

**COS121**  
**Bible I: Introduction**  
**Hiwassee College**  
**September/October 2016**

Instructor: Pat Whittemore

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**Course Description:**

This course introduces biblical interpretation. Attention is given to the inspiration, formation, and function of the canon and to the development of a methodology of interpretation consistent with the nature of scripture. The importance of the Bible as a witness to the life and faith of ancient Israel and earliest Christianity will be emphasized. (Taken from GBHEM materials.)

**Course Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate the place of scripture in the life of the congregation and the role of the pastor in interpretation.
2. Understand the inspiration and formation of the canon and its authority within the community of faith.
3. Understand and apply historical, literary, and theological approaches to various types of literature in scripture using Genesis, Hosea and Amos, Mark, and Philippians.
4. Develop a method of exegesis consistent with the nature and authority of the Bible.

**Required Textbooks:**

Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*

John Hayes & Carl Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*

Bernhard Anderson, *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible*

**Required Reference Books:**

*The Interpreters One-Volume Commentary*

*Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*

*NRSV—New Interpreter's Study Bible*

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**Grading**

Each student will be awarded a grade for COS121 according to the number of points accumulated for the class—

A	90-100 points
B	80-89 points
C	70-79 points
D	60-69 points
F	below 60 points

Individual assignments will be weighted according to the following percentages to determine the total points accumulated for the class—	Pre-course questions from texts	20%
	Pre-course paper on Anderson book	10%
	Pre-course exegesis paper (Genesis)	10%
	Pre-course exegesis paper (Amos/Hosea)	10%
	Mid-course questions from texts	15%
	Mid-course exegesis paper (Mark)	10%
	Mid-course exegesis paper (Philippians)	10%
	Final Exam	15%

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### **Overview of Topics/Course Outline**

#### **WEEKEND I:**

- I. Introduction to Exegesis/Hermeneutics.....Exegetical “Tools”
- II. Biblical Inspiration/Authority/Canon
- III. The Bible as a Whole
- IV. Understanding the Pentateuch (emphasis on Genesis)
- V. Finding Connections with the Prophets

#### **WEEKEND II:**

- I. Review of Weekend I.....More Exegetical “Tools”
  - II. Unity and Diversity among the Gospels (emphasis on Mark)
  - III. Contextualizing the Epistles (emphasis on Philippians)
  - IV. The Pastor as Interpreter of Scripture
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### **Pre-Course Assignments (due the first weekend of this COS session)**

All written work should be submitted using complete sentences with proper grammar and spelling. Students should be thorough when answering questions from the various textbooks. The questions are designed to connect the student with key sections of each book. Other sections of each text will be assigned for the second COS weekend. Please note that students are encouraged to read each book in its entirety.

From the Fee & Stuart book...

Read pages 17-31; answer the following questions from this material—

1. What is the difference between exegesis and hermeneutics? Discuss.
2. What do the authors mean by “historical context” and “literary context”?

Read pages 89-106; answer the following questions from this material—

3. What are the three levels of narrative? Discuss.
4. What are the characteristics of Hebrew narrative?

Read pages 181-204; answer the following question from this material—

5. What were the functions of the Hebrew prophets (beginning on page 184)?
6. Why is historical context important in interpreting the prophets?

From the Hayes & Holladay book...

Read pages 5-16; answer the following question from this material—

1. What factors affect the exegetical process in general? How do these relate to the Bible?

Read pages 53-71; answer the following questions from this material—

2. What is the difference between history *in* the text and history *of* the text? Discuss.
3. What is meant by “multiple authorship” and “pseudonymous authorship”? Discuss.

Read pages 90-100; answer the following questions from this material—

4. What do the authors of this book mean by “literary context”?
5. What is “redaction criticism”?

From the Anderson book...

Read the entire book (don't despair—it is not very long!); write a 2-3 page paper summarizing Anderson's understanding of the Bible as a whole. In other words, using his eight study units what does he see as the major events/moments in God's dealing with the world?

Exegesis Paper (Genesis)—using the *Interpreters One-Volume Commentary*, the *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, the *New Interpreter's Study Bible*, or other sources at your disposal, write an exegesis paper on Genesis 22:1-24 (Abraham sacrificing Isaac). What are the historical context, the literary context, the narrative level, etc.? What does the passage say about God, about human nature, about the covenant with God? How would you preach this passage in your congregation? The paper should be 3-4 pages in length.

Exegesis Paper (Amos/Hosea)—using the *Interpreters One-Volume Commentary*, the *Harper Collins Dictionary*, the *New Interpreter's Study Bible*, or other sources at your disposal, write an exegesis paper on EITHER the book of Amos or the book of Hosea. You will need to focus on either document in its entirety rather than on a given specific text. What are the historical context, the literary context, the messages to ancient Israel, etc.? What does the prophet say about God, about human nature, about the covenant with God? How would you preach this prophet in your congregation? The paper should be 3-4 pages in length.

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