

## **BITH 557/478: MARGINAL VOICES IN OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES**

Spring Semester, 2022  
Monday evenings, 6:30 – 10:00 pm

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### **CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION (Generic)**

Separate courses devoted to the study of specialized topics, issues, or areas within the Old Testament field.

### **SPECIFIC COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to important contributions to Old Testament studies from women scholars and from Latin American and Latino/a (Hispanic), African and African American, and Asian and Asian American perspectives.

### **THEME QUESTIONS**

- How do contextual factors impact Old Testament interpretation?
- What are important contributions that perspectives grounded in gender, ethnicity, and cultural contexts bring to reading and interpreting the Old Testament?

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

1. To become familiar with important hermeneutical and theological issues and decisions related to Old Testament interpretation arising *from* and *for* specific contexts and groups. The purpose is to engender an appreciation of the impact that dimensions of identity and context (e.g., sociohistorical, gender, social, cultural and ethnic, national, ecclesial) have on biblical interpretation—at personal, ecclesial, and broader levels.

Assessments:

- (a) Class Discussion: a time for introducing key concepts and for providing an *open* space to ask *any* kind of question to facilitate hermeneutical reflection
  - (b) Reading assignments: readings will introduce students to key authors and foundational questions and concepts
2. To develop constructive critical reading skills *and* conversational openness to engage biblical interpretations from different points of view with the goal of learning to be sufficiently discerning for relevant and suitable appropriation.
- Assessments:
- (a) Written Assignment #1: investigation of a historically central theme from different regions of the world—the Exodus
  - (b) Written Assignment #2: investigation of readings of various biblical texts from a specific area of the world—southeast Asia

3. To recognize the fundamental importance of articulating a set of commitments (theological and contextual) and a hermeneutical framework for reading and appropriating the biblical text.  
Assessments:
  - (a) Journal: a medium for ongoing hermeneutical reflection and development throughout the course
  - (b) Term paper: summative exercise to gauge student analytical skills and level of constructive hermeneutical acumen

#### **COURSE TEXTS**

1. Required  
Ekblad, Bob. *Reading the Bible with the Damned*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.  
Patte, Daniel, ed. *Global Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2004.  
Sugirtharajah, R. S., ed. *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. 25th Anniversary ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016.
2. Recommended  
Gorman, Michael. *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.  
Keener, Craig S. *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.  
Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.

The works edited by Patte and Sugirtharjah concentrate on perspectives from outside the United States and privilege postcolonial approaches. The readings from Latino/a, African American, Asian American, and women perspectives will be drawn from the volume edited by Gorman and materials posted on Schoology (see p. 7).

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS**

1. **Participation.** This course offers an opportunity to explore different and potentially challenging approaches to the study of the Old Testament. For that reason, it involves primarily reading and discussion (and, hopefully, some good arguments!). It will be important to be generous listeners and to see ourselves as pilgrims on a journey toward greater understanding and wisdom in our appropriation of the Scriptures.  
Class sessions will be crucial for surfacing and attempting to work through potentially complex and disputed theological, hermeneutical, and contextual issues. In addition to discussing the reading, there will be class guests. Accordingly, it will be important to be present at *all* the class sessions and for everyone to speak up and interact with one another. Attendance and participation account for **10%** of the final course grade.
2. **Reading**
  - 2.1. For those days indicated in the calendar students will read the weekly assigned

reading (masters level students have additional reading each week). Readings beyond what is assigned in the course textbooks will be posted on Schoology (there will be a folder on Schoology for each week's reading). These often will not be posted until the week beforehand. This will allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness to the class and current societal discussions. It is possible that one week the reading will be substituted by a group threaded discussion.

