

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Fall 2005
33-506 Teaching for Biblical Faith
Mondays, 12:45-3:45 pm

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Course Description

Christians have been called people of the book. The profession of the church is that the Bible contains the witness sufficient for faith and life. Yet it is with increasing difficulty that biblical understandings are connected to the present day because of the distance of culture and time. The role of the Bible appears diminished to some. But the Bible remains a living book—the Church’s book—that offers life and hope to those who open themselves to it through the power of the Holy Spirit. This course will focus on skills for opening the Bible to laypersons in congregations that are applicable for leaders in Christian education, youth ministry, evangelism, music ministry, or spiritual formation. Students will discover and critically examine their own approach to the Bible. Other cultural perspectives for reading the Bible will be encountered and considered. The course focuses on equipping laypersons to live out of Biblical faith in the 21st century. Students will complete a teaching practicum.

This course meets the requirements for United Methodist Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Music Ministry, Evangelism or Spiritual Formation. It is a foundational course in Christian Education for the M.A. and M. Div. degrees. Lay persons who teach in their congregations, pastors seeking to strengthen their teaching skills, and lay professionals seeking certification will all find this course useful in their future ministry.

Required Texts:

- Barbara Bruce. ***Seven Ways of Teaching the Bible to Children.*** Abingdon Press. ISBN: 0-687-02068-9. Or ***Seven Ways of Teaching the Bible to Adults.*** Abingdon Press. ISBN: 0-687-09084-9.
- Walter Brueggemann, William Placher and Brian Blount. ***Struggling with Scripture.*** Westminster John Knox Press, 2002. ISBN: 0664224857.
- John M. Bracke and Karen B. Tye, ***Teaching the Bible in the Church.*** Chalice Press, 2003. ISBN: 0-8272-3643-3.
- Yolanda Y Smith, ***Reclaiming the Spirituals: New Possibilities for African American Christian Education*** Pilgrim Press, 2004. ISBN: 0829815511
- John R. Levinson and Priscilla Pope-Levinson, ***Return to Babel: Global Perspectives on the Bible.*** Westminster John Knox Press, 1999. ISBN: 0664258239
- **NRSV Study Bible** – New Interpreters, HarperCollins, or Oxford Edition

Texts for Teaching/Learning Experiences (each student will teach from one of these resources:

- Barbara Green. ***Like a Tree Planted: An Exploration of Psalms and Parables***

- Through Metaphor*. Liturgical Press, 1997. ISBN 0-8146-5869-5.
- Norvene Vest. *Gathered in the Word: Praying the Scripture in Small Groups*. Upper Room Books.
 - Renita Weems. *What Matters Most: Ten Lessons in Living Passionately from the Song of Solomon*. Warner Books, 2004. ISBN 044653241X
 - Walter Brueggemann, *Spirituality of the Psalms*. Fortress Press, 2001. ISBN 0800634500
 - Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence*. Fortress Press, 2003. ISBN 0800636090
 - Carol Ochs, *Our Lives As Torah: Finding God in our Own Stories*. Jossey-Bass, 2001. ISBN 0-7879-4473-4.
 - Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*. Harper Collins, 2000. ISBN 0060608765
 - Eric H. F. Law, *The Word at the Crossings: Living the Good news in Multicontextual Community*. Chalice Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8272-4244-1

Ground Rules:

All written work should follow rules of good scholarship, using proper English grammar, spelling and punctuation. Any sources used should be cited using a recognized style manual such as APA, Turabian or Chicago Style. Papers are to be completed in an inclusive manner, sensitive to issues of sexism, racism, and ageism in the English language. References to God should consider carefully the use of gendered pronouns. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course.

This class is an intensive learning community that requires your full attention. Please arrange your life so that you can attend this class faithfully each week. Because we are a learning ecology, we are only as strong as our weakest link. All of us will teach all of us. Each of us depends on all the rest of us.

Assignments: Subject to revision!

1. **Active class participation and reading of assigned literature. (20% of grade).** All students should read all of the required texts. In addition, you will pick one of the recommended texts to read and use as the basis of your teaching session. You should read at least one of the other recommended books as well.

