

**I/C 2642: Teaching and Learning the Bible with Adults
Spring 2009**

Mondays / NW232 / 1:10 pm – 4:00 pm

Diane Jacobson / Mary Hess

DJacobso@luthersem.edu / mhess@luthersem.edu

Office hours by appointment

(090202 revision of the syllabus)

This course focuses on discovering and practicing multiple ways of teaching and learning the Bible, as a means of interpreting and confessing the Word of God in a variety of contexts. The goal is to prepare leaders to meet the pressing challenge of inviting others into deep yet critically sustaining relationship with the Bible as the Book of Faith. The method will be intentionally inter-disciplinary, drawing on diverse practices of pedagogy and theological interpretation. Students will reflect on how their own experiences and the experiences of Christian communities shape the teaching and learning of Scripture for the sake of the world.

Full course, meets the I/C core requirement.

The essential questions this course takes up:

What does it mean to teach and learn the Bible with adults? How does engaging the Bible in learning community lead us to interpreting and confessing the Word of God? When we are choosing texts, when we are choosing methods of pedagogy, what explicit, implicit and null implications are there for interpreting and confessing? What resources and strategies exist for supporting these processes? What challenges and conflicts arise in doing so?

Ideas and concepts central to understanding:

Christian leaders and communities are called and shaped by a living God who initiates relationships with people of all ages in a world of many cultures. The Bible as Word of God is at the heart of that call, and fundamentally shapes those relationships. Leading learning with the Bible requires interpreting and confessing the Word, both personally (in one's own life) and communally in a congregation (or other shared setting).

Ideas and concepts that are important to know and to do:

- know what a Christian learning community is (and can be)
- articulate a clear statement of your history with scripture, and how it shapes and nourishes your faith and your teaching/learning with the Bible
- what is important about teaching and learning with the Bible? Why would you do it? Why would a community, should a community, care about it?
- articulate a clear vision for providing leadership in learning and teaching the Bible – both at home and in community

- know how a biblical imagination shapes and challenges our encounter with the world, and broadens and deepens our understanding of what teaching and learning scripture is
- know how to ask good and meaningful questions that catalyze learning
- know how ritual/narrative shapes learning about and with the Bible, and identify key opportunities in a community's rituals for learning about and with the Bible
- know how to figure out how culture shapes and has shaped a specific community's engagement with the Bible, and how to work with and from and beyond that
- know what your tradition's theological relationship to engagement with culture is, and how to teach and learn within and beyond it in relation to scripture
- listen carefully to a community and assess the Bible learning challenges present in that community
- based on that assessment, prepare and implement appropriate learning designs for Bible study (this includes working with a variety of published curricula)
- know something about leading change, and how to support and nurture it
- know how to move a community from expert-centered teaching to lay-centered learning
- know something of the history of interpretation, and the implications of that history in designing learning events
- understand something of the complexity of teaching and learning the Bible in a world of many faiths, and many traditions within those faiths, which reverence different sacred texts and in different ways

Ideas and concepts that are worth being familiar with:

- a variety of forms of biblical interpretation
- a variety of denominational/doctrinal commitments to biblical engagement
- five elements of Christian curriculum (kerygma, diakonia, leiturgia, didache, koinonia) and how the Bible can function within them
- information about brain function, psychological and social development in adults in relation to learning
- information about pedagogy and curriculum design for adult learning
- information about the sacred texts of other traditions (particularly the Bible of the Jewish faith, and the Koran of the Muslim faith)
- information about inter-cultural conversation

Required texts:

A good study Bible (we will be engaging closely with the Book of Ruth, and the 1st Letter to the Corinthians)

Opening the Book of Faith, by Jacobson, Olson, and Powell

Pedagogy of the Bible, by Dale Martin

Teaching the Bible in Church, by Bracke and Tye

Reading Other-wise, ed. by Gerald West

CALENDAR SCHEDULE

Feb 9 / introductions and orientation, what are the challenges? what are our goals? who are we, who gather for this class?

Rhythms for the class:

- Each week an opening devotion (students sign up in advance)
- A unit/presentation/exercise led by Diane and/or Mary
- Some kind of presentation/sharing led by students (see individual weeks for specific topics)

Guiding assumption: we are all learners and teachers together. Some of us have been further down the road in particular areas, but we are all contributing to this learning. Towards that end, you will see multiple places in this syllabus where we expect you to explore a specific piece and bring your insights on that piece to the class. In each of those cases we've listed possibilities, but we'll be eager to hear of other resources, as well.

As one way to make the learning of this class more public, and thus a resource to the larger church, we will be regularly using the Book of Faith Initiative ning site (<http://bookoffaith.ning.com/>) in various ways. Most weeks we will have a "ning question" that we ask you to respond to, on that site. Our intention is that you complete the response to that question prior to coming to class for the week in which it is listed.

