

HIS 405/410/605 THE BIBLE IN COMMUNITY

Spring 2009

Instructor: Prof. R.Gerald Hobbs

Purpose

An exploration of the dynamic relationship of the Bible read and interpreted as sacred text within the sacred communities of synagogue and church. Through lectures and the guided reading of original source documents students will engage the history of the Bible in Jewish and Christian faith communities as a living dialogical process of interpretation, with a view to understanding their own history and developing their own understanding of issues of the authority and interpretation of Scripture in today's world.

Content

Selected studies in the reading of Scriptures in particular settings, as illustration of the contextual character of all Scriptural interpretation. Topics will include amongst others, the shift from centralized Temple to local synagogue in diaspora; the impact of the ascetic & monastic movement; the Jewish-Christian encounter; the challenge of bring Scripture from monastery to city; the impact of urban literacy; Scripture as learned document; the development of a lay readership; reading the Scriptures in cross-cultural settings, and in marginalized communities.

Competence Objectives

The course seeks:

- to enable students to develop their understanding of tradition as the dynamic created by the on-going reading and interpretation of Scripture within the faith community;
- to develop awareness of the influence of social and historical context on the way Scriptures are interpreted;
- to deepen understanding of the history of one's own faith tradition, by examining some of the diverse ways Christian churches have understood and institutionalized this process;
- to enable students to develop and practice their own theology of the authority of Scripture and tradition within the framework of their own denominational tradition and church community.

Format

One three-hour session weekly, Wednesdays 6:30-9:15pm, using lecture/presentations and seminar study of texts.

Students will have the option of participating in a graduate-level reading seminar.

Requirements & Evaluation

Class attendance, preparatory reading and participation in discussion. Each student will introduce one source text discussion (5-10 min.), and will write a paper on a selected theme.

Prerequisites

HIS 100, and first-year biblical classes (or equivalent).

20/3/08

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