This course introduces biblical interpretation. Attention is given to the inspiration, 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 will be emphasized. 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 scripture using Genesis, Amos and Zephaniah, Mark, and Philippians.
4. Develop a method of exegesis consistent with the nature and authority of the Bible.

Required Textbooks:

Please note that the required Study Bible, Dictionary and Commentary will be used in this class and in future COS classes, as well as being valuable additions to your pastoral library. You may already own the same of these from License to Preach School. I know this is a hefty startup book cost but also note that you will be expected to use the first three books in all five bible courses that you will take in the Course of Study.


Supplemental Textbooks:


Note that the abbreviations in brackets [] are used in the syllabus to indicate that resource. An advantage of the NISB is its introductory articles to books of the Bible and also the excursuses*. I will assign these in reading assignments. An intro to a biblical book is at the beginning of that book in this study bible. Excursuses appear throughout this book. The list of excurses by subject is found on pg. xxiv - xxv. A list by title of the particular excursus follows on pg. xxv - xxvi. (* an excursus is a useful article set apart from the main text that explains an aspect of the text or a related issue.)

**Instructions for Writing Papers:**

1) For the Reading Questions, read the text assignments, take notes and answer the questions completely in your own words, using complete sentences (unless otherwise noted). Do not quote extensively from the text that you read. Rather, digest the ideas and information, and then put them in your own words. Follow the approximate length that is given for each item of written work, using one-inch margins.

2) Format your written work for 8 ½ x 11 paper, double-spaced. Use 12 point font. Do not use script, condensed, or all caps print.

3) Citation Rules:
   a) If you quote from a text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including page numbers at the end of each usage). Quotations less than five lines should be enclosed in quotes. Quotations five or more lines should be single spaced and indented 1.5 Inches from the left margin.
   b) As much as possible, ideas and information should be stated in your own words and sentence structure, not in the words or sentence structure of the authors you have read.
   c) Whenever you use information or an idea from another source, whether that is a direct quotation or a restatement in your own words, always cite the source. You may footnote, or use the in text method (Author’s last name Year, page/s) for example: (Powell 2011, 400). For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the abbreviations in the syllabus. If you refer to books that are not listed on the class reading list, then provide full bibliographic information in a bibliography at the end of the paper. Author. Title. Place of publication: publisher, date. I will be providing a handout of examples for properly citing sources.

4) Submit the papers to the instructor via the assignment upload page by midnight of the due date. Submit the file in MS Word format (*.doc or *.docx) or Rich Text Format (*.rtf, in most all word processing programs you can save a document in this format using the “save as” command). Attach that file to your e-mail and submit it to me.

5) When you submit the reading questions place the following information on a cover page:
   a) The course number
   b) Name of the course
   c) Your name
   d) Date the paper is due

6) When you submit the Exegesis Paper place the following information on a cover page:
   a) The course number
   b) Name of the course
   c) Your name
d) Paper’s title (if you choose to title it)
e) Passage being discussed
f) Date the paper is due
7) Papers are returned in PDF (Adobe Acrobat) format with comments attached.
8) NOTE: Using other people’s language or intellectual property without acknowledgment or documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. Such stealing, 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.
9) Writing Resources and Style Manuals:
   a) The Purdue OWL site at: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html
10) Helps to recognize and avoid plagiarism:
   a) These are links to some websites that may help you to cite appropriately and use your own words more.
   b) https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quotingsources/
   c) https://cehe.instructure.com/courses/20915
   d) https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html
   e) https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/teacher_and_tutor_resources/preventing_plagiarism/index.html

Participation in the required discussion forum/s for each week:

1. This is akin to showing up for class in an online environment.
2. Posts should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the readings and other posted material.
3. Posts should follow the guidelines stated for each discussion forum.
4. Replies should reflect genuine engagement with the post to which you are replying in relation to the readings and other posted material.
5. Posts and replies do not need to be lengthy (actually concise is better) but should reflect familiarity with the readings and other posted material.
6. The minimum for these will be one post and one reply unless otherwise stated in the particular discussion forum.
7. All initial posts will be due by Thursday 11:59 pm so students will have time to reply to those initial posts.
8. Replies to initial Posts will be due by Saturday 11:59 pm.