Feb 16 / what does it mean to teach and learn? What are some of the elements of this process? How have we been taught Bible? How does that history shape how we encounter learning here and now?

Ning question: Take the BFI individual assessment. What, if anything, does that assessment tell you about your own needs/desires for learning the Bible? Post a brief introduction to yourself sharing any insights you've gained from the assessment tool, and then just generally explore the site.

Required reading: Bracke & Tye, *Teaching the Bible in Church*

Feb 23 / the Bible and personal devotion, tracing personal learning and supporting adults on faith journeys; an introduction to the Book of Faith initiative; exploring some basic Bible practices/rhythms for personal Bible study

Ning question: Choose one process for engaging the Bible in personal study, and use the "basic questions" guide (which we will hand out in class at our first session) to explore and learn about that process. You may use some part of either the book of Ruth, or 1st Corinthians as your focus. Post a short summary of your findings on the ning BFI site. Please sign up in advance (we will have sign-up sheets available in the first week of

class), so that each student does a different process. If a process you want to explore is not on this list, please clear it with one of us before choosing it:

- TRIP process
- SPECK process
- Visio divina
- Lectio divina
- God Pause (from Luther Seminary)
- “Growing in Grace” (Lutheran devotions)
- Swedish marking method
- Missional questions for texts
- Daily lectionary
- Daily psalter
- Small catechism
- Teaching hymns
- “At Home with the Word”

Required reading: *Opening the Book of Faith*

March 2 / Structured Bible learning in “one off,” or “short form, church adult forums, and other traditional practices. What do our differing denominations offer us? What are some of the variety of interpretations out there? How do particular theological lenses shape our learning/teaching?

Writing question: Reflect on your experience of adult engagement with scripture in short form contexts (in an adult forum, for instance, or a community lecture). Describe one such experience, and explain what teaching methodology was used, and what theological interpretation was present. If you have never experienced this kind of Bible teaching, reflect on a one-time adult education event that you have experienced in some other context.

Required reading: Dale Martin *Pedagogy of the Bible*

March 9 / Structured Bible learning in long form

What resources exist to support learning the Bible with adults in formal learning contexts? What are some of the typical curricula that are available, and what are their pedagogical assumptions and theological frameworks? In what ways do they support, or put obstacles in the path, of interpreting and confessing the Word of God?

Writing question: Choose one of the following curriculum packages and use the “basic questions” guide to consider it. Make sure that you look for how it engages the book of Ruth, and 1st Corinthians. Write a brief post explaining what you’ve discovered. As

before, sign up for a specific curriculum, and if you want to consider one that is not on this list, contact an instructor for permission:

Book of Faith
JustFaith
Living the Questions
Alpha
Crossways
Little Rock Scripture Study
Seasons of the Spirit

Required reading: work on finding bibliographic resources for your final project

March 16 / The Bible in worship, proclamation amidst ritual, how do *you* learn, and the congregation learn about the Bible through worship? What are the tools you're going to use to prepare to proclaim? How does this shape learning in your community? (sermon prep studies with congregants, blogging your sermon prep, choosing hymns, etc.)

Writing question: Choose one of the following, and explore what it offers for engaging the Book of Ruth, or 1st Corinthians. Take a look at the basic questions guide in relation to the tool you've chosen (although that guide is not really formatted for this task). Post your findings to the writing site. Again, if there's a different tool you'd like to consider, please check it out with us first.

Possible tools:

Bibleworks
Accordance
NT Gateway (<http://www.ntgateway.com/>)
Workingpreacher.com
Into the New Testament (<http://readnew.net/>)
Textweek.com
Evangelical Lutheran Worship
Gather hymnal
Feautor.org

Please bring to class any examples of Bibles you have around that might be given away in a church, or that you would suggest for personal study; of hymnals that you work with; or other worship resources you find useful.

Required reading: Instead of required reading, we're asking this week that you give us a proposal for your final project. Your proposal should include a brief outline, a bibliography (at least 5 texts or media), and the primary pedagogical method you're going to employ.

March 23 / The Bible at home, woven through faith journeys at work, shared with younger people

Daily practices, speaking with people who do not know the bible at all, sharing in non-faith contexts, teaching children, Luther's table devotions, etc.

Ning question: Choose one of the following, and explore what it offers for learning the Bible. Be sure to think about whether and how, if at all, it engages the Book of Ruth, or 1st Corinthians. Take a look at the basic questions guide in relation to the resource you've chosen. Post your findings to the ning site. Again, if there's a different resource you'd like to consider, please check it out with us first.

