

Catalogue Description:

The question “What does the biblical text mean?” will be the focus as students explore what have become the more significant contemporary approaches to biblical interpretation. The Bible will be viewed variously from the perspectives of the worlds behind, of/in, and in front of the text, using hermeneutical methods ranging from the typological to the historical-critical to the liberationist, post-modern. Textual grounding will be achieved through hermeneutical analyses of select passages in both Testaments. This course is pre-requisite for all Scripture electives.

Goals and objectives of the course:

- To become familiar with the hermeneutical strategies and exegetical tools proper to contemporary Scripture study;
- To understand the leading interpretive theories by which readers have determined the meaning of biblical texts;
- To be aware of historical, cultural and religious worldviews of communities responsible for the composition and preservation of the Scriptures;
- To analyze the Bible through contemporary models of interpretation including historical-critical, social-scientific, narrative-critical and contextual approaches;
- To appreciate the ecclesial context within which the interpretation of Sacred Scripture takes place.

Required Texts:

- Any contemporary translation of the Bible, e.g., NRSV, NAB, NJB, etc.
- Béchard, Dean. *The Scripture Documents: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teaching* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003)
- Soulen, Richard N and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. Third edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Recommended Texts:

- Brown, Raymond E., Joseph Fitzmyer and Roland Murphy. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Forms of Assessment:

- Weekly posting 30%

*As a response to their own reading, as well as the posting of the professor, students will post online their reflections and analyses by **Thursday evening** of any given week. By **Saturday evening**, they will also be expected to respond to at least two of their fellow students' analyses and reflections*

- Annotated bibliography 20%

Each student will compile a bibliography of articles or books written in the past ten years which addresses the subject of the exegetical paper. The bibliography will be annotated (i.e., the student will provide a brief summary of each scholar's findings). The bibliography should comprise no less than ten entries.

- Exegetical paper 50%

Students shall examine a biblical passage of their own choice, analyzing its literary form, the historical context it addresses, and applying a method or approach to the passage in question, in order to address some interesting feature the biblical text presents. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length.