Class Preparation and Study

Study habits are important. Clergy should have good study habits. Persons who have college or university experience should have developed good study habits. Persons who have not had such experience should pay special attention to observing them. One rule that students in college learn is the “twofer” one. One should study two hours outside of class for each hour in class. The COS assumes 20 hours of class time and about 20 pages of writing.

As a best practice read the assigned readings and work through the activities and videos etc. earlier in the week in order to be able to intelligently participate in the discussion forums and respond to the reading
questions.

It frequently helps to read text material twice. The first reading is to see the general ideas and progress of the author’s thinking, the issue that is taken up, the thesis and conclusions and reasons for whatever thesis or conclusion that is claimed. Then ask: Is the thesis justified? Is something important omitted? Is the argument sound and convincing? Are there other solutions to the issue? Are such conclusions better than those of the author? It may be helpful to make notes. For example, outline the text by writing one sentence that summarizes a paragraph or section.

**Grading:**

Letter grades are assigned. The final grade for the course is based upon how well the student fulfills all the requirements of the course. Attendance in all of the sessions is required. See the “Course Expectations” chart below.

**Course Expectations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exegetical Paper (around 10 pages)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings Questions (6 sets total, each about 2 pages)</td>
<td>(9% per set x 6) 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in discussion forums and Zoom meetings*</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note that participation in forums is akin to showing up for class in the online portion of this course. The 15% value assigned to the forums is based on quality and substance of the discussion posts. Simply not participating in the forums at all or chronically late posts may result in a greater than 15% reduction in the overall grade. A student cannot miss more than four contact hours of a course and still pass. Contact hours are estimated in an online course by gauging the amount of time that completing online tasks may reasonably take. For example: a student watches a 1 hour video; then participates in a discussion forum for 0.75 hours, posting an initial post and then responding to other student’s posts, and responding to responses and so on; then completes a guided lesson with a quiz at the end for 0.25 hours; then engages in a 1 hour Zoom discussion. This totals 3 contact hours.

**Course Schedule**

Due to the odd nature of the recent pandemic and the need to take this course fully online instead of the usual hybrid format things will be more fluid. I may, in order to spread out workload to a more manageable pace extend the final dates of the class as well as extending due dates for written work.

We will be doing Zoom meetings in lieu of in person meeting. For those of you who don't know, Zoom is a way for groups to meet virtually face to face. You can see and hear each other on your computer screen using a computer with a camera and microphone (usually built into the camera). If you don't have this, you can use an iPad, Android Tablet, or a smartphone. You can also use a plain old telephone to call in. Don't worry if you do not have a Zoom account, the professor will invite you to the meeting with a link sent to your email.
The two Saturday Zoom sessions will still be held on the dates indicated. One to two other Zoom meetings may be arranged, in the best attempt to accommodate everyone’s schedule, throughout the course as needed. Zoom meetings shall not exceed 2 hours and not be less than one hour.

**Saturday Zoom sessions (May 16)**

**Time**
- 10:30 am – Noon
- 1:00 pm – 2:30

**Topics**
- The Christian Canon of Scripture
- The Text of the Bible
- Biblical Social World
- Exegetical papers to be explained and passages assigned
- What is Exegesis
- Biblical Studies Resources

**Readings** (to be completed prior to the Zoom sessions)
- HCBD article entitled: Canon
- NIOVC: Under General articles: How the Bible Was Created; Canon of the OT; Canon of the NT
- Article: Texts, Versions, Manuscripts, Editions (available on course website)
- Gorman: Chapter 1 - 2
- Enns, Chapters 1-2

