Professor- Wilma Ann Bailey, Ph.D.
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This course will examine concepts and issues of war, peace and justice in the Hebrew Bible and their relevance for contemporary life. As an exegesis course, students will develop skills needed for a critical study of the Hebrew Bible.

By the end of the course you should be able to
1. show awareness of the cultural context of the text and why cultural context matters for the purposes of interpretation,
2. show awareness of the literary texture and genre of the text, and why this matters,
3. support your claims on the basis of primary evidence,
4. articulate the theology of the text, and engage that theology.

Goals-

The student will develop exegetical skills.
The student will become familiar with terminology, texts, and issues associated with war, peace and justice in the Hebrew Bible and the Church.
The student will examine and develop his/her own thinking about these issues.

Method- Directed Discussion, Films, Student Presentations, Some lecture.

Requirements:

1. Students will be present for each class session. (Students who are absent for more than 3 of the class sessions will receive a failing grade.)

2. Students must participate fully. This means that all students (including auditors) must read the required materials and be prepared to share their insights and reflections on the material. In addition, students should always be prepared to discuss their papers and exercises with the class.

3. Students will prepare a presentation for the class based on the research paper.

4. Students will write a paper describing a denomination’s position on war and peace.

5. Students will write a paper on a topic related to the Hebrew Bible that will be chosen in consultation with and approval of the professor.

6. Students will complete and turn in five exegetical exercises.
7. All papers and exercises must be received by the professor in order to pass the course (in addition to receiving passing grades on all measures of assessment).

8. Papers or exercises turned in late will receive a deduction in 5 points from the grade for each day that the paper is late whether the absence is excused or not. Due dates appear on the schedule. Papers will be submitted in hard copy form unless an exception is made by the professor. The student should read and conform to the “Guidelines for Term Papers” and the “Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism” found in the Student Handbook and Planner.

9. Attendance and Participation- Because student participation is a vital part of this course, students will receive a 15 point deduction from the attendance and participation grade for each day that the student is absent after the first one (no penalty for one absence).

**Instructions for the denominational paper** (10 pages)- The student will interview two people from the same congregation, one the pastor or a knowledgeable leader and one lay person to ascertain their thoughts about Christian participation in war.

Denominational position paper- The student should find out whether the chosen denomination has a position on war by reading denominational documents and interviewing two members or participants in the denomination. If the denomination does not have a particular position, the student may read statements made by denominational founders or leaders on the topic. Part of the paper should be in interview form.

During the interviews, a question and answer format should follow.

The following questions should be asked:

Have you ever participated in a war or the military or supported a war or refused to participate in a war or the military or support one?

Should Christians participate in war? Why?

How may a Christian participate? Should a Christian participate in any required or expected way (examples: killing the enemy, killing civilians if necessary or as collateral damage in an operation, interrogations that may require using “pressure” techniques to get information). Is there anything that a Christian should refuse to do?

If the person being interviewed is a pacifist or conscientious objector to war, you might ask what responsibilities a Christian has when a nation is at war. Should a Christian benefit from the fruits of war, if he or she refuses to support it?

Ask them how they came to their position on the issue?

Ask them whether or not they think there is biblical support for their position. If so, what is it?

The student may ask any other questions related to the topic that are of interest to the student.

**Instructions for the war, peace or justice paper** (12 pages) - This is an exegetical research paper with hermeneutical reflection. The student will consult scholarly books (minimum of four), scholarly articles (at least two found in the ATLA index). In addition to books and articles, scholarly on-line resources may be used. The student will identify a text for study related to war or peace or justice in the Hebrew Bible. Students may include reflections on the text as it relates to contemporary life, events or issues at the end of the paper. The text must be approved by the instructor. The paper should begin with an introduction to the topic followed by a careful study of the text using a critical method. Include supporting materials from primary and secondary
sources and end with a summary or concluding statement. Include a bibliography or works cited list. The critical content of this paper will be presented to the class at the end of the semester. The student will think of a creative way to present the topic. No boring lectures. (All boring lectures will be delivered by the professor.)