BibleSong

Akaloo

Stories for the 40 days

40- Day Journey with Martin Luther

The Bible Experience

Faith5

an appropriate resource from the Youth and Family Institute catalog

an appropriate resource from the Faith @ Work at Yale center

an appropriate resource from Centered Life publications

Please bring along to class any examples you might have of Bibles that you have received from a church, or that a church gives to a family to use at home, or other kinds of study Bibles.

Required reading: please continue to work on reading for your final project.

March 30 / The Bible and culture, working with texts across cultural spaces (learning with immigrants, learning within different ethnic spaces, learning intercultural communication, learning the Bible in media culture, etc.); Diane's work with the prodigal son

Ning question: this week you may feel free to contribute to the ning site as you are moved to do so, but we would most like you to explore the web (either staying within the BFI site, or moving into the wider web) for resources for adult learning with the Bible on these issues.

Required reading: *Reading Other-wise*, edited by Gerald West

April 6 / The Bible and hard questions (controversy, leading through conflict and change)

Required reading:

Journey Together Faithfully Study Guide, parts one and two

Or, an alternative study guide put together by a church body to engage a controversial question (please check with us to approve your choice)

Writing question: Use the basic questions guide on the materials under consideration, and then think about your own history in engaging controversial questions with the Bible. Post one or two (no more) questions that you have found fruitful when learning with Bible on a controversial issue (note: we are not asking for answers here, but QUESTIONS).

[[Spring Break / April 13]]

April 20 / How do we think about the Bible in the context of multiple denominations and other faiths? What about other sacred texts? What does it mean to teach and learn the Bible in a world of many cultures and many faiths?

Writing question: TBA

Required reading: work on your final project!

April 27 / Review: learning the Bible explicitly, implicitly, and through “null” curricula

Writing question: TBA

Required reading: Work on your final project!

May 4 / share teaching and learning projects with each other

May 11 / share teaching and learning projects with each other

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Participate in the Book of Faith Initiative ning community (<http://bookoffaith.ning.com/>). Most weeks there will be an assignment of some sort for our BFI-ning class site. See the calendar for those assignments, and remember that you need to keep your posts short – no more than 500 words!
2. Take responsibility for doing one of our opening devotions – these are moments when we invite you to bring art, a hymn or other music, video, an exercise, etc. to our shared learning space, something that prayerfully engages a biblical text. This term we will work specifically with the Book of Ruth, and with 1st Corinthians. You can choose a portion of either one as your focal point, but please use this as a moment to experiment with multisensory, multiply intelligent learning. There will be a sign up for this in our first class meeting.
3. Take responsibility for one of our closing process notes. Each week we'll ask one person to pay special attention to our process throughout the seminar, and at the end of class we'll ask that person to comment – briefly – on what s/he observed about how we were working with each other (where there was energy, where we got bogged down, problems or curiosities, etc.). In particular, we want this process person to keep an eye on whether – and if so, how and when – we attended to our I/C questions. There will be a sign-up at our first session.
4. Make a plan for engagement with scripture both personally and communally, including ongoing biblical scholarship, as you move into your pastoral leadership following seminary. Throughout the term we'll be exploring various elements of this, so the actual “requirement” is simply that you summarize briefly for us by our last meeting what your plan will be. Am I going to teach a bible class? Am I going to train people? Am I going to have a community I read scripture with? Am I going to subscribe to W&W? What am I going to do, personally? (and that commitment should have both an individual and communal element to it).
5. Choose one of the following as a final project, or propose an alternative. Just keep in mind that this class is about interpreting and confessing publicly the word of God!
 - Plan and implement an adult bible study in your contextual placement, share with us your plans, your implementation, and what you learned.
 - Create a set of units and a study guide for engaging the Bible in pop culture (for example, pick a season of Battlestar Galactica, or the West Wing, or Lost, etc. or choose a couple of films, or songs, etc. etc. and so on)
 - Create a series of media meditations on some part of Ruth or 1st Corinthians.

Your final project will be shared with the class – through you teaching some element of it – in one of our two last sessions (May 4 and May 11). These sessions will be made

“open” to the public, so that other people can come, and your final project will be published to *Feautor.org*. Keep in mind that you will have about 15 minutes to present, and another 15 to discuss.

Sign up for class tasks:

	Opening devotion	Process note-taker
February 9	_____	_____
February 16	_____	_____
February 23	_____	_____
March 2	_____	_____
March 9	_____	_____
March 16	_____	_____
March 23	_____	_____
March 30	_____	_____
April 6	_____	_____
April 20	_____	_____
April 27	_____	_____
May 4	_____	_____
May 11	_____	_____

Sign up for resource choices:

February 23 / personal devotional practices

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March 9 / long form Bible curriculum

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March 16 / Bible in worship

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March 23 / Bible at home and work

April 6 / Bible and hard questions