**Have completed prior to coming to class:**
- From the course website under the module: Resources for Saturday Opening Session:
  - Activity: How did we get our bible?
  - Ancient Cosmology video resources
  - Lesson: Introducing Exegesis

[Note that for the online engagement the week starts on Monday]

**Online Week 1 (5/18-24)**

**Topics**
- Genesis
- Exegesis: formal analysis – the genre of a book and the forms within

**Readings**
- Book of Genesis
- Enns, Chapter 3
- Enns, Image of God PDF (available in this week’s module)
- HCBD articles entitled: Genesis
- NISB: Introduction to Genesis; All the excursuses listed under Genesis on pg. xxiv
- NIOVC: Overview to Genesis
- NIOVC: Under General Articles: Hebrew Narrative
- Gorman: Chapter 3 and 5

**Assignments Due**
- Reading Questions on Cannon and Text of Scripture
• Reading Questions on Genesis

**Online Week 2 (5/25-5/31)**

**Topics**
- Amos
- Exegesis: historical context – the historical situation of the passage

**Readings**
- Book of Amos
- Enns, Chapter 4
- HCBD articles entitled: Prophet; Amos
- NISB: Introduction to Amos
- NIOVC: Overview of Amos
- NIOVC Under General Articles: Prophetic Literature
- Gorman: Chapter 4, Section titled: Historical, Sociopolitical, and Cultural Contexts
- Handouts: historical context

**Assignments Due**
- Questions on Prophecy and Amos

**Online Week 3 (6/1-7)**

**Topics**
- Mark
- Synoptic Problem
- Exegesis: literary context – what comes before and after a passage

**Readings**
- Book of Mark
- Enns, Chapter 5
- HCBD articles entitled: gospel; The Gospels; Synoptic Problem; Mark, The Gospel According to
- NISB: Introduction to Mark
- NIOVC: Overview of Mark;
- Gorman: Chapter 4, section titled: Literary and Rhetorical Contexts
- Handouts: literary context

**Assignments Due**
- Reading Questions on Gospels and Mark

**Online Week 4 (6/8-14)**

**Break for Annual Conference**

It is unknown at this time whether annual conference will proceed as scheduled, or if it will be in person or through some other venue. I am leaving this portion of the syllabus as is but understand that adjustments may need to happen.
Online Week 5 (6/15-21)

Topics
- Zephaniah
- Exegesis: close reading/detailed analysis – the details and the internal logic of a passage

Readings
- Book of Zephaniah
- Enns, Chapter 6
- HCBD articles entitled: Zephaniah, Book of
- NISB: Introduction to Zephaniah
- NIOVC: Overview of Zephaniah
- NIOVC under General Articles: review Prophetic Literature
- Gorman: Chapter 6
- Handouts: close reading/detailed analysis

Assignments Due
- Reading Questions on Zephaniah

Online Week 6 (6/22-26)

Topics
- Philippians
- Exegesis: Putting it all together

Readings
- Book of Philippians
- HCBD articles entitled: Philippians, Letter of Paul to the; Philippi; Letter; Epistle
- NISB: Introduction to Philippians
- NIOVC: Overview of Philippians
- NIOVC under General Articles: Letters
- Gorman: Chapter 7
- Handouts: writing an exegesis paper
- Exegetical readings and handouts (available in Week 6 course module)

Assignments Due
- Reading Questions on Letters and Philippians

Saturday Zoom Sessions (6/29)

Time
- 10:30 am – Noon
- 1:00 pm – 2:30

Topics
- Bible and Ministry Formation
- Hermeneutics: What’s up with that Peter Enns guy anyway!?
Readings
- Enns, Chapter 7
- NOT required: Gorman: Chapters 8-9

Assignments Due
- Exegesis Paper (around 10 pages, see assignment page for instructions)

Scary Legal Stuff:

Below is an excerpt from the student handbook relating to writing and plagiarism. You may find the resources and links below quite helpful in preparing your papers, however.

Policies Guiding Student Writing and Research:

As a rule of thumb the Chicago Manual of Style shall be followed in writing papers however an instructor may choose to use a different writing style for their course.