- 2.2. Complete the reading for the dates assigned in the course schedule. **Two points** will be deducted from the final grade for each assignment for which 75% or less is completed on time; **one point**, if 76-99% is completed on time. The Reading Report (posted) will be handed in by the student at the end of the semester. The reading is worth **25%** of the final grade.
- 2.3. Some of the readings are paired intentionally to compare and contrast why and how the Old Testament is read in different ways by related groups: Latin America with U.S. Latino/Latina, African with African American, Southeast Asian with Asian American interpretations.
3. Each student will keep a **journal** to record impressions, questions, and doubts that surface in the reading **and** class discussions. This journal will not be seen by anyone but the professor. The hope is that students will be as open as possible about their hermeneutical journey through the course (including, for instance, ongoing questions and doubts, new ideas, formative class discussions or readings). There must be a substantive entry for each week of the semester, except for when a written assignment is due. This journal is **not** the same as notes on class discussions. This journal is to be turned in at the beginning of class period #15 (**May 2nd**) and will be worth **10%** of the final grade.
4. **Written Assignments.** There will be short written assignments (two for masters-level students, one for undergraduates), which will orient the discussion for the assigned date. Each assignment should be four-five pages long and typed written (one-inch margins, size 12 font, double spaced). **Three** points will be taken off the grade for each weekday that a paper is late. Up to ten points will be deducted for poor or improper style, format, and spelling. Students needing help with an assignment, particularly those for whom English is not their native language, are encouraged to contact the writing center: <http://www.wheaton.edu/Academics/Services/Writing-Center>.
  - 4.1. The first assignment is **only** for *masters-level students*. This paper will be an interactive summary, both *critical* and *constructive* (in terms of the Bible, theology, ideology, etc.) of the hermeneutical positions taken by four of the six authors in Sugirtharajah, *Voices from the Margin*, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition, Part Three ("Many Readings: Exodus"). The four authors will be of the student's choosing. The grade will reflect the quality of the interaction with the reading. It is understood that students enter the class with different levels of biblical training and expertise, and this will factor into the grading of this assignment and the next. This assignment is

due at the beginning of class period #4 (**Feb. 7th**). This assignment is worth **10%** of the final grade for masters-level students. For that day, the undergraduate students also will read four of these chapters, but do not have to turn in a paper.

- 4.2. The second assignment is for **all** students. This paper will be an interactive summary, both *critical* and *constructive*, of the hermeneutical and biblical positions taken by the authors in Sugirtharajah, *Voices from the Margin*, Anniversary edition, Parts Four and Five, chapters 23, 28, 32, 33. The grade will reflect the quality of the interaction with the reading. This is due at the beginning of class period #9 (**March 21st**). This assignment is worth **10%** of the final grade for masters-level students, **15%** for undergraduate students.

### 5. Term Paper

- 5.1. Book review of Ekblad, *Reading the Bible with the Damned*. This book review should include a solid summary of the book’s argument (including several examples of that argument) and a *critical* and *constructive* engagement with that argument and the book’s use of the Bible. The interaction should be based on the hermeneutical perspectives learned in the course, suggested lessons for the North American evangelical church, and comments on how the book has impacted you.
- 5.2. This term paper/book review is to be 12–15 pages long, typed written, double-spaced. The text and footnotes should follow the format presented in Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) or accepted social science/APA style. Please provide a cover page. Up to ten points will be deducted for style, format, and spelling.
- 5.3. The paper is due at the beginning of class period #14 (**April 25th**). Three points will be taken off the grade of the term paper for each weekday that it is late. The term paper is worth **35%** of the final grade of masters-level students, **40%** for under-graduate students.

6. There is **no final exam**. There will be class (#15) on **May 2** to make up for the Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday.

### Grading:

	<b>BITH 449</b>	<b>BITH 639</b>
Participation	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Reading	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Journal	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Written Assignment #1	<b>N/A</b>	<b>10%</b>
Written Assignment #2	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Term Paper	<b><u>40%</u></b>	<b><u>35%</u></b>
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grading Scale:**

93-100	A	77-79	C+	60-62	D-
90-92	A-	73-76	C	0-59	F
87-89	B+	70-72	C-		
83-86	B	67-69	D+		
80-82	B-	63-66	D		

**Other Pertinent Academic Matters**

**Academic Honesty Policy**

From <http://www.wheaton.edu/~media/Files/Student-Life/student-handbook.pdf>:

The Graduate School Academic Honesty Policy and attendant protocols reflect the expectation that by this stage of their academic life graduate students should demonstrate a mature understanding of and commitment to academic integrity. In addition, the protocols for disciplinary sanctions and appeal options have been adapted for adjudication by graduate school personnel and offices.

