Teaching the Bible in the Church: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes
CE 3083 / OT 3053 Fall 2009
Instructors: David C. Hester and Patricia K. Tull

This is an interdisciplinary course concerned with the practice of teaching Bible in the congregation. It is concerned, in particular, with developing skills for leading congregational Bible study of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. These skills include: the practice of biblical exegesis, interpretation, and educational design. We want to look with considerable depth at the process that lies “behind the scenes” of the most common adult church education experience: group Bible study led by a pastor or church educator.

Expected Learning Outcomes
At the end of the course, students should:
1. Be able to exegete a passage of Scripture and create a plan for teaching the text in a congregational setting;
2. Have had an experience teaching one or more texts from Job, Proverbs, and/or Ecclesiastes to adults;
3. Examine issues related to Bible study in a congregation, including:
   a. Biblical authority
   b. Teaching Old Testament in the church
   c. Exegesis and interpretation skills and presuppositions
   d. The particular context of adult education

Methods and Requirements
Reading and Class Preparation
All students are expected to complete the common readings for the course. These include:
Selected portions of volumes on Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes in The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volumes 4-5.
Selected readings from introductory articles in New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume 1. [Reserve]
Students are also expected to consult at least two commentaries on Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes for introduction to the book, historical and literary issues, theological perspectives, and commentary on specific passages being studied or taught, one commentary being The New Interpreters Bible’s relevant volumes.

Teaching (50%)  
Students will teach twice during the semester, first in pairs, the second time individually. You will be given a list of passages from which to choose, and your second teaching session should not be from the same biblical book as your first. Exegetical notes, a statement concerning the passage’s significance, and a plan for teaching should be submitted in advance of each teaching session (5-7 pages, double-spaced). Presentations will be followed by evaluative discussion. Each student is required to have notes and reflections on passages that his/her peers are teaching.
in their team and individual sessions. These may be collected in a notebook or journal or whatever form you find helpful. Instructors may ask to look at your notes and reflections from time to time during the semester. These are working documents for you to bring and use in class during discussions.

**Dates for teaching to be determined in class**

**Written assignments (25% each)**

1. Each student will write a piece on biblical authority and interpretation in a congregational setting, focused particularly on the significance of *Job, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes* for today (choosing the book you did not sign up to teach on). The piece can take the form of a sermon, a presentation to the session, the first lesson in a Bible study series, or a confirmation class session or some other format/genre that you can imagine might be helpful for presenting such ideas to a congregation. It should integrate insights from the common readings, critically evaluated and judiciously used. The first draft (4-6 pages double-spaced) will set out your approach, and the second draft (6-8 pages) will improve on it and add discussion of a particular passage in relation to your understanding of the Bible’s authority in a congregational setting. **First draft due Oct 8; final draft Nov 17**

2. Each student will submit a final project. For those who are taking the course for CE credit, the project may be teaching notes, exegetical information, introductory material, a description of teaching method, and a fairly detailed plan for teaching a selected text. Those taking the course for Bible credit may explore a topic of interest and importance to you related to *Job, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes*, its formation, history of interpretation, theology, or place in the church. Topics will be selected in consultation with instructors. 10-15 pages, double-spaced. **Due last day of Class.**

**Use of Inclusive Language**

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contributing to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive.

Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse traditionally has been patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of constructing an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God.

Racism also permeates our society and is detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to racial equality and justice.

**Citation of Sources**

Be careful to document fully any information included in your papers that is not original. Also be aware that when you summarize information, even when you give the complete documentation information, your summaries should be in *your words* and not retain too much of the original author’s style. A paper that presents the ideas or writing of someone else as if they were your own constitutes plagiarism, and seminary policy on academic honesty will be followed. The Academic Support Center has handouts, and/or the Library can be of assistance.
Class Attendance
Students are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of the course, except for illness or other valid reasons.

Electronics-Free Environment
Because the format of the class is primarily discussion, laptops will not be necessary or useful in this class. Please take any notes you would like to keep by hand, and you may transcribe them later as needed. Needless to say, cell phones and other communications devices should be turned off during class time.

Special Accommodations
Students requiring accommodation for a learning disability should be in contact with Kathy Mapes in the ASC Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) as soon as possible and should speak with the instructors to arrange appropriate adjustments.

Web Site
This course is posted on CAMS, which may be accessed through the Seminary web site. The CAMS site will be used for access to course documents, such as the syllabus and calendar, for student teaching plans to be submitted in advance of class presentations, for faculty prepared materials that may be made available to class participants, and for threaded conversations around questions or issues, as desired.

Before attending class, please reread the books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes.

Thurs, Sept 10  Course introduction and introduction to wisdom literature in the Bible
Preparation: read Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes

Tues, Sept 15  Review of Proverbs and of Biblical Poetry
Preparation: read the introduction to the book of Proverbs in the NIB Bible Commentary, vol. 5

Thurs, Sept 17  Review of Job and of Biblical Narrative
Preparation: read the introduction to the book of Job in the NIB Bible Commentary, vol. 4

Tues, Sept 22  Workshop on Proverbs
Preparation: assignments to be given in class on Sept 15

Thurs, Sept 24  Workshop on Job
Preparation: assignments to be given in class on Sept 17

Tues, Sept 29  (no class)

Thurs, Oct 1  Review of Ecclesiastes and of Canonical Interpretation
Preparation: read the introduction to the book of Ecclesiastes in the NIB Bible Commentary, vol. 6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct 6</td>
<td><strong>Workshop on Ecclesiastes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> assignments to be given in class on Oct 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Oct 8</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of the Character of Adult Education; and Blair, <em>The Art of Teaching the Bible</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read the book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>First draft of authority piece due before class begins</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct 13</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of Groome, <em>Christian Religious Education</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read chapters 9-10; articles as assigned from NIB 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Oct 15</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of Wink, <em>Transforming Bible Study</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read the book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct 20</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Blair’s method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Oct 22</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Blair’s method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 27 - Oct 29</td>
<td><strong>Research and Study Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Nov 3</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Groome’s method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Nov 5</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Groome’s method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Nov 10</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Wink’s method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Nov 12</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Wink’s method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Nov 17</td>
<td><strong>Second round of Bible studies begins</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Final draft of authority piece due before class begins</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 19-Dec 10</td>
<td><strong>Second round of Bible studies continues</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Dec 10</td>
<td><strong>Final Bible studies and course conclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pledge yourself to fill out the online course evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Bibliography

Wisdom Literature

Job

Commentaries

Other Studies

Proverbs

Commentaries


**Other Studies**


---

**Ecclesiastes**

**Commentaries**


**Other Studies**


