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Lamentations Spring 2017

PURPOSE: This seminar style course will engage in a close reading of the text of Lamentations, as well as consider traditional and recent interpretive approaches for the book. These approaches include poetic analysis, traditional historical critical methods as well as feminist interpretation and recent interpretive perspectives engaging topics around trauma. Reading in the Hebrew text of Lamentations will occur every week, as well as presentations of resources on the interpretive approaches included. Students with limited Hebrew (BIBL500) are welcome and Hebrew reading assignments will be adjusted to match their abilities. Access to Bible Works or Logos online Bible software will be important (Bible Works is available at the VST Library).

PREREQUISITES: HB500, HB600 and BIBL500 or equivalent

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

- **Utilize critical methods for biblical interpretation at an intermediate level**
 - Identify and discuss the poetic artistry, content, methodological issues, and theological themes of the book of Lamentations
 - Describe the historical and social context of the book and assess how that interacted with its message and theology
- **Demonstrate an ability to use Hebrew in translation and exegesis of texts**
 - Using translation tools, apply various standard translation techniques to produce an acceptable translation of a Hebrew text (use of bible translation software expected)
 - Apply standard exegetical tools to explicate a text, including the application of a reading knowledge of Hebrew to explicate and analyze a text
- **Discuss and apply appropriate hermeneutical methods to interpret a biblical text both in its ancient contexts and in contemporary contexts**
 - Report on recent interpretive methods applied to Lamentations such as feminist hermeneutics and trauma studies and assess their usefulness for interpreting the book in contemporary contexts

FORMAT AND CONTENT:

This seminar will meet weekly. Students will prepare their own English translation of the Hebrew from assigned sections of the book each week. Extent of the sections assigned will reflect each student's level of Hebrew knowledge. Students will also prepare and present reports on their reading of scholarly commentaries and interpretive approaches selected from the course bibliography.

TEXTS and RESERVES:

Required: Berlin, Adele. *Lamentations: A Commentary*. OTL (Westminster John Knox, 2002)
Students will also be expected to do regular consultation of commentaries and monographs listed in the class bibliography.

COURSE POLICIES

- **Attendance** For a weekly course, VST requires at least 80% attendance. For an intensive course, VST requires 100% attendance.
- **Reading and assignments** Students are expected to read all required assignments before class and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.
- **Academic honesty** Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
- **Inclusive language** In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when making reference to God.
- **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
 - Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is "Not Approved") including narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.
 - Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.
- For a passing grade in the course, all assignments must be Approved.
- **Late assignments**
Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.
- **Limitation on use of social media**
Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.

VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

1. **Class participation:** Students are expected to participate in class discussions, and do adequate preparation of Hebrew translation to regularly contribute to in-class discussions. Evaluative criteria; Hebrew translation is prepared in detail from Bible software and poetic structures are identified and described.
2. **Oral presentations** of reviews of bibliographic resources on Lamentations, selected with the instructor's guidance. Depending on class size, this will involve between two and four presentations. Review guidelines will be given in class. Evaluative criteria: concise and clear review including completeness and accuracy in carrying out tasks assigned.
3. **Exegesis paper** Described in handout; due as specified in calendar. Evaluative criteria: paper shows close reading of the biblical text and competent use of secondary sources and

scholarly materials; are written in clear, concise and expressive language, and show an ability to report on and integrate critical studies and interpretive approaches in explicating a text. [For Hebrew exegesis competency, the final paper will be a major exegetical paper, guidelines to be handed out in class.]

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