

COMPREHESIVE EXAMS FOR BIBLE AND CULTURES PROGRAM

I. Comprehensive Exam 1: Course Development

Develop a two-semester course titled *Introduction to the History and Literature of Ancient Israel and Early Christianity*. Each semester is 12 weeks in length with a Reading Week at mid-point. The course meets twice a week. The sessions are 75 minutes. The course may target either undergraduates or seminarians.

Students will submit the following:

- A. A brief statement (250-300 words) of your personal philosophy on the teaching of biblical literature. In other words, what are you attempting to accomplish in the biblical studies classroom? What are your pedagogic aims?
- B. A detailed syllabus, complete with
 1. a course description;
 2. a list of 5-6 learning goals and expected outcomes;
 3. a schedule of weekly topics, with
 - a. a 6-10 line paragraph introducing each text/topic;
 - b. a list of weekly (reasonably-sized and level-appropriate) reading assignments, including the focal biblical texts, and both required and recommended secondary sources;
 - c. a list of 3-5 discussion questions for each class session that target both conceptual understanding and applicability.
 4. a set of assigned student activities (quizzes, papers, presentations, etc.) and assessment rubrics by which you will evaluate your students' learning progress.
 5. a course bibliography that includes both assigned and recommended collateral readings.
- C. A corresponding set of session notes
 1. that gives an account of the unfolding of the semester's theoretical narrative, in other words, that demonstrates the logic of the course structure, that plots the evolution of the discussion, that articulates how the semester's work culminates in a particular set of understandings that you find to be the most valuable in the study of biblical narrative;
 2. that includes the background sources that you will read in preparation to lead discussions of each major component of the syllabus (e.g., the Pentateuch or the Synoptic Gospels) and some reflection on why/how these will be helpful.
- D. A credit-hour calculation worksheet that charts student learning hours. (Worksheet will be provided.)

While the syllabus in form, content, and pedagogical strategy, should be informed by prior coursework and TA experience, it should not recycle components from the syllabi of others. **Submission of teaching materials will be followed by a one-hour oral examination** by two biblical studies faculty.

II. Comprehensive Exam 2: Exegesis and history of reception

At the beginning of a three-week exam period, the student will be given three texts/passages. S/he will choose one text from the list, produce 1) a critical translation, 2) a close exegetical reading, and 3) a study of some aspect of its cultural impact in the history of its reception. The exam essay should distill the significant scholarly insights on the text as well as attempt to demonstrate originality, creativity, and hermeneutical and methodological sophistication. The essay should be proofed, properly footnoted, and accompanied by a list of works cited.

Length: approximately 10,000 words (discounting the bibliography).

III. Comprehensive Exam 3: Interdisciplinary Exam

The student will propose an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary topic and produce a publishable encyclopedia article. This essay should provide an informed and informative overview of the topic and, while not necessarily requiring an original argument, it should demonstrate a grounded understanding of the relevant thinkers, theories, contributions, and considerations pertaining to the topic. Subjects suitable for this exam may include the works of a particular theorist or theoretical movement; the genealogy of a concept from (an)other discipline(s); a cultural study (e.g., The Exodus narrative in African American culture[s], covenant in Puritan North American politics, the figure of Jesus in contemporary film, etc.) The essay should be proofed, properly footnoted, and accompanied by a list of works cited. While the essay may build on work produced during coursework, it should not simply be a recycled paper from coursework. Neither should it be an already published work, or a work accepted for publication at the time when the exam is submitted.

Length: 4500-5000 words (discounting the bibliography).

IV. Comprehensive Exam 4: Dissertation-Related Exam

The student will propose a topic or text related to the dissertation and produce a publishable journal article. The article may have an exegetical or a methodological/hermeneutical focus, and must contain an original argument. It may build upon and/or apply (but not duplicate) theoretical, conceptual, or methodological work from exam #3 to texts, themes, and/or topics in the field of biblical studies. Alternatively, it can explore some completely different aspect of the dissertation work. The essay should be proofed, properly footnoted, and accompanied by a list of works cited. While the essay may build on work produced during coursework, it should not simply be a recycled paper from coursework. Neither should it be an already published work, or a work accepted for publication at the time when the exam is submitted.

Length: 7000-7500 words (discounting bibliography).