1. Course Description

The first section of the course will begin with a study of the unity of the Bible as a whole. Is this unity to be viewed in terms of two unique witnesses to a single theological subject matter, or as a single story-line or metanarrative running from Genesis to Revelation? What difference, if any, does our answer to this question make for our understanding of the Old Testament’s witness to Christ? We will then turn to a discussion of premodern, modern, and postmodern approaches to the unity of Scripture, with special emphasis on the understanding of authorial intention, historical context, and Scripture’s theological sense at work in these approaches. The middle and final sections of the course will discuss the study of biblical words and texts, the place of literary genre, the NT use of the OT, as well as its relation to the hermeneutics of Second Temple Judaism. Case studies of biblical texts drawn from both the Old and New Testament will provide opportunities to illuminate these issues in the concrete context of exegesis and interpretation.

2. Course Texts

Required


Recommended

3. Course Requirements and Grading

a) Course requirements

4 homework assignments, 1 book review, and a final paper.

b) Grading

Four homework assignments.........................50%
Sanctified Vision review..........................20%
Drama of Scripture paper.........................30%

c) Requirements for the book review (Sanctified Vision)

Your review should be between 6-10 pages double-spaced. About one-half to two-thirds of your paper should be devoted to summary of the book’s content. The other one-half to one-third should focus upon responding to the following questions:

Do you think that Reno and O’Keefe provide persuasive arguments for taking seriously the early fathers’ approach to biblical interpretation in our day? Why or why not?

Reno and O’Keefe state that “the text is the subject matter” on page 13, and also make comments that are similar to this statement in other contexts in the book (cf. for example the comments on pages 27-28, 30, and 116, to name but a few). What do they mean by this, and what issues (if any) are they trying to address in modern biblical exegesis when they make such a statement?

How might Reno and O’Keefe respond to Walter Kaiser’s view of allegory, as articulated by Kaiser in Kaiser & Silva, Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics?

You should be aware that you are not required to sign off on everything Reno and O’Keefe have to say about patristic exegesis. However, if and when you feel compelled to express disagreements with them, I will expect you to give reasonable arguments in support of your objections. A ‘reasonable argument’ or objection is one that is based upon a careful reading of what the book actually teaches, and not a misrepresentation or short-sighted reading that fails to do justice to what the book as a whole has to say about a particular issue.

c) Requirements for the paper (The Drama of Scripture)

The Drama of Scripture offers a story-shaped approach to Biblical Theology by providing an overview of the Bible’s narrative movement in six acts. Using this framework as a large-scale map to help orient your own approach, your assignment will be to devise a means of helping people gain a sense of the main features of the narrative movement of both testaments in terms of these six acts.
Imagine that you have been asked to present the story of Scripture in an adult Sunday School class, and that you have been given 30 to 45 minutes to do so. Write a paper between 6 to 10 pages (double-spaced) that moves through the six acts described in *The Drama of Scripture*. Your paper should be written in a style that is appropriate to an oral delivery, rather than the style you would adopt for a formal, academic paper.

*I am not looking for a simple restatement of the content provided in the book, but for your own way of stating that content.* Make sure your presentation covers all the six acts, and that you use at least one illustration in each of the six acts in order to make it easier for your audience to understand. In making use of illustrations, students are free to draw upon whatever resources and/or formats they find useful for supporting their presentation.

Your paper should also take care to bring out the Old Testament’s character as Christian scripture on its own level, apart from the New Testament. In the schema presented by Bartholomew and Green, the first 3 acts (creation, fall, Israel) comprise what we now call the Old Testament. *Be sure to address how these 3 acts bear witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ the eternal Word of God on Old Testament terms, prior to his incarnation in the flesh.*

Your grade will depend upon the effectiveness of your communication, your pedagogical skills, as well as your ability to set forth the distinctively Christian character of both testaments.

If your paper treats these 3 acts as part of a chronological storyline or historical series of events leading up to the incarnation, but fails to discuss how these events disclose Christ on their own terms, you will not earn a grade higher than a B, and possibly even lower.