

6.107 STM - Opening the Scriptures: The Old Testament in the New

MGVHoffman – LTSG – May 2011

Rationale

The earliest Christian reflection on Jesus was centered on their reading and interpretation of Scripture. This course will investigate the use of the Old Testament in the New and focus on some of the key texts that shaped the early Christian understanding of Jesus. While a significant component of this course will be a historical investigation into how early Christians read and reflected upon Scripture, it is also important to identify the hermeneutical procedures that were employed then and to reflect on how they might be appropriately applied today.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Demonstrate a familiarity with the ancient texts that contribute to early Christian reflections on Scripture
- Demonstrate an ability to work with the exegetical tools and resources necessary for investigating the use of the OT texts in the NT
- Demonstrate an understanding of ancient exegetical and hermeneutical methods and express how such an understanding is helpful for contemporary reflection on the biblical texts.

Strategies

In order to accomplish the stated Objectives of this course, the following Strategies will be employed:

1. CLASS SESSIONS and PARTICIPATION

- Starting May 9, online work (~ 8 hours expected)
- Monday, May 23: 1:00-5:00pm
- Tuesday-Thursday, May 24-26: 8:00am-12:00pm and 1:00-5:00pm
- Friday, May 27 from 8:00-12:00pm
- Post-class, online work (~ 2 hours expected)

The students will be expected to participate in online assignments, attend class, to have read all required readings prior to class, and to be prepared to discuss the topics for each class session. If you are absent, you are absent. It may reflect negatively on your final grade. If there are mitigating circumstances, let me know.

2. CLASS PRESENTATIONS and FINAL PAPER

Completion in advance of readings and other assignments is critical for your readiness to learn and your ability to contribute to the mutual learning that occurs in class. Students will be expected to present their work according to their scheduled time. Assignments will be accepted past the due date ONLY if the reason for tardiness is commensurate with a reason why a rostered leader would not be prepared to preach or teach as expected by their congregation on a given Sunday.

- Area of Concentration presentation: Students will select an area of concentration from the list provided or in consultation with the instructor in advance of the first day of class. Presentations will be made at a scheduled time on Tuesday or Wednesday. The best presentations will likely include a distributable guide of some kind for the members of the class and pointers to other resources. Depending on the number of students in the course, these presentations will be 20-30 minutes long.

- Topic Presentation: Students will select a topic that will become the focus of their work from the list provided or in consultation with the instructor. Presentations on the preliminary work accomplished will be scheduled for Thursday or Friday. The best presentations will help the other members of the class understand the issues involved with your text or topic and the preliminary ways you are working with it. The presenter should keep in mind that a final paper will yet be written on this topic, and so feedback should be solicited that will contribute to that paper. Depending on the number of students in the course, these presentations will be 20-30 minutes long.
- Final Paper: Based on the topic chosen, this paper will be 12-18 pages long. (one inch margins, double-spaced, 12pt font) The best papers will have a strong thesis statement that clearly defines the issue involved with the chosen topic and a proposal for how it should be handled. Interaction with appropriate resources (both primary and secondary) is expected, and the conclusion should indicate how this topic fits within the larger scope of early Christian attempts to interpret Scripture. This paper will be due on Friday, June 17.

3. READINGS

REQUIRED READING

Students are expected to read all assigned readings in the following:

- *The Bible*:
 - You will need a good study Bible, preferably NRSV. You should bring this to every class, but you may bring it as a book or as part of your computer [Bible software](#).
 - For a Greek New Testament, I highly recommend the [NET Bible Nestle-Aland27 Diglot](#). (Note: the cheapest way to acquire this book is through the seminary bookstore.) Any recent Greek NT will do, however. (Again, either book or digital.) Bring this to each class session.
 - For an Old Testament, we will be consulting the Hebrew (or working through Hebrew-English tools to get at the Hebrew) and Greek Septuagint. Computer Bible software should have appropriate editions of both. For the LXX, Rahlfs is the standard book edition. Online versions are also available. (E.g., [The Unbound Bible](#))

NOTE: While we will be discussing the following two books in class, they mainly serve as background reading. Given the pace of the course, I encourage you to read as much as possible before the course begins!

- *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Library of Early Christianity, Vol 3) by James L. Kugel (Author), Rowan A. Greer (Author), Wayne A. Meeks (Editor) (Westminster John Knox Press, 1988) ISBN: 0664250130
- *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* by Donald Juel (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1992) ISBN: 0800627075
- ONE of the following:
 - *The Last Trial* by Shalom Spiegel (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1993) ISBN: 187904529X
 - *The Bible As It Was* by James L. Kugel (Belknap Press, 1999) ISBN: 0674069412
- Additional readings may also be required.
- See the online Bibliography for recommended books and additional resources.

RECOMMENDED READING

- *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson. (Baker Academic, 2007)
- *Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New* by Steve Moyise (T & T Clark International, 2008)
- *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* by Richard B. Hays (Yale University Press, 1993).

Evaluation

Evaluation of students will be as follows:

- **Class and Online Participation:** 20%
- **Area Presentation:** 15%
- **Topic Presentation:** 15%
- **Final Paper:** 50%

A grade of at least 70% is needed to pass.

For those taking the class for a grade, the scale is: A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%