From <http://www.wheaton.edu/Academics/Departments/Polsci/Current-Students/Plagiarism-Policy>:

By affirmation of the Wheaton College Community Covenant, all students, faculty, and staff are expected to understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and to take personal responsibility and accountability for their work.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense against an academic community and against the standards of excellence, integrity, and behavior expected of its members. Academic dishonesty degrades the educational and research mission of the College. Truth and honesty are to be followed in all academic endeavors, including the taking of examinations and in the preparation of class reports and papers.

Areas of concern related to academic integrity include plagiarism, cheating, fabrication of information or data, unauthorized collaboration, lying, defrauding, misrepresentation, or deception related to assigned or voluntary academic work. The definition of academic dishonesty, the method for reporting violations, and the procedures of the disciplinary process are stated in the “Policy on Academic Honesty” in the Student Handbook, available in the Student Development Office.

A fuller treatment with definitions, processes, and outcomes is available at [http://intra.wheaton.edu/studentresources/studenthandbook/student\\_handbook.pdf](http://intra.wheaton.edu/studentresources/studenthandbook/student_handbook.pdf), pages 5-7.

**Inclusive Language**

For academic discourse, spoken and written, the faculty expects students to use gender inclusive language for human beings. The Wheaton College Gender Equity Vision Statement can be found at: <https://www.wheaton.edu/life-at-wheaton/kingdom-diversity/gender-equity-vision-statement/>.

**Wheaton Disability Policy**

Wheaton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to contact the Academic and Disability Services Office as early in the semester as possible. Please

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call 630.752.5941 or send an e-mail to [jennifer.nicodem@wheaton.edu](mailto:jennifer.nicodem@wheaton.edu) for further information.

### **Late Policy**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the Course Schedule. For every weekday that the paper is late, three points will be deducted from the assignment grade. Only special circumstances will be considered for any change in this policy, and the student should consult with the professor about the possibility of waiving part or all of the penalty. Students are encouraged to make backups of their work in case of potential problems with their computer, as some sort of computer malfunction does not qualify for special consideration. If the assignment is not completed on time, the student will not be able to attend the portion of the class session dedicated to that assignment.

## Readings for “Marginal Voices in Old Testament Studies”

M. Daniel Carroll R.

### Germany & Nazism

Undergraduates:

- Luther (1543): “Luther on Jews and Their Lies” (excerpts)
- “Was Luther Anti-Semitic,” *Christian History* 39 (1993)
- The Barmen Declaration (1934)
- “German Churches Reckon with Antisemitic History,” *Christianity Today*, November 2020

Additional readings for graduate students:

- *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches*, ed. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), 38–41 (key documents)
- *Preaching in Hitler’s Shadow: Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich*, ed. Gene D. Stroud (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 180–86.

### Latin America #1

Undergraduates and graduate students:

- Readings from Patte, *Global Bible Commentary* — Old Testament books written by Latin American authors
- M. Daniel Carroll R., “Liberation Theology – Latin America,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Bible*, ed. J. Rogerson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 316–29, 378–79.

Additional readings for graduate students:

- “Biblical Scholarship for the People? Considering *lo popular* in Central American Biblical Studies.” *SBL Forum*, Summer, 2004. <http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=289>

### Latin America #2

Undergraduates and graduate students:

- Readings from Patte, *Global Bible Commentary* — Old Testament books written by Latin American authors

Additional readings for graduate students:

- “Biblical Scholarship for the People? Considering *lo popular* in Central American Biblical Studies.” *SBL Forum*, Summer, 2004. <http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=289>

## US Latino/a #1

Undergraduates:

- Justo González, *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), chs. 3 & 5 (77–90 & 103–13).
- M. Daniel Carroll R., “Latino/Latina Biblical Interpretation.” In *Scripture and its Interpretation: An Ecumenical, Global Introduction to the Bible*, ed. M. Gorman (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 311–23.
- “Processing the Processes of Migration: Insights from Book of Daniel.” *Apuntes*, 41, no. 1 (2021). <https://scholar.smu.edu/apuntes/vol41/iss1/6/>
- Christian Paz, “Another Problem for *Latinx*: Not many Latinos in the US use the term. Even fewer elected officials do,” *The Atlantic* (November, 2021) <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/11/latinx-future-progressive-congress-latino/620764/>

Additional readings for graduate students:

- Fernando F. Segovia, “Introduction: Approaching Latino/a Biblical Criticism: A Trajectory of Visions and Missions,” in *Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics: Problematics, Objectives, Strategies*, ed. Francisco Lozada Jr. and Fernando F. Segovia, SBLSS (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 1–39.

