

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (BIBHB500-X)

Online, asynchronous (no required synchronous sessions)

Spring 2024 (February 05 -- May 14)

Instructor: Dr. G. Brooke Lester (Associate Professor of Hebrew Scriptures; he/him)

Teaching Assistant: Aaron Dorsey (PhD Candidate in Hebrew Bible; he/him)

Revision: October 30, 2023.

DRAFT: Some details may change before the first day of class.

Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr Brooke Lester: brooke.lester@garrett.edu

Dr. Lester may be reached by email. He checks email twice/day, and will respond within 36 hours. (See "Emergencies" in this syllabus.)

Office location: Shaffer 731. Office hours by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Aaron Dorsey: aaron.dorsey@garrett.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will introduce the learner to the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures--Torah, Prophets, and Writings--with emphasis on their order and contents, the historical and cultural settings from which they arise, their literary forms, their religious themes, and some of the kinds of interpretive approaches that communities of readers have taken since the advent of modernity.

Learning Goals:

- Students will develop basic historical understanding about the Hebrew Bible, the authors and settings of its writings, and its socio-cultural, political, and ideological environment in the ancient Near East.
- Students will gain acquaintance with interpretations from multiple perspectives.
- Students will acquire basic skills in exegesis of Hebrew-Bible texts.
- Students will develop skills in expressing and contextualizing what they have learned to broader audiences.

Required Textbooks:

- Robert E Goss and Mona West, eds. *The Queer Bible Commentary*. Second Edition. SCM Press, 2022. ISBN-13: 978-0334060789. ISBN-10: 0334060788. Amazon hardcover \$82.85. Amazon Kindle \$78.81.
- Michael Joseph Brown. *What They Don't Tell You: A Survivor's Guide to Biblical Studies*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2000. ISBN-13: 978-0664222208. ISBN-10: 066422220X. Amazon Paperback \$38.96. Amazon Kindle \$9.99.
- Common English Bible and Joel B. Green. *The CEB Study Bible with Apocrypha*. Common English Bible, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-1609262150. ISBN-10: 1609262158. Amazon hardcover \$45.92. ***If you already own an NRSV Study Bible, such as the Harper Collins or New Interpreter's, you may use that instead. But please first contact the instructor by email to check in about what you've got. Thank you!***

Delivery:

This course is asynchronous, but not self-paced. By “asynchronous,” we mean that there are no synchronous sessions (neither in-person nor by videoconference). By “not self-paced,” we mean that there are deadlines every single week, both for individual tasks and for collaborative tasks (accomplished asynchronously online).

Accommodations Policy:

Garrett-Evangelical is committed to providing a quality theological education and will provide reasonable accommodations for documented conditions. Students requiring specific assistance such as classroom changes, alternative ways of note-taking, different classroom procedures, or alternative testing formats are urged to request the appropriate accommodations from the director of academic studies/registrar. The director of academic studies/registrar can advise students on other support services and resources, for example, diagnostic testing. Students must complete a request for accommodations using the form available from the director of academic studies/registrar or through MyGETS documenting their condition(s) through appropriate verification methods.

Participation Policy:

- *All first-week assignments and activities must be completed, as assigned and on deadline, in order for a student to continue in the course.*
- All collaborative work must be completed as assigned and on deadline, in order to receive any credit. *(Collaborative processes cannot be done late: you can't bring a covered dish to a party that happened yesterday.)*
- Individual writing assignments may receive partial credit if late: a full letter grade will be deducted during each 24-hour period after deadline. (So, an "A" assignment will receive a B during the first 24 hours of lateness; a C during the next 24 hours; and so on.)
- Please see below regarding emergencies.

Emergency:

Students may sometimes find themselves beset by an emergency that is likely to threaten progress in this course in ways that are hard to predict. In such a case, the student should contact the office of the Registrar without delay to document their emergency. Depending on the nature of the emergency, it may not be possible for the student to complete the course; however, the instructor will work with the student and the Registrar to determine what options are available (including an Incomplete for the course, an Extension for missing work, or other options).

