review: *Practical Theology*

### February 24 – 29, 2020: Introduction to Methods of Theological Reflection (Part 2)

#### Read:

- Graham et al., Theological Reflection, Chap. 4 - 7

### February 26, 2020: *Ash Wednesday (No Classes)*

### March 2 - 16, 2020: Initial Draft of Theology Paper Due (Self Study)

#### Due March 16, 2020):

- Initial draft of theology paper (5 – 10 pages) outlining which theological methods will be applicable to your final research project and key theology partners that you will be in conversation with.

### March 16 - 22, 2020: Understanding the Need for Ethical and Inclusive Biblical Interpretation

#### Read:

- R.S. Sugirtharajah, “Biblical Studies after the Empire: From a Colonial to a Postcolonial Mode of Interpretation” in *The Postcolonial Bible*.
- Randall C. Bailey, “The Danger of Ignoring One’s Own Cultural Bias in Interpreting the Text” in *The Postcolonial Bible*.
- Ellen Armour, (“Queer Bibles, Queer Scriptures? An Introductory

Response” in *Bible Trouble: Queer Reading at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*.

- Anderson, *Ancient Laws and Contemporary Controversies*, Chap. 1, 2

**March 16 – 22, 2020:** **Ethical and Inclusive Biblical Interpretation – OT/Hebrew Bible (Part 2)**  
**Read:** Brown, *A Handbook for Old Testament Exegesis*, Chap. 7-14

**March 23 - 29, 2020:** *Spring Break – No Work Due*

**March 30 – April 5, 2020:** **Ethical and Inclusive Biblical Interpretation – OT/Hebrew Bible (Part 1)**

**Read:**

- Anderson, *Ancient Laws and Contemporary Controversies*, Chap. 3
- Brown, *A Handbook for Old Testament Exegesis*, Chap. 1- 6

**April 6 - 12, 2020:** *Easter Break – No Work Due*

**April 13 – 19, 2020:** **Ethical and Inclusive Biblical Interpretation – New Testament (Part 1)\***

**Read:**

- Carter, *Seven Events that Shaped the New Testament World*, Chap. 1-4

**Due:**

- **Critical Book Review:** *Ancient Laws and Contemporary Controversies*

**April 20 - 26, 2020:** **Ethical and Inclusive Biblical Interpretation – New Testament (Part 2)**

**Read:**

- Carter, *Seven Events that Shaped the New Testament World*, Chap. 5-7
- Gooding, *Searching for Meaning*, Chap 1 – 4 and Introduction from Parts 2 and Part 3

**May 3, 2020:** **OT/NT Exegetical Paper Due (Self Study) (10 – 15 pages)**

**Due:**

- In consultation with the instructor and likely your advisor, students will exegete two biblical texts that will serve as conversation partners in writing the final paper. **For the Old Testament text, students must use at least 2 methods from *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis* by William P. Brown. For the New Testament text, students must use at least 2 methods from *Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament* by Paula Gooder. Students must also utilize diverse (i.e., racial, ethnic, gender, class, sexual orientation) as a part of their analysis while also keeping in mind their own social location and the social location of the people of their proposed project. The exegesis of both texts will be in one (1) paper (10-15 pages).**

**May 15, 2020:** **Final Paper Due**

## **COURSE GRADING:**

**Introductory Assignment: 10%**

**Initial Theology Paper: 25%**

**OT/NT Exegetical Paper: 35%**

**Final Paper: 30%**

## **Grading Criteria for Written Assignments**

1. Each answer offers a clear thesis statement, follows a logical organization, is well developed, and is free of grammatical and spelling errors.
2. You enter into intelligent, critical conversation with the course texts.
3. You demonstrate a depth of theological and pastoral insight in your critical analysis and constructive claims.

**Please note that although I will assign a letter grade to each assignment, this course is Pass/Fail.**