

COS 121-Bible: Introduction

Winter 2020

Instructor: David Carr

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Harrelson, Walter J., ed. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003. **ISBN: 9780687278329**
- Barreto, Eric D., and Micahel J. Chan, *Exploring the Bible: Foundations for Learning*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. **ISBN: 9781506401041**
- Additional reading selections will be made available in online course platform

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #1: Exegetical Briefs (5 pages single-spaced)

After reading each of our focus texts— Genesis, Hosea, Amos, Mark, Philippians—write one [1] exegetical brief according to the following guidelines and instructions:

- Exegetical briefs result from a student’s **own** careful reading of a NT composition, leading to the student’s informed, supported, and creative “take” on the composition.
- Briefs should give an account of the *composition as a whole* while highlighting its distinctive features, perspectives, or theological vision.
- Since students develop these briefs based on their own readings of each composition, secondary resources should not be consulted for this assignment, apart from the introduction and notes in the *New Interpreters Study Bible*.
- Moreover, *a brief involves analysis of the text itself and should not be concerned with historical-critical issues (i.e. authorship, date, etc.)*.
- Finally, at this stage, please avoid discussing the implications of a composition for preaching or teaching, or what the text has to say to contemporary readers. For this assignment, the aim is simply for students to analyze the text itself, on its own terms.
- Each brief is limited to one page, single-spaced (material on a second page will not be considered). Briefs should offer consideration of the following three concerns and should *use the following bolded terms as subtitles to structure each brief*:

1. **Structure**

- How is the composition organized? What are its major sections and subsections?

2. **Key Themes**

- What are the composition’s key themes, concerns, and perspectives? Use clear examples *with specific citations*. **Example:** A major theme in Romans is God’s righteousness, as introduced in the first chapter: “[T]he righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, ‘the one who is righteous will live by faith’” (1:17). Paul restates and expands the theme of righteousness in 3:21–26.

3. **Function**

- On the whole, what does the composition attempt to accomplish? What is its purpose? E.g., does it make an argument? Does it primarily encourage an audience who is suffering? Does it admonish a wayward community? Use specific examples to support your claims.

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #2: Theology of Scripture (4 pages double-spaced)

Instructions: Carefully read the UMC's theological guidelines on scripture (<http://bitly.com/1JuKh45>). Please address the following questions, aided by particular references from the UMC's guidelines:

- (A): What is scripture? Identify **and** explain three [3] statements made by the guidelines concerning the nature of scripture.
- (B) What does scripture do? Identify **and** explain three [3] statements made by the guidelines concerning the function of scripture.
- (C) How is scripture understood? Identify **and** explain [3] statements made by the guidelines concerning the interpretation of scripture.
- (D) Describe your own theology of scripture, providing any relevant scriptural references supporting it, **and** compare it with the UMC's guidelines.

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #3: Orientation to Barreto and Chan

Read the following chapters from Barreto and Chan: chs. 1–7, 8, 11, 13, 14. In one [1] paragraph for each chapter (i.e. a paragraph for ch. 1, a paragraph for ch. 2, etc.), please summarize the key points of each assigned chapter. For this assignment, please feel free to include any questions that arise from your reading, and I will do my best to answer them either in my feedback on the assignment or when we meet together as a class.

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #4: INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVES: AN EXAMPLE

Selection provided online: González, Justo L. *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Read ch. 4 (pp. 91–102) and provide one [1] question that arose for you as you read it. I will plan to discuss the various questions raised in class as we discuss diverse approaches to biblical interpretation.