

G-ETS 33-502: **Teaching For Biblical Faith**

Tentative: subject to revision!

Summer 2017

June 19-30, 2017

8:00am-12:30pm

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Teaching Assistant:

Course Description

As Christians, the Bible is our sacred text. Ways of understanding, interpreting, and teaching the Bible are as varied as the denominations in the Christian faith. It is also increasingly difficult to parse out how a text like the Bible can speak to our lives today. This course will focus on skills that ministers, educators, and leaders can use to open the Bible to laypersons in congregations. Students will discover and critically examine their own approach to the Bible, and will complete a teaching practicum. We will also consider a variety of cultural perspectives for reading the Bible, and will practice equipping laypersons to live out a Biblical faith in the 21st century.

This course meets the requirements for United Methodist professional certification in Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Music Ministry, Evangelism or Spiritual Formation. It is a foundational course in Christian Education for the M.A. and M. Div. degrees. Lay persons who teach in their congregations, pastors seeking to strengthen their teaching skills, and lay professionals seeking certification will find this course useful in their future ministry.

Course Goals:

- A. **Knowing:** To know practices and disciplines of Christian education and formation and to understand how these are affected by differing cultural contexts. This goal includes the following sub-themes:
1. To know major approaches to faithful teaching and learning.
 2. To understand learning theories – particularly liberative and transformative learning and multiple intelligences theory – and their pedagogical use.
- B. **Doing:** To examine, assess, and lead a variety of approaches to teaching and learning appropriate to a particular faith community. This goal includes experience or practice in the following:

1. To be able to read, evaluate and engage the culture of a congregation and its community with particular sensitivity to culture, race, class and gender.
 2. To teach Christian practices and faith in intentional ways to address the developmental and faith issues of people in congregations.
 3. To integrate practices of biblical and theological study into teaching and learning leadership in a congregation.
 4. To coordinate and lead a congregation in its educational ministry.
- C. **Being:** To be a theological educator who seeks to liberate and empower persons to be co-creators of the reign of God in our multi-cultural and multi-faith environment. This goal includes the following:
1. To be a reflective teacher and leader who can empower others in the congregation to be reflective and open to transformation.
 2. To be a Christian disciple who continues to engage in the practices that develop and deepen faith.
 3. To understand oneself as a critical and open participant in an ongoing theological tradition.

Required Texts: (Book prices were obtained from www.barnesandnoble.com)

- Karen Tye. **The Basics of Christian Education**. Chalice Press, 2000; ISBN-13: 978-0827202290, \$15.39
- Jack L. Seymour. **Teaching Biblical Faith**. Abingdon Press, 2015; ISBN-13: 978-1630884307, \$14.25
- Marcus Borg and N. T. Wright. **The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions (Plus)**. HarperSanFrancisco, 2007; ISBN-13: 9780061285547, \$11.98
- William P. Brown (editor). **Engaging Biblical Authority**. Westminster John Knox Press, 2007; ISBN-13: 9780664230579, \$13.99
- **NRSV Study Bible** – New Interpreters, HarperCollins, or Oxford Edition

Texts for Teaching/Learning Experiences (Students should choose two books from this list. Each student will teach from one of these books.)

- Francis Taylor Gench. **Back to the Well: Women’s Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels**. Westminster John Knox Press, 2004; ISBN-13: 9780664227159. \$14.16
- Renita J. Weems. **Just A Sister Away**. Innisfree Press, 1988; ISBN-13: 978-0931055522. \$6.48.
- Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. **ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church**; Baker Books, 2008; ISBN-13: 9780801046315. \$19.39
- Brian McLaren. **The Secret Message of Jesus**. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007; ISBN-13: 9780849918926. \$14.42
- Sara Miles. **Jesus Freak: Feeding, Healing, Raising the Dead**. Wiley, John and Sons, 2010; ISBN: 0470481668; ISBN-13: 9780470481660. \$16.35

- Henri Nouwen, **Can You Drink The Cup?**, Ava Maria Press, 2006; ISBN-13: 9781594710995. \$11.47
- Howard Thurman. **Jesus and the Disinherited.** Beacon Press, 1996; ISBN-13: 9780807010297; \$11.64
- Mark Yaconelli. **Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus.** Zondervan, 2006. ISBN-13: 9780310267775; \$18.09
- Walter Wink, **Jesus and Nonviolence.** Fortress Press, 2003. ISBN-13: 978-0800636098. \$6.38
- Jack L. Seymour, **Teaching the Way of Jesus.** Abingdon Press, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1426765056; \$19.76

Ground Rules:

All written work should follow rules of good scholarship, using proper English grammar, spelling and punctuation. Any sources used, including internet sources, should be *carefully* cited using the Garrett guide. (A copy will be provided on Moodle.) Papers are to be completed in an inclusive manner, sensitive to issues of sexism, racism, and ageism in the English language. References to God should consider carefully the use of gendered pronouns. **All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course. Assignments that are not completed on time will receive a deduction in their grade.**

This class is an intensive learning community that requires your full attention. Missing more than one session will adversely affect your grade. Because we are a learning ecology, we are only as strong as our weakest link. All of us will teach all of us. Each of us depends on all the rest of us.

