

Mississippi Course of Study
COS 121: Bible 1
October 18—November 20, 2021
Online via Millsaps Course Connect

Synchronous Zoom Class Sessions:
October 22-23
November 5-6
November 19-20
Friday night classes will meet 5:30-7:30pm;
Saturday morning classes will meet 10:00am-12:00pm
unless prior notice is given via course connect.

Rev. Aislinn Kopp
Email: revaislinnkopp@gmail.com
Cell: (662)542-8054

SYLLABUS

Course Description and Objectives

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.

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.

In order to meet these objectives, students will complete several required reading and writing assignments in addition to class discussions and group work on applying what we have learned to teaching the Bible in congregations.

About your Instructor

Rev. Aislinn Kopp is an ordained elder in the Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church and serves as Pastor of Discipleship and Mission at Columbus First United Methodist Church. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Mississippi State and her Master of Divinity with a concentration in the Missional Church from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. She lives in Columbus with her husband, who is a Ph.D. Candidate in History at Mississippi State, their dogs, Bones and Percy, and their cat, Sophie.

Required Textbooks and Readings

The following are required for this class, but each will prove to be valuable tools in future Course of Study classes, and for your continued ministry. Some of these are required texts in other Course of Study classes. Recognizing the expense involved, I encourage students to purchase used copies or digital copies online for substantially less, as long as the purchase is the newest version of the book. View the book list here: <https://amzn.to/37YjNsd>

GBHEM Required Texts:

John Hayes & Carl Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook**
Bernhard Anderson, *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible**

GBHEM Required Reference Texts:

*The Interpreters One-Volume Commentary**
*Harper Collins Bible Dictionary**
*NRSV – New Interpreter's Study Bible**

Instructor Selected Texts CHOOSE ONE: (Only purchase one of the following books.)

Rachel Held Evans, *Inspired*
Lisa Sharon Harper, *The Very Good Gospel*

**Required by GBHEM*

Grading and Assignments

Pre-Class and Midterm Assignments: 30% of Final Grade

Course of Study classes are conducted in a very concentrated time format. In order for us to do our online assignments and maximize our class time when we are together, please familiarize yourselves with the class texts prior to the first week of class. Your assignment due dates are listed below:

Include your name in the body of the paper and in the file name of all submissions.

Due October 23: Summary and Reflection Questions 10% of Assignments Grade

- ⇒ Submit on Course Connect a 1-2 page summary (250-500 words typed, double-spaced, 12-point font) for *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible*. Your summary should be in your own words, referencing, but using no direct quotes from the books themselves, and using no information from other outside sources.
- Be sure to include your name in the body of the paper and in your file name.

A good summary should:

- Clearly identify which text the summary is about by stating the title and author.
- A summary of the main purpose of the text.
- A summary of the central ideas presented (there may be one or many) that support the main purpose of the text.
- A detail of the central ideas that you find useful or important for your study of the Bible.

- ⇒ Submit on Course Connect three questions for the author of *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. These questions should be about the content of the book, and we will address some of your questions in class on the 2nd class weekend.
 - Be sure to include your name in the body of the paper and in your file name.

Due October 23: Small Group Discussion Guide 10% of Assignments Grade

- ⇒ Submit on Course Connect a discussion guide for using either *Inspired* or *The Very Good Gospel* in a small group setting. After reading each chapter, write 3 questions that you would ask a small group that is studying this book together. You should end up with a list of unique questions. The final number will depend on the book choice but make sure you have 3 for each chapter. These questions should reflect the course objectives and focus on the role and authority of scripture in the lives of your congregation. A sample discussion guide will be posted to Course Connect.
 - i.e. Ask questions about how what they read helps them to
 - 1. Interpret scripture and/or
 - 2. Apply it to their lives.

*If I can tell that you haven't read the chapter or you ask the same questions repeatedly, your grade will be penalized.

Due November 6: Integration Paper 10% of Assignments Grade

- ⇒ Email to revaislinnkopp@gmail.com a 1-2 page essay (250-500 words) using the book *Biblical Exegesis* to identify and discuss how Rachel Held Evans in *Inspired* or Lisa Sharon Harper in *The Very Good Gospel* use a particular exegetical method in their book to talk about a particular passage of scripture. This is not a paper over the whole book, but over a chapter or section where the author exegetes a particular text. For example: Lisa Sharon Harper's exegesis of the Tower of Babel in the chapter "Shalom Between Nations."
 - The essay should take this form:
 - At the top of the document, include your name, course number, and the book you have chosen.
 - What exegetical method does the author use?
 - What evidence is there that she uses this method?
 - How does the exegetical method inform her conclusions about the text?
 - What are the author's conclusions about the text?
 - We will talk more about this integration paper in our first class weekend

Exegesis Paper: 50% of Final Grade

Half of your course grade is based on your demonstration of your understanding of the ideas and techniques discussed in class. This will take the shape of a required exegesis paper. The paper will be on an assigned biblical text and will follow the outline of the exegetical method that will be provided in class.

The paper will be typed, double-spaced, and not less than 8 pages or more than 13 pages. You will consult your mentoring elder for feedback on the paper, and he/she must sign it prior to your turning it in. A draft of your exegetical paper is due **Saturday, November 13**. This draft can be VERY rough. **All students must turn in a draft.** I will return the paper to you with some edits and suggestions. The final paper is due **November 24**. Late papers will be penalized. Extensions must be approved in advance.