## US Latino/a #2

Undergraduates:

- Gregory Lee Cuellar, *Voices of Marginality: Exile and Return in Second Isaiah 40–55 and the Mexican Immigrant Experience*. American University Studies VII/271 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), ch. 3 (64–104).
- Loida Martell-Otero, Zaida Maldonado Pérez, and Elizabeth Conde-Frazer, *Latina Evangélicas: A Theological Survey from the Margins* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), chs. 1 & 5 (1–13 & 73–89).
- Lisa Isherwood, “An Interview with Ada María Isasi-Díaz,” *Feminist Theology* 20, no. 1 (2011): 8–17.

Additional readings for graduate students:

- Jean Pierre Ruiz, “The Bible and Latino/a Theology,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*, ed. Orlando O. Espín (Chichester: Wiley, 2015), 111–27.
- Leticia Guardiola-Saenz, “Mujerista Criticism,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*, ed. Julia M. O’Brien (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).



## **Africa #1**

Undergraduates:

- Bungishabaku Katho, “African Biblical Interpretation.” In *Scripture and its Interpretation: An Ecumenical, Global Introduction to the Bible*, ed. M. Gorman (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 284–97.
- Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), chs. 1 & 2 (1–41).

Additional readings for graduate students:

- Knut Holter, “Being Like the Cushites: Some Western and African Interpretations of Amos 9:7.” In *New Perspectives on Old Testament Prophecy and History: Essays in Honour of Hans M. Barstad*, ed. R. I. Thelle, T. Stordalen, and M. E. J. Richardson, VTSup 168 (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 306–18.

## **Africa #2**

Undergraduates:

- In Patte’s Global Bible Commentary, read the commentaries on Ruth, Psalms, and Habakkuk.
- Jeremy Punt, “Popularising a Prophet (Isaiah) in Parliament: The Bible in Post-Apartheid, South African Public Discourse,” *Religion and Theology* 14, nos. 3–4 (2007): 206–23.
- Grant LeMarquand, “Bible, Crosses, Ong, Guns and Oil: Sudanese ‘Readings’ of the Bible in the Midst of Civil War,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 75, no. 4 (2006): 553–79.

Additional readings for graduate students:

- Temba Rugwhiji, “Towards the Quest for Transforming Old Testament Scholarship: The Impact of Political Socio-Political Crises on Scholarship in Zimbabwe,” *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 3 (2014): 1009–34.

## **African American #1 (Civil War)**

Undergraduates:

- “The Inconceivable Start of African American Christianity” – *Christianity Today* (February 21, 2018).
- Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Appendix (1845)
- Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” (1852)
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, introduction and chapter 1 (1852)
- *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, information from Wikipedia

Additional reading for graduate students:

- Eddie Glaude, *Exodus! Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), ch. 1 (3–18).

## **African American #2**

Undergraduates:

- Albert J. Rabateau, “African-Americans, the Exodus, and the American Israel.” In *African American Christianity: Essays in History*, ed. Paul E. Johnson (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), ch. 1 (1–17).
- Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), ch. 1.

Additional reading for graduate students:

- Rhondda Robinson Thomas, *Claiming Exodus: A Cultural History of Afro-Atlantic Identity, 1774–1903* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), ch. 4 (83–111).

## **Asian & Asian American #1**

Undergraduates:

- Sun, “Recent Research on Asian and Asian American Hermeneutics Related to the Hebrew Bible,” *CBR* 17, no. 3 (2019): 238–65.
- Hwang, “The Book of Jeremiah as Case Study in Asian Contextual Theology,” *Asia Journal of Theology* 35, no. 1 (2021): 21–37.
- John M. Prior, “‘Failed Migrants Return’: A Transforming Word from the Book of Ruth.” In *God’s People on the Move: Biblical and Global Perspectives on Migration and Mission*, ed. vanThanh Nguyen and John M. Prior (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), ch. 19 (132–43).

