Logo, company name

Description automatically generated

Formed by Scripture

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Instructor Josh Meyer, D.Min. Phone 215.460.8128 Email jmeyer@mosaicmennonites.org Class Location Mosaic Conference 1000 Forty Foot Rd., Suite 100, Lansdale, PA 19446 Class Dates & Times February 10-11, 2023  March 10-11, 2023  April 28-29, 2023  9AM-5PM |  | Course Overview As Anabaptist Christians, we are called both to know and to follow God in our lives. Reading and interpreting scripture in community is essential to our being formed into disciples who not only proclaim the Good News but live it out faithfully in our context. Course Objectives Upon successful completion of this course, students will:   * Grow in their ability to faithfully *read Scripture* as they evaluate and assess the various assumptions and lenses we bring to the text * Grow in their ability to faithfully *interpret Scripture* as they consider what the Bible is, how it functions, why we engage it together, how others understand it, and how to navigate differences in interpretation * Grow in their ability to faithfully *live Scripture* as they seek practical application and life transformation (not merely new information) as a primary goal of engaging biblical texts   In pursuit of these objectives, students will be formed:   * Formationally – as they develop and articulate a personal hermeneutic that is developed in community, informed by Scripture, and guided by God’s Spirit * Interculturally – as they consider, seek to understand, and learn from the hermeneutics of others * Missionally – as they contextualize and communicate biblical interpretation in ways that connect the good news of God’s grace most effectively within their respective communities.  Required Texts What Is the Bible and How Do We Understand It?, Dennis Edwards (Herald Press, 2019)  Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes: removing cultural blinders to better understand the Bible, Richards & O’Brien (IVP Books, 2012)  Eat This Book: a conversation in the art of spiritual reading, Eugene Peterson (Eerdmans Publishing, 2006)  The Bible Unwrapped: making sense of Scripture today, Meghan Good (Herald Press, 2018) Recommended Texts What Is The Bible: how an ancient library of poems, letters, and stories can transform the way you think and feel about everything, Rob Bell (Harper One, 2017)  The Blue Parakeet: rethinking how you read the Bible, Scot McKnight (Zondervan, 2018) Assignments and Grading (grading for credit only) Reading and Class Participation (15 pts)  You are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire session.  While there will be occasional lecturing from me, much of our class time will center on discussion—of the ideas expressed in the readings, of our thoughtful responses to those ideas, and of the ways in which those ideas connect with larger course themes and with a more insightful understanding of how to read, interpret, and live Scripture. Consequently, the responsibility for the course’s success rests collectively on all of us.  Because I respect this power you have, I take your role in class very seriously. I fully expect that you will read and study the assigned reading material in a timely and intellectually responsible manner. I expect that you will have read and studied the material to the point that you can discuss it intelligently, even if you don’t understand everything fully. I also expect that you will contribute *actively*, *thoughtfully*, and *regularly* to class discussions.  Formational Engagement Practices (15 pts)  The Bible is primarily a spiritual text and though we rightly study it with academic rigor, we mustn’t reduce it to merely another textbook. Therefore, we will engage in a series of formational practices to help remind and equip us to engage Scripture spiritually. Students will experiment with three such practices and keep a journal to reflect intentionally on their experience.  In the 1st month, students will commit to *Hearing Scripture* – listening to an audio recording of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) at least twice through. The goal is to hear the words of the Bible rather than simply read them, and to take in big chunks of Scripture at a time.  In the 2nd month, students will commit to *Scribing Scripture* – hand-copying a book of the Bible. The goal is to learn to slow down while engaging Scripture, noticing things that are missed when reading quickly.  In the 3rd month, students will commit to *Discussing Scripture* – engaging in at least two experiences of reading/studying the Bible in a group. The goal is to practice biblical engagement within the community of faith rather than in isolation.  Presentation (15 pts)  Students will give a 20-minute presentation the weekend of March 10-11. Each student will be assigned a different podcast episode to listen to. During the presentation, you will recap the major themes presented in your assigned podcast and share how it may form/shape our approach to Scripture in our current context. This presentation should be guided by the questions included in the assignment sheet posted online.  Reading Responses (40 pts)  Students will turn in a 2-page reading response for each of the required texts (*What Is the Bible*…, *Misreading Scripture*…, *Eat This Book*, *The Bible Unwrapped*). The response should include a synopsis of the author’s hermeneutical lens and a reflection on how that lens resonates or is dissonant with the student’s ministry context.  Final Paper (15 pts)  After the conclusion of our classes, for-credit students will write a final 5-page paper on their hermeneutical lens. This paper is intended to be a reflection on what the student learned about their own interpretive lens, that of their ministering context, and how those lenses interact with one another. A handout will be provided to further guide your response. |