NOTE: You will not pass if you do not do both the draft and the final copy of the paper.

**Note: The first exegetical paper can strike fear in the hearts of students. We will go over the whole process in class and in online lecture. Though some of these requirements are listed in the syllabus, do not start on it prior to our first weekend.*

Class Participation: 20% of Final Grade

Class members are treated with respect and warmth. I take you seriously, and value your involvement, attention, attitude, and punctuality. To receive full credit for class participation, please arrive on time with all assignments completed; please participate in class discussions and activities with a positive attitude; and please treat other class members, as well as your instructor, with respect, humility, and kindness. Your class participation will be calculated from the number of online assignments you have participated in, attendance for the entirety of synchronous zoom classes, and participation in the final in class assignment to develop a Bible study from the gospel of Mark. To receive all 20 points, you must complete all online assignments.

Grading:

- 30 points—Pre-Class and Midterm Assignments
- 20 points—Class participation
- 50 points—Exegesis paper **completion of draft and final paper*

Total: 100 points (A standard letter grade will be assigned, based on 100 points.)

Assignment Format

All assignments should be in the following format:

- 12 point, Times New Roman or equivalent
- Double Spaced
- 1 inch margins
- Heading that includes
 - Name
 - Course Number
 - Date
- Include your name in the filename
- Citations can be MLA or Chicago/Turabian, whichever you prefer. Citation Guides can be found here: MLA – https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html
Chicago/Turabian – <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/turabian-notes-and-bibliography-citation-quick-guide.html>
 - *Online citation generators can be helpful for making sure you properly cite your work.*
 - *You will find an online lecture about citations on Course Connect.*
 - **When in doubt, cite. See policy on plagiarism below.**

Honor Code:

The Honor Code refers to our commitment as a Christian community to maintain academic honesty and integrity. The Honor Code of MSCOS requires that all material submitted by a

student must be the student's own work. Violations include cheating, turning in someone else's work as one's own, copying and pasting information directly from the internet into one's own work without citation, and plagiarism, which is to knowingly claim the work of another person as one's own (including the lack of proper citation in a paper or other assignment). Any person found guilty of violating the Honor Code may be subject to one or more of the following actions: receiving a warning, failing the assignment, being removed from the course, failing the course, being placed on probation, and being expelled from MSCOS. Regardless of what the action is, communication about the incident will be sent to the student's district superintendent and local pastor registrar. All MSCOS students are required to abide by the MSCOS Honor Code, and to seek to uphold the highest standards of academic and pastoral integrity.

Plagiarism:

It is important to include a few words about plagiarism here since so much of the grade for this course depends on writing. Papers must reflect your own thoughts, words, sentence structure, and ideas. Any use made of another author's material must be acknowledged in the form of a citation (a footnote or parenthetical reference, appropriately formatted; if you have questions about this, please email your instructor), whether or not the material was included in the form of a direct quotation. This applies equally to information from online sources like Wikipedia and other websites. Importing online material – or any other material, whether written and published, or from a podcast, video, etc. – without formal written acknowledgement is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and a violation of the Honor Code. *Err on the side of caution and cite anything and everything you use to complete your assignments.*

Calendar:

October 18

Week 1

Topic: Introductions

Online Activities:

- Watch Introductory/Terms to Know Lecture
- Introduce yourselves and participate in the Course Connect forum covering the Terms to Know lecture content.

Assignments Due October 23:

- Pre-Class Assignment: Summary and Reflection Questions
- Pre-Class Assignment: Small Group Discussion Guide

October 22-23

Class Weekend

Topics Covered:

- The Bible and Cannon
- Biblical Exegesis

October 25

Week 2

Topic: Writing an Exegetical Paper

Online Activities:

- Watch Writing an Exegetical Paper Lecture
- Participate in Course Connect forum covering lecture content.
- Participate in Course Connect forum selecting your Exegetical Paper Scripture.

- November 1** Week 3
 Topic: Researching an Exegetical Paper
 Online Activities:
- Watch Lecture on Sources for Biblical Exegesis.
 - Read Excerpt on Sources for Biblical Exegesis.
 - Participate in Course Connect forum for your Exegetical Paper Scripture.
 - Watch Journey through the Scripture Lecture in preparation for class weekend #2.
- Assignment Due November 6:
- Midterm Integration Paper
- November 5-6** Class Weekend
 Topics Covered:
- Journey through the Scriptures
 - Exegetical Paper Working Groups
- November 8** Week 4
 Online Activities:
- Watch lecture on Reading the Bible for Spiritual Growth.
 - Participate in Course Connect forum related to lecture content
- Assignment Due November 13:
- Exegetical Paper Draft
- November 15** Week 5
 Online Activities:
- Watch lecture on Teaching the Bible.
 - Participate in Course Connect “Course Round Up” forum.
- November 19-20** Class Weekend
 Biblical Interpretation in Small Groups
 Writing a Bible Study on the Gospel of Mark
- November 24** Week 6 – Final Exegetical Paper Due November 24

Instructor

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 Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Mission
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