An excellent resource is the Purdue Online Writing Lab (AKA: the Purdue OWL). This provides tools for writing a paper and instructions in several different writing styles such as The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS or Turabian); The Modern Language Association (MLA); and American Psychological Association (APA). It also provides resources on writing in general as well as how to do research and how to avoid plagiarism (taking someone else’s ideas or words and not giving them credit or passing them off as one’s own work).

Visit the Purdue OWL here:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Best Practices for writing:

Students must do their own work, not submit the work of others as their own. To submit the work of someone else as the student’s own work is dishonest and a form of stealing - stealing the intellectual property and writing skill of a source and claiming that it is your own. It also defeats the purpose of a course and education in general since the student does not learn either the subject matter at hand nor the skill in organizing ideas and expressing them in writing. In addition, of course, it is unfair to those who correctly absorb the subject matter and write their own papers for credit in a course.

It is normal, indeed expected, that one consult relevant sources on a topic when preparing a paper for a course. The way that the student uses those sources, however, becomes crucial. The student should read, absorb the subject matter, but then organize the ideas and material in the student’s own way. One should not simply follow a series of ideas – the thinking – of the source.

One can quote from a source, of course, but then that quoting must be exact, not changing a word or so here and there. The rule is: three consecutive words or more constitutes a quote. A quotation from a source must be indicated as a quotation (enclosed in quotation marks) and the exact source of the
quotation must be given so that the reader can go to that source and find it without difficulty. Quoting from a text requires quotation marks before and after the quote and the source (including page numbers) must be clearly identified at the end of each usage. Generally quotations should not be more than a sentence or two in length.

The student should state the ideas and material in the student’s own words and structure of sentences. A student writer should not use the sentence structure of the source, merely changing some words in the text. Such a practice does not constitute one’s own work but uses the work of others. Such practice is plagiarism, the chief academic sin.

The student should be scrupulous in identifying the work of others in writing a paper. Honesty and personal integrity demand it. It is better to over-document one’s sources than to under-document them and leave doubt in the mind of the reader as to the use of sources.

In order to be fair to the students who do their own work and fairly earn a good or superior grade, other students should not be allowed to cheapen the value of a good grade by unfairly receiving a better grade than the student earns, especially if the student employs some form of cheating and/or plagiarism.

The appearance of plagiarism in a paper is unacceptable. An assignment may have to be done over or may simply be rejected. An “F” grade in a course is warranted, especially in egregious or repeated instances of plagiarism. Students are encouraged to work with their instructors on expectations for written work and to use one of the writing resources and style manuals identified.

Writing Resources and Style Manuals:

The Purdue OWL site at: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Helps to recognize and avoid plagiarism:

These are links to some websites that may help you to cite appropriately and use your own words more.

https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quotingsources/

https://cehe.instructure.com/courses/20915

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/teacher_and_tutor_resources/preventing_plagiarism/index.html

**Academic Integrity Policy:**

The Indiana Extension Course of Study requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling academic requirements must be the original work of the student. Violations of academic integrity include any action by a student indicating lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism.
Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the published or unpublished words or ideas of another [including online resources] as if it were one’s own work. A writer’s work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) uses a writer’s distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism. A student found guilty of a violation of the academic integrity policy, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions:

- warning
- probation
- a reduced or failing grade for the assignment or the course
- suspension for the remainder of the course
- expulsion from the Course of Study
- notification of one or more persons, organizations, or committees:
  - Student’s Conference/District Superintendent
  - Student’s District Committee on Ordained Ministry
  - The Regional COS director
  - The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

Decisions relating to the above consequences shall be decided by the professor and the director of the Extension COS, and be based on the following factors, including but not limited to:

- Severity of the offence: What percentage of the assignment was plagiarized?
- Previous instances of plagiarism
- Intent: In as much as can be determined how well did the student understand she or he was plagiarizing?