

Introduction to Christian Scriptures

Required Textbook:

Amy Jill-Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (2nd edition) Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-0190461850

[Note: students need the 2nd edition because there are additional essays and updates to the annotations from the 2011 edition] **Available at DTL2**

Student Learning Objectives

This course is meant to introduce students to the literary and cultural history of the Christian Testaments as well as methods of interpretation so students can engage in a meaningful way in the academy, ministry, life, and activism about Christian Sacred Texts and tradition. During the course, students will:

- Explore the historical, literary, and cultural context of the Synoptic Gospels, Johannine literature, Pauline and deutero-Pauline Epistles, Revelation as well as some texts from the Apocrypha and extra-biblical traditions.
- Engage in open and respectful dialogue concerning different interpretations of the Christian scriptures.
- Engage with historical-critical and intersectional feminist methodological frameworks to practice a hermeneutic of suspicion, remembrance, and resistance. This hermeneutical cycle will be used to understand counter-oppressive readings or 'flipping the script' on dominant oppressive readings of Christian Sacred Texts and traditions.
- Learn how to access, search, and use library research tools and resources for academic research.

Educating to Counter Oppressions

This course seeks to advance the values expressed in the statement of [Educating to Counter Oppressions \(ECO\)](#) that is central to Starr King School for the Ministry's educational design. The overall goal is to help each person prepare for religious leadership, within a multi-religious and counter-oppressive context to create just and sustainable communities.

Course Policies

Please refer to the following course policies links:

- a. Academic Conduct <https://www.skism.edu/current-students/statement-academic-integrity-misconduct/>
- b. Plagiarism <https://www.skism.edu/plagiarism/>
- c. Notice to Students About Your Privacy (FERPA) <https://www.skism.edu/academics/policy-statements/ferpa-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/>
- d. Disability Policy <https://www.skism.edu/resources/student-handbook/starr-king-policies/students-with-disabilities-policy/>

Assignments:

Students will be expected to read the assigned sections from *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* as well as additional readings and to participate in class discussions. There will be short reading reflections that should be completed every week and submitted through Populi. There are two required papers for the course.

Instructions for Papers:

Review of Liberating an Oppressive Reading from Christian Scriptures
(2 papers - length = 5-7 pages)

Each of the papers involve choosing a minimum of two articles or chapters from peer-reviewed academic works (a list of possibilities will be provided, and students

are welcome to find other pieces as well) that engage with a passage from the Christian Testaments that has been used to support systems and ideologies of oppression such as sexism, homophobia, racism, or xenophobia and offer counter-oppressive readings or “flipped scripts”. Students will offer a brief overview of the main points of each piece, the methods, and arguments of the articles and then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the flipped scripts based on students experience and context. Students are encouraged to put the pieces in conversation with course materials. A handout with suggested readings and further details on the assignment will be posted on Populi. The following are suggested questions the students can ask themselves to act as a guideline for assessing the material:

Literary context: Does it engage with the text in its literary context: of which larger narrative is it a part? What occurs before and after?

Genre and setting/Historical background: Does it engage with the genre of the text (narrative, legal text, myth, fable, liturgy, etc.)?

Cultural legacy: Does it engage with how it has traditionally been taught and understood in religious or wider secular contexts?

Counter-oppressive Readings: Does it open up new opportunities for preaching and/or teaching with the text? What are the elements in the reading that support a liberating reading of justice, love, and equality by setting it within its larger literary and/or cultural/historical context? What methodology is employed? For example, does it explore feminist, queer, and/or postcolonial readings of the text? Did you find a reading that resonates with you and your ministry/activism?

This research will allow the student the opportunity for deeper engagement with the issues that are most important to them and act as preparation for conversations that they are likely to encounter directly in ministry, the academy, life, and/or activism. Cite sources used from the course as well as any additional resources. Students can use footnotes, endnotes, or in-text citations – any system is acceptable, as long as they are consistent. Paper and citation format with resources is provided below.

Course Schedule: TBA