Assignments:

This course includes four (4) Units: The Writings; The Latter Prophets; The Former Prophets; and The Pentateuch. Each Unit involves two assignments: one individual assignment interpreting biblical texts, and one collaborative small-group assignment constructing your “takeaway kit” bringing the fruits of the course toward your imagined ministries.

There are, then, a total eight (8) assignments: four (4) individual interpretive assignments, and four (4) collaborative “takeaway” assignments.

Grading:

Week One “Gospel” Assignment: 10%

Individual Interpretation Assignments: 40% (10% each)

Collaborative “Takeaway” Assignments: 40% (10% each)

Final Week “Gospel Reprise” Assignment: 10%

Evaluation rubrics will be available on course Moodle site when the semester begins.

Schedule: Our “Week” begins and ends Monday mornings at 9:00 am Central (Chicago) Time.

Week One, 02/05 - 02/11:

Read: QBC Introduction.

View or listen to lecture: Introducing the TNK (*Sound quality is uneven on some of these early Lectures, but they are audible, and it gets better.*)

Actions for the Week (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Two, 02/12-18

Read: QBC (Psalms) and WTDY 1-23.

View or listen to lecture: Psalms (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Three, 02/19-25:

Read: QBC (Job) and WTDY 24-39.

View or listen to lecture: Wisdom (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Four, 02/26 - 03/03:

Unit One Projects Complete (Writings)

Read: QBC (Daniel) and WTDY Rules of Thumb 1-5.

View or listen to lecture: Daniel and Hellenism (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Five, 03/04 - 03/10:

Read: QBC (Hosea) and WTDY Rules of Thumb 11-15.

View or listen to lecture: Prophecy (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Six, 03/11-17:

Read: QBC (Jeremiah) and WTDY Rules of Thumb 16-19.

View or listen to lecture: Jeremiah and Jerusalem (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Seven, 03/18-24:**Unit Two Projects Complete (Latter Prophets)**

Read: QBC (Lamentations) **OR** (Ezekiel). **AND READ** WTDY Rules of Thumb 20-24.

View or listen to lecture: Responses to Exile (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

SPRING BREAK**Week Eight, 04/01-07:**

Read: QBC (Deuteronomy) **OR** (1 and 2 Kings). **AND READ** WTDY Rules of Thumb 25-28 and Concluding Remarks.

View or listen to lecture: Deuteronomy and the DtrH (parts A and B); **AND** Divided Monarchies (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Nine, 04/08-14:

Read: QBC (Joshua) **OR** (Judges). **AND READ** WTDY

View or listen to lecture: Emergence (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Ten, 04/15-21:**Unit Three Projects Complete (Former Prophets)**

Read: QBC (1 and 2 Samuel).

View or listen to lecture: Royal Theology (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Eleven, 04/22-28:

Read: QBC QBC (Genesis).

View or listen to lecture: Documentary Hypothesis (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Twelve, 04/29 - 05/05:

Read: QBC (Exodus).

View or listen to lecture: Covenant (parts A and B)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Week Thirteen, 05/05-12:**Unit Four Projects Complete (Pentateuch)**

Read: QBC (Leviticus)

Weekly Activity (see Moodle for full instructions): TBA.

Institutional Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the Academic Handbook for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

Writing

- Academic integrity and plagiarism: (See 19-20 Handbook, 12, 78-83) All professors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.
- Writing and citations: The Turabian Manual for Writers and the Chicago Manual of Style footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online here. In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
- Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services> "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

Attendance and Class Participation

- Inclusivity/Diversity: The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed.... All participants in the teaching- learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues. (See 19-20 Handbook, 9)
- Attendance and lateness policies: Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (19-20 Handbook, 19)
- Some faculty may limit on the usage of electronic devices such as cell phones during class. At the least, all cell phones should be silenced during the whole of a class session.

Academic Accommodations

- Student accommodations for documented conditions should be developed and requested before the beginning of the semester. See the Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities policy and process set out in the Academic Handbook (19-20 Handbook, 12). Such accommodations are developed in consultation with the Registrar.
- Extensions: For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term. (19- 20 Handbook, 20)