The purpose of class participation is to demonstrate comprehension and integration of assigned material. Participation includes preparation for class, constructive verbal contributions to class discussions, attentive listening, and facilitating the participation of others. Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. Notify the instructor in case of an emergency necessitating an absence. The purpose of the reading assignments is to provide a range of theoretical grounding for the students' work. Class members are expected to have completed all readings by the class session for which they are assigned. The right to participate in class discussion is based on having read the assigned texts for the session. **A list of the readings (both required and recommended) and what percentage you have carefully read is due on the last day of class. I rely on your honest reporting of this.**

2. Teaching the Bible in the Church, a position paper (9-10 pages). Use this paper to explore your understanding of the nature and authority of the Bible, of the importance of teaching the Bible in the church, and of the approach to teaching the Bible that you intend to appropriate. Use this paper to show that you have integrated your own convictions with class discussions, readings, and your experiences in the church. **(20% of grade)**

3. **Curriculum Review.** Using the Religious Education Curriculum Library (in the United Library at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary) examine two curriculum resources for Bible study. These may be for children, youth, or adults. Analyze and compare the two resources. Look critically at how scripture is used and describe the educational process. Prepare a one page handout on each resource to share with your classmates to use during your oral report to the class. **(10% of grade)**

4. **Teaching session (one hour)** in class with a small group (2-3 persons) and evaluation **(30% of grade)**. The assignment includes

- Thoughtfully reading the book your group is assigned.
- Planning with your group and preparing a group teaching plan (**due one class before teaching**),
- Prepare a one-page handout describing the book's approach (**hand-out for class**)
- Write an individual evaluation paper (8-9 pages, **due two sessions after teaching**). The evaluation should address the following:
 1. assessment of the approach that your group chose to use in the session, its strengths and weaknesses from biblical and theological perspectives,
 2. assessment of the approach's strengths and weaknesses from educational perspectives,
 3. assessment of group planning process, your role in it, and team teaching,
 4. assessment of self as teacher.
- Use the questions given in class to guide your thinking. Use the vocabulary we develop together in class as well as material from readings. **Ultimately, the evaluation should focus on what you learned about yourself as a teacher and what you learned about how people learn.**

5. **"My plan for Continued Growth as a Teacher of the Bible"** (10% of grade) This paper will focus on how you intend to seek opportunities to continue to develop your skills as a teacher. What are your growing edges? How will you learn about the learners in each new teaching context? How will you continue to grow in your knowledge of the Bible? (4-5 pages)

Class Schedule:

1. Monday, September 12

Introduction to the course and discussion of the challenges of teaching for biblical faith. Ground rules for our learning community. Sign up for class devotions. What is the Bible? View the *Everyday Creativity* video and consider how we can help lay persons to know what they see instead of seeing what they know. **Reading in preparation:** *Teaching the Bible in the Church* by Bracke and Tye, p 1-9.

2. Monday September 19

Teaching the Bible in the Church – (Authority of Scripture) DISCIPLE video
Choose books and negotiate teaching groups. **Reading in preparation:** Bracke and Tye, p 11-73 and Brueggemann et al (whole book).

3. Monday, September 26

How to review a curriculum. Tour of RECL.

Reading in preparation: Bracke and Tye, p. 75-158

4. Monday, October 3

Curriculum Review Reports are due. Your report should be no more than 10 minutes long and use good teaching techniques. Think creatively. How can you make this an interactive learning experience? **Reading in Preparation:** book by Anne Wimberly.

5. Monday, October 10

What is a teaching plan? How do adults learn? What do we know about teaching children and youth? Given what we know about the nature of the biblical text, how do the theories of multiple intelligences help us? Using a biblical text, we will create together teaching plans that use each of the intelligences.

Reading in preparation: Read the book of your choice by Barbara Bruce.

6. Monday, October 17

What does the church long for? Lay persons will share with us in a discussion.

Reading in Preparation:

7. Monday, October 24

Global perspectives on the Bible. Panel of international students. **Reading in Preparation:** whole book by the Levinsons.

8. Monday, October 31

Teaching session and evaluation discussion

9. Monday November 7

Teaching session and evaluation discussion

10. Monday, November 14

Teaching session and evaluation discussion

11. Monday, November 28

Teaching session and evaluation discussion.

12. Monday, December 5

Teaching session and evaluation discussion

13. Monday, December 12

Reading list due. Closing.