Assignments: Subject to revision!

1. **Active class participation and reading of assigned literature. (20% of grade).** All students should read all of the required texts. In addition, you will pick one of the recommended texts to read and use as the basis of your teaching session. You are required to read at least one of the other recommended books as well.

The purpose of class participation is to demonstrate comprehension and integration of assigned material. Participation includes preparation for class, constructive verbal contributions to class discussions, attentive listening, and facilitating the participation of others. Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. Notify the instructor in case of an emergency necessitating an absence. The purpose of the reading assignments is to provide a range of theoretical grounding for the students' work. Class members are expected to have completed all readings by the class session for which they are assigned.

The right to participate in class discussion is based on having read the assigned texts for the session. **A list of the readings (both required and recommended) and what percentage you have carefully read is due on the last day of class. I rely on your**

honest reporting of this.

2. Complete the Biblical Hermeneutics Self-Inventory. Include a 2-page reflection paper on what you learned about your understanding of the Bible through the Self-Inventory (paper should be double spaced, 12-point font). Due **June 23 (20% of grade)**

3. **Curriculum Review.** Using the United Library at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, or other sources, examine two curriculum resources for Bible study. These may be for children, youth, or adults. Analyze and compare the two resources. Look critically at how scripture is used (particularly issues of authority and interpretation) and describe the educational process. Prepare a one -page handout on each resource to share with your classmates (bring sufficient copies for everyone) and a display for our curriculum fair. **(10% of grade) Due June 22**

4. **Two Teaching Sessions:** Micro (20 min.) and Full (60). Teaching in class with a small group (2-3) of persons and evaluation

Full teaching session (one hour) in class with a small group (2-3 persons) and evaluation **(30% of grade)**

The assignment includes:

- Thoughtfully reading the book your group is assigned (from the list of recommended texts)
- Planning with your group a Bible study to be taught in class. Select a scripture that will be the focus of the study. The book is to be used as a resource, not the focus of the study. Prepare a group teaching plan (**due one class before teaching**)
- Consultation with the instructor before teaching
- Exegesis of the biblical text you are teaching
- Preparation of a one-page handout offering a brief summary of the book and describing the book's model(s) of Jesus. (Bring copies of the handout for the class)
- **Write an individual evaluation paper (6-8 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced) which is due one week after teaching.** The evaluation should address the following:
 1. Assessment of the author's model(s) of Jesus and its usefulness for helping teach for Biblical Faith. Consider strengths and weaknesses from biblical, theological, and educational perspectives.
 2. Assessment of the approach to interpreting the Bible used by your group in the session, its strengths and weaknesses from biblical and theological perspectives, how it is informed by the book you read together,
 3. Assessment of group planning process, your role in it, and team teaching,
 4. **Assessment of yourself as a teacher.** What did you learn about your strengths and your weaknesses?
 5. Use the questions given in class to guide your thinking. Use the vocabulary we develop together in class. Draw on material from readings.

Ultimately, the evaluation should focus on what you learned about yourself as a teacher and what you learned about how people learn.

5. A statement (6-8 pages, 12-point, dbl-spaced) of your understanding of the task of teaching the Bible in the Church, particularly considering the Jesus you will teach. Please address the following questions: What is the Bible? What is your view of biblical authority? What theological assumptions and educational assumptions inform your approach to the Bible or use of the Bible in your ministry? How does your social location inform your approach to teaching the Bible? How do your answers to these concerns affect the way you do Bible Study? What implications do your assumptions have for the way you preach, teach, engage in mission, and lead a congregation? How will you seek to empower laity to read, engage, and teach the Bible? What Jesus will you teach? This paper should reflect your dialogue with the texts of this course as well as learnings from class discussions and the other recommended book you read. **Due July 30 (20% of grade.)**

Important statements about grading.

- All papers need to be typed in an accepted academic style. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cite all your sources carefully!
- All papers need to be 12-point type and double-spaced (except the handout for class).
- All papers, presentations, and conversations need to be sensitive to and inclusive of issues of language in relation to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, and so forth.
- Incompletes will be granted only for reasons beyond the control of the student.
- Grades will be reduced for late papers.
- All assignments must be completed to pass the course.
- Attendance is vital for this course to be successful and for you to successfully complete this course. All late arrivals and absences must be discussed with the instructor.

(Complete the chart – on Moodle – as you read as preparation for class discussion)

WEEK 2

June 26: Teaching/Learning Session #1 and evaluation

June 27: Teaching/Learning Session #2 and evaluation

June 28: Teaching/Learning Session #3 and evaluation

June 29: Teaching/Learning Session #4 and evaluation

June 30: Teaching/Learning Session #5 and evaluation; **Reading list due.**

(Sometime during this week, we will visit the Garrett-Evanston Children's Defense Fund Freedom School)

Final papers (Assignment #5) are due July 30. Submit your papers as an attachment in email to Jennifer.moe@garrett.edu Include your name on the subject line and in the title.