

Biblical Interpretation

Description:

This research program focuses on Hebrew Bible and Early Christian (canonical and apocryphal) literature. Students in this concentration will have competence to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in the languages, literature, history, and religion of ancient Israel and early Christianity. In addition to teaching competencies, graduates will be prepared to conduct research and scholarship in biblical studies. Students may specialize in select areas of either Hebrew Bible or the New Testament and their cognate literatures.

Application in this concentration presupposes a minimum of one year of Hebrew and one year of Greek, along with demonstrable usage of each language within the last three years. The application process for this concentration also requires a research paper in biblical studies, preferably an analysis of a biblical text, and it assumes general background in biblical literature and history.

Students develop a study plan in consultation with their advisors. Prior to advancement to degree candidacy, students in the Biblical Interpretation (BI) concentration are expected to have acquired a thorough mastery of both Hebrew and Greek. Proficiency in these languages is assessed in the preliminary interview.

Requirements:

Most students are required to take at least two, two-credit reading courses in Hebrew and/or Greek as part of their course work in the Program. Such requirements may be waived if there is evidence of mastery at the time of matriculation. Comprehensive exams will examine the student's grasp of critical issues and biblical interpretation generally and readiness to pursue dissertation research. Questions are developed by the student and the dissertation advisor.

In addition to the three required Core courses required of all students, BI Concentration students are required to take three of the following courses during the coursework portion of their program. These courses are designed to give students basic competencies in the skills, methodologies, and background of biblical studies. Particular emphases of each course will vary somewhat depending on which of the BI faculty are teaching them in any particular quarter.

1) Methods in Biblical Studies (4 credit hours)

This course concentrates on a range of methodologies used to interpret biblical texts, from classical historical critical methodologies, to contemporary methodologies. The course will be taught every other year. Canonical emphasis will be determined by the faculty member's area of concentration. Accommodations will be made for the study of how particular methods are used within each sub-discipline.

2) New Testament Language and Texts OR Hebrew Bible Language and Texts (4 credit hours)

These courses are designed to increase students' facility and proficiency in biblical Greek and Hebrew. They are intended to teach students how to interpret texts using the most sophisticated scholarly resources, tools, and technology. They cover issues

such as advanced grammar, textual criticism, work with manuscripts and other material evidence, and other related issues and skills pertaining to the use, reading, and study of written evidence of biblical and related texts. The courses are taught every other year, on an alternating schedule.

3) Hebrew Bible Environments OR New Testament Environments (4 credit hours)

These courses take up the study of the history, society, culture, religions, and other aspects of the larger world within which the biblical materials were developed and used. They are taught every other year, on an alternating schedule.

Additionally, students are required to participate in the Colloquium in Biblical Interpretation (2 or 3 credit hours) at least once during the coursework phase of their degree program. The Colloquium addresses key themes, issues, or topics in the field of Biblical Studies. This course will be offered every year, with the focus for the Colloquium determined by the BI faculty member(s) in charge that year.