**Grades**

Participation and Attendance- 50 points  
Denominational Paper- 100 points  
Research Paper and presentation- 150 points  
Five Exegetical exercises- 100 points

**Grading scale:**  
A= 368-400  B=328-367  C= 288-327  D=248-287  F=below 248

A plus may be added to final grades that are three points or less short of the next highest grade if the student’s work merits it. There is no A plus grade at CTS.

**Required Readings**

The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in any contemporary translation


**Recommended but Not Required**


Schertz, Mary and Ivan Friesen, Beautiful Upon the Mountains. Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2003.


Schedule

August
29  Introductions
Definitions of terms
Read Brimlow pp 9-18
Read Soulen- “Ancient Roots of Biblical Criticism” and “Modern Biblical
Criticism”
Video-“Frontline Battle for the Holy Land”

September
5   Labor Day- Seminary closed
12  War in the Hebrew Bible- Joshua 6, Judges 1-2, 2 Kings 3:4-27,
2 Kings 6:24-32
Read Niditch pp 3-89
Read Soulen- The Historical Critical Method, Historical Criticism
Exegetical Exercise # 1 (3 pages) Joshua 6
Make three lists (three columns on one page): the instructions of God to Joshua,
the instructions of Joshua to the people and the account of what the people do.
Compare and contrast them.
Video- “Saving Private Ryan”
19  War in the Hebrew Bible continued- Judges 19:16-21, Genesis 34,
Read Niditch pp 90-155
Read Soulen- Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism,
Sitz-im-Leben.
Exegetical Exercise # 2 (3 pages) 1 Samuel 17
Draw or photocopy a map. Locate all place names. Trace the likely
journey of David to the battle (note the terrain in the area). Trace the
likely journey of Goliath to the battle. Notice the armor of Goliath and
Saul (where he clothes David). What do the armor and weapons tell you about
the type of warfare that is envisioned in the text?
26  “You Shall Not Kill”
Read Bailey
Due- Denominational Paper

October
3   Deuteronomy 20
Read Brimlow 19-128
Video “Soldiers of Conscience”
10 2 Kings 22-23
Read Brimlow pp 129-150
Read Soulen- Literary Criticism, Structuralism
Exegetical Exercise # 3 (3 pages) Exodus 14:10-14
Describe what occurs before and after this pericope. Does the pericope fit? Could the narrative continue if the pericope were removed? Provide an outline of the pericope. What is Moses’ conception of God?

17 Meet at the IMA, 38th street entrance to the “100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art and Nature Park.”
If it is raining when we are scheduled to meet, come to our regular classroom.
Read Lamentations.
Exegetical Exercise # 4 (3 pages) Lamentations 1
Name the genre of the poem. Which characteristics of a lament are present in this poem? Which are absent? How is God described in this poem? Read the section of exilic and post-exilic Zion theology in the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol. 12. page 357 – 362 top. How does the exilic-post exilic conception of Zion fit this poem?

24 Shalom in the Hebrew Bible
Read Perry Yoder pp 1-23
Read Soulen- Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation, Postmodern Biblical Interpretation.

31 Deuteronomy 20
video “The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It”
Read Brimlow 151-190
Read Soulen- Feminist Biblical Interpretation

November

7 Isaiah 2:2-5, 11:1-9, Micah 4:1-5
video “Conscientious Objector”
Exegetical Exercise # 5 (3 pages) Isaiah 2:1-5
To whom is this poem directed? Support your response. Does the poem end at verse 4 or verse 5? Support your response based on internal evidence and the verses surrounding it. Compare this poem to the one found in Micah 4:1-4. What is different? Why? Compare the translation of the text in the NRSV with the JPS TANAKH translation.
14  Genesis 26:12-22, 2 Kings 6:8-23, 1 Samuel 25:2-42
    Read Soulen- Ideological Criticism, Hermeneutics
    Video- “You Chiefs are Peacemakers”

21  Thanksgiving week- No Class

28  Justice- 2 Kings 8:1-6, Amos 4:1-5, Amos 5:18-24, Micah 6:6-8
    Read Perry Yoder pp 24-146
    Due- Research Paper

December

  5  Student Presentations

  12 Student Presentations