Mississippi Course of Study School
at Millsaps College
1701 North State Street
Jackson, MS 392

COS 121
Bible I: Introduction
Fall 2026

Course Outline

Rev. Brandon Halford
Office #: (601) 353-9691
Office Hours: Wednesday 1 – 3 PM & Sunday 2 – 4 PM
Other times by prior appointment.
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Required Texts:

Biblical Exegesis: A Beginners Handbook by John Hayes and Carl Holladay
The Unfolding Drama of the Bible by Bernard Anderson
Web articles and handouts may be assigned as needed.

Additional Material:

The student should have access to the UM Book of Discipline (2016 or 2020 edition)

Reference books are required and are to help our local pastors build their own libraries.

Assignments assure the use of the reference books. Reference books for COS 121 are: *The Interpreters One-Volume Commentary*
Harper Collins Bible Dictionary
NRSV New Revised Standard Version
Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics (David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina)

- Also suggested: *Merriam-Webster's Guide to Punctuation and Style,* 2nd Edition

COURSE OVERVIEW

COS 121: Bible 1: Introduction

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.

Class time:

Synchronous instruction via Zoom will take place the following eight (8) Monday evenings September 21st, September 28th, October 5th, October 12th, October 19th, October 26th, November 2nd, and November 9th.

ZOOM invitations will be sent via email. Please be sure to check you Course Connect email for these.

The class will meet from 6:30 to 8:30 PM CDT, or in the case of November 10th, 6:30 to 8:30 PM CST. The eight meetings will constitute sixteen (16) hours of synchronous learning.

Students will have an additional 4 hours of asynchronous assignments which will be available via Course Connect.

The asynchronous assignments will be discussion board posts. The primary posts will be due on October 5th, October 19th, and November 2nd. The students will reply to each post by the following Wednesday night (October 12th, October 26th, and November 9th).

OBJECTIVES:

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

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

ACTIVITIES AND GRADES

Each student is expected to participate in the core activities of this course: reading, listening, talking, thinking, writing, and participating in activities and discussion online. I will give several assignments over the course of the semester. Each assignment's value is listed following the Course Requirements.

Final course grades will be determined according to the following table:

Total grade 100%
90-100 **A** (indicates a superior grasp of subject matter, initiative, originality in attacking problems, and full college appropriate presentation)
80-89 **B** (indicates better than average grasp of the subject matter, ability to apply principles with intelligence, and basic college appropriate presentation.)
70-79 **C** (indicates an acceptable grasp of the essentials of the course and basic presentation.)
60-69 **D** (indicates less than average performance in the course.)
<60 **F** (indicates failure to master the minimum essentials of the course.).

Course Requirements:
A variety of assignments will be required to meet these objectives:

1. **Student Introduction.** Due September 22nd. Student Introductions will be public to the class. The Student Introduction is an opportunity for the students to introduce themselves to the instructor and the class. The student should provide a basic personal history including some description of family, employment, ministry setting, hobbies, hopes, and dreams. The Student Introduction should be a minimum of 300 words. As with all other

discussion posts, each student will need to reply to a minimum of two fellow students' primary posts, but additional replies are encouraged. Replies should be substantive and a minimum of fifty words. Please also reply to my post telling me whether you have participated in Disciple Bible Study, taken a College course in Old Testament and/or New Testament, or anything like these.

2. **Active class participation**. Your success in this class is directly related to your engagement with the material and with your classmates. Please be prepared and ready to ask questions, offer insights, and discuss issues intelligently and thoughtfully. Each student will be prepared to reflect upon our readings as well as the synchronous or asynchronous assignments.

3. **Personal Reflection Posts.** Each student will be required to post six personal reflections on assigned passages related to the course objectives and the current readings from the textbooks and a final personal reflection. The reflections on the textbooks should be 350 to 450 words each. Posts must be submitted in the COS Learning Management System website by 11:59 pm on the appropriate Sunday. The personal reflections should include reflections upon the assigned passages and the impact of learning upon the student's intellectual understandings, spiritual-devotional practices, the role of pastor/teacher, and/or the role as a worship leader. The final reflection is listed and described below. The personal reflections will not be public to the rest of the class. Personal reflection/learning reflections including the final reflection should <u>total together</u> 13 to 15 pages.

4. **Learning Discussion Posts.** In addition to the Introductory Discussion Board Post, each student will be required to post three discussion board posts. The student's primary (personal/initial) post should be a minimum of 250 words each. With all discussion posts, students will reply to at least two primary posts with substantive replies of a minimum of 50 words. The primary posts will be due on September 23rd, October 7th, October 21st, and November 4th. Student replies will be due the Wednesday night immediately following. Posts and Replies must be submitted in the COS Learning Management System website by 11:59 pm of the appropriate night. Again, the September 22nd post will focus on Class Introductions. The three following discussion board posts will focus on specified learning objectives.

5. **One Paper**. The student's final paper will be a sermon or Bible Study lesson demonstrating appropriate practices learned from this course. The primary text should come from one of the following: Genesis, Amos, Mark, Luke, Acts, Philippians, or the Lectionary Texts for November 2nd, 9th, 16th, or 24th. (I will not accept a sermon on a Psalter. I would accept a Bible Study on a Psalm, but I suggest something easier.) If you are in the midst of a sermon series or a book-by-book Bible study; we can negotiate an exception to the above directions. **The paper should be 6 ½ pages to 7 ½ pages doubled spaced (12 font size and 1" margins).** The paper will be submitted electronically. {Plagiarism is not acceptable. ALL PAPERS SUBMITTED WILL BE RUN THROUGH TURNITIN VIA COURSE CONNECT. Failure to cite quotes properly will lower the grade significantly.} The paper is due November 22nd, no later than 11:59 PM. Remember, this is an academic exercise.

6. **Final Reflection**. Due November 17th. The Final Reflection will not be public to the class. The Final Reflection will focus upon the impact of this course in and upon the student's personal life, faith, devotional practices, and/or role as a worship leader. Please note that the Final Reflection should differ from the focus of the Final Paper and should include insights beyond the focus of the paper. The Final Reflection should be between 650 and 850 words. The Final Reflection is more personal in nature.

Course Grading:

1. Discussion Posts = 20%
2. Class Participation (and any Quizzes administered) = 25%
3. Personal Reflections, including the Final Reflection = 25%
4. Final Paper = 30%

Academic Integrity Statement:

FORMS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

1. Cheating on tests, examinations, or other class work.
2. Plagiarism (appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work into one's own written work offered for credit).
3. Counterfeit Work – including turning in as one's own, work which was created, researched, or produced by someone else or Artificial Intelligence.
4. Unauthorized Reuse of Work – the turning in of the same work to more than one class without consent of the instructor involved constitutes academic dishonesty.
5. Collusion – Involvement in Collusion -unauthorized collaboration with another.

Other Class Guidelines:

1. Please log in **ON TIME** for Zoom sessions.

2. During class have the **books and /or readings** assigned for that day. If the reading is accessible from the web, print it out and have it in class so we can refer to it together.

3. There will be many varieties of opinions in this class. **Be respectful** of all ideas and the people expressing them, even if you strongly disagree.

4. Papers must be turned in electronically via Course Connect.

5. Check your **COS email** regularly. Once the course begins, I will only use this email to communicate with you.

See the Course Calendar In Course Connect for Reading assignments and due dates.