Additional reading for graduate students:

- Bo Lim, “Theological Interpretation.” In *T&T Clark Handbook of Asian and Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Seung Ai Yang and Uriah Y. Kim, T&T Clark Handbooks (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 141–59.
- Lee, “The Authority of the Bible in the Multiscriptural Context of Korean Christianity.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Korea*, ed. Won W. Lee, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 41–52.

## **Asian & Asian American #2**

Undergraduates:

- Russell Jeung, “Evangelical and Mainline Teaching on Asian American Identity,” *Semeia* 90/91 (2002): 211–36.
- Young Lee Hertig, “Subversive Banquets of Vashti and Esther.” In *Mirrored Reflections: Reframing Biblical Characters*, ed. Young Lee Hertig and Chloe Sun (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 15–29.

Additional reading for graduate students:

- Timothy Tseng, “Second-Generation Chinese Evangelical Use of the Bible in Identity Discourse in North America,” *Semeia* 90/91 (2002): 251–67.

## **Feminist #1**

Undergraduates:

- A. Ogden Bellis, "Introduction." In A. Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd. ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 3–34.
- Carol L. Meyers, "Reconsidering Ancient Israelite 'Patriarchy,'" *AJS Perspectives* (4/5/2022), 1–5. <http://perspectives.ajsnet.org/patriarchy-issue/reconsidering-ancient-israelite-patriarchy/>

Additional reading for graduate students:

- Carol L. Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?," *JBL* 133, no. 1 (2014): 8–27.

## **Feminist #2**

Undergraduates:

- A. W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 7–22, 200–29.
- Eunny Lee, "Women's Doings in Ruth: A Feminist Biblical Theology of Providence." In *After Exegesis: Feminist Biblical Theology*, ed. Patricia K. Tully and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015), ch. 3 (31–43).
- Heath Thomas, "Justice at the Crossroads: The Book of Lamentations and Feminist Discourse." In *Tamar's Tears: Evangelical Engagements with Feminist Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Andrew Sloane (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), ch. 9 (246–73).
- J. Pokrifka, "Patriarchy, Biblical Authority, and the Grand Narrative of the Old Testament," in *Tamar's Tears*, ch. 10 (274–314).

Additional reading for graduate students:

- Jacqueline E. Lapsley on Judg. 19–21, "A Gentle Guide: Attending to the Narrator's Perspective in Judges 19–21." In Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 35–67.

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**BITH 639/478 – COURSE SCHEDULE, SPRING 2022<sup>1</sup>**

<u>Class No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
1	1/10	Hermeneutical Foundation	Klein-Blomberg-Hubbard, 201–43 (recommended)	
	1/17	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (national holiday)</b>		
2	1/24	Nazi Germany	folder	____%
		Latin America #1	textbook & folder	
3	1/31	Latin America #2	textbook & folder	____%
4	2/7	<b>Short Paper #1<sup>2</sup></b>		
5	2/14	US Latino/a #1	textbook & folder	____%
6	2/21	US Latino/a #2	folder	
7	2/28	Africa #1	textbook & folder	
<b>Spring Break — March 5–13</b>				
8	3/14	Africa #2	folder	____%
		<i>Case Study:</i> U. S. Civil War African American #1		
9	3/21	African American #2	folder	____%
10	3/28	<b>Short Paper #2</b>		
		Asian #1		
11	4/4	Asian #2	folder	____%
		Asian American #1		
12	4/11	Asian American #2	folder	____%
		Women #1		
13	4/18	Women #2	folder	____%
14	4/25	<b>Term Paper</b>		
15	5/2	<b>Turn in Journal</b>		
		Review of Course		

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<sup>1</sup> Flexible. Subject to change, depending on invited guests, pace of the course, and other factors.

<sup>2</sup> Undergrad students will need to read the material assigned for this paper, even though they will not have to write the paper. Please see the syllabus for the readings.