# Course Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class Session | Topics | Details |
| Feb 10-11 | *Reading* Scripture: assumptions & lenses | In preparation for this weekend, please read *Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes* (Richards and O’Brien). Optional additional reading: *The Blue Parakeet* (McKnight).  In our first set of classes, we’ll seek to understand what the Bible is (and isn’t), how the Bible came together, and how our approach to reading the Bible is influenced by a variety of personal and communal assumptions and lenses we bring to the text.  In addition to some input from the instructor, we’ll spend lots of time in group discussion, “playing with” various passages of Scripture as we seek to become more faithful readers of the Bible. We’ll also welcome a guest-lecturer (Beny Krisbianto) to lead a discussion on biblical interpretation from the margins. |
| Mar 10-11 | *Interpreting* Scripture: formation & community | In preparation for this weekend, please read *Eat This Book* (Peterson). Optional additional reading: *What Is The Bible* (Bell).  In our second set of classes, we’ll continue exploring how the Bible functions and what its primary purpose is. We’ll consider the inner life of the interpreter, factors that hinder faithful biblical interpretation, the role of fellow believers in developing/testing our interpretations, and what to do with differences in interpretation.  In addition to some input from the instructor, we’ll hear student presentations and practice a variety of methods for group/community biblical engagement as we seek to become more faithful interpreters of Scripture. We’ll also welcome a guest-lecturer (Michelle Curtis) to lead a discussion on being formed by Scripture. |
| Apr 28-29 | *Living* Scripture: biblical survey & practical application | In preparation for this weekend, please read *The Bible Unwrapped* (Good) and *What Is The Bible and How Do We Understand It* (Edwards).  In our third set of classes, we’ll consider the Big Story of Scripture and what its narrative arc means for how we live and move and have our being (as individuals and as faith communities). We’ll discuss issues such as biblical authority, literary genre, and Christ-centered hermeneutics – and crucially, how to move beyond the Bible as a source of information to a place of deep and transformative wonder about Scripture.  In addition to some input from the instructor, we’ll spend lots more “time in the text” as we focus on integrating and applying our conversations thus far so that we can faithfully live as doers and not merely hearers of the word. We’ll also welcome a guest-lecturer (Meghan Good – to be confirmed) to lead a discussion on biblical genres and literary context. |

# Requirements for Students Desiring Academic Credit

Any student who would like to receive academic credit for this course must inform the instructor of record (PhD/DMin) and Mosaic Institute director before the class begins. Depending on the credit desired (certificate, undergraduate, or seminary), extra reading, papers, field research, assignments, and/or face time with the instructors may be required. Mosaic Institute does not guarantee that academic credit will be granted by your institution but will provide the materials necessary to apply for advanced standing through an institution of your choice (we have an agreement with Kairos University, which can then transfer credit if your institution allows). There may be extra fees required by Mosaic Institute or the accrediting school.

# Attendance Policy

Mosaic Institute Courses have been carefully planned to provide opportunities for learning, building relationships, and practicing new skills. Therefore, class participation is vital. All students are asked to prioritize attendance to every class session throughout the duration of the course. If you are taking this course for credit or as a credentialing requirement, you may miss no more than 4 seat hours (in a 3-credit class) or 2 seat hours (in a 1-2 credit class) to receive credit for the course. In case of an emergency (that is, something that can’t be planned for in advance), please talk with your instructor about how to make up missed work.

# Additional Information