

North Park Theological Seminary  
3225 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, IL 60625

**BIBL 7190 (Section 1)**  
**Ethnic American Biblical Interpretation**  
**Spring 2010 Syllabus**  
(*subject to revision; v. 10/25/09*)

Professors	Dr. Bob Hubbard (Professor of Old Testament) Dr. Max J. Lee (Associate Professor of New Testament)
Class Hours/Location:	<b>TuTh 1:30-3:00pm Rm TBA</b>
Office	Nyvall 26
Office Hours	Hubbard: TBA Lee: Mon 9:30-11am; Tues 10am-12pm; Wed 9:30-11am * Please reserve a time to meet by signing up on the office hours sheet posted on the instructor's door, or make an appointment with the instructor for other hours
Email	mlee1@northpark.edu

### Description

In this course the student will be interpreting select biblical texts from the Old and New Testament Christian canon with an appreciation for how African–American, Asian–American, Latino/a–American, and other ethnic-American scholars hear these same texts from a social and cultural location different from an exclusively European and (white-)American context. Three hours.

### Course Objectives

- ♦ To be more aware of your own biases and presuppositions to biblical interpretation. By reading interpretations of the biblical text ‘from the margins’ or from specific cultural and ethnic social locations, students are asked to re-examine traditional (Reformational) ways of understanding the Bible and explore alternative methods for biblical interpretation.
- ♦ The class will still seek *to build a common vocabulary* with the ancient world of the biblical writer (i.e., the task of **exegesis** and the historical critical method) and *apply* his original message into our present Christian context (the task of **hermeneutics** and **theological reflection**). Yet this mode or method of biblical interpretation has its own set of limitations and deficiencies, and the class will seek to explore how reading biblical texts using other methods might inform the traditional task of exegesis, hermeneutics and theological reflection.
- ♦ In order to achieve the above objective, it is necessary to study also the history, cultural milieu, social networks, religious value systems, and politics of Palestine and the ancient near east in the OT period, and for the NT period, Second Temple Judaism and the wider Roman world. We do this to ask how the ancient world frames perennial questions that continue to have relevance today.
- ♦ We will also engage with scholarship from both the dominant European and American segments of the academy to understand how certain biblical texts have been heard, read, understood and applied throughout the history of the church.
- ♦ But the primarily focus of the course is to read non-European, ethnic-American, and ‘majority world,’ perspectives or perspectives ‘from the margins.’ We will be reading select commentaries, articles, and essays from ethnic-American scholars or scholars of color, who collectively represent alternative ways to read the biblical texts and its central themes.

## Required Textbooks

**Fields, Bruce L.** *Introducing Black Theology: Three Crucial Questions for the Evangelical Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. [ISBN: 0-8010-2278-9]

**González, Justo L.** *Santa Biblia: The Bible through Hispanic Eyes*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996 [ISBN: 0-687-01452-2]

**Yeo, Khoik-khng (K.K.).** *What Has Jerusalem to Do with Beijing?: Biblical Interpretation from a Chinese Perspective*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998. [ISBN: 1-56338-229-6]

*The Ethnic American Biblical Interpretation Reader* (hence **EABIR**)

On blackboard in the assignment folder for this course, journal articles, essays, and select chapters from books/monographs will be available online as part of your required reading. The assigned readings from the reader are *required* and provide additional materials to your textbooks. The reader includes important material from non-traditional scholars, scholars of color, and scholars who write for the non-European and non-(white)American ‘majority world’ or with a perspective ‘from the margins’

[For all MDiv students; no exceptions unless otherwise permitted by the instructor of the course]: *The Greek New Testament* (UBS<sup>4</sup> or NA<sup>27</sup>) and *The Hebrew Bible* (BHS). MDiv students are required to work from the Greek New Testament and Hebrew Bible at select points from the course. You are allowed, however, to bring your English Bible as well (see comments just below) as a *second* reference but all MDiv students will be required to do assignments using the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

[For non-MDiv students]: *The English Bible* in any contemporary translation, but preferably the **NRSV** or **TNIV/NIV**.

Please do not use a paraphrased translation (e.g., New Living Bible) or an idiomatic/colloquial one (e.g., Eugene Peterson's translation). A more literal translation of the Hebrew/Greek texts are needed for the course. If you have any questions concerning if a particular version or translation is acceptable or not, please do not hesitate to ask the instructor.

## On Reserve

Select works which could possibly be in high demand from the whole class will be placed on library reserve so there will be fair access to all. A bibliography of on-reserve books will be given during the first week of class.

## Overview of Assignments

Assignment Description/Summary	Max Points	Due Dates
Critical Book Review on K.K. Yeo's <i>What Has Jerusalem to Do with Beijing</i>	100	Send email ( <a href="mailto:mlee1@northpark.edu">mlee1@northpark.edu</a> ) attachment by 11:59pm Tues 3/16/10
Student Presentation	100	Due on your assigned day
Attendance and Participation	100	Weekly each day of class
Final Paper	200	Send email ( <a href="mailto:mlee1@northpark.edu">mlee1@northpark.edu</a> ) attachment by 11:59pm Fri 5/7/10
<i>Total Possible Points Possible</i>	500	

**Critical Book Review of K.K. Yeo's Book (100 pts)**

Although only select chapters of Yeo will be discussed in class, please read *all* of K.K. Yeo's *What Has Jerusalem to Do with Beijing* (1998) and write a 2-3 page critical review (single-spaced) of the book. The criteria for the critical review will be given later during the first week of class.

**Student Presentation (100 pts)**

Each student must sign up for a student presentation for a select day during the week of instruction. The sign up sheet will be placed on blackboard. 1-2 students per topic only but all the presentation slots must be filled. The instructor reserves the right to move around 2nd signees on one presentation slot as a 1st signee on another presentation day if the latter has been left unfilled.

For your presentation, please provide a short 1-page outline for the whole class, but *for the instructors of the course*, you are to provide a 2-3 page (single-spaced) critical essay of the reading specified for our discussion for a given week. In general, you must include the following information:

1. A brief biography on the author and his/her importance in New Testament scholarship.
2. Summarize the central thesis of the essays/articles, its main arguments, and the supporting evidence/data which the author uses to assert these arguments.
3. What biblical texts from does the author interpret? Does the author interpret the text from a particular modern methodological or hermeneutical approach? Describe the author's method of interpretation.
4. Is the author's interpretation of the texts convincing? Why or why not? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's interpretation for his/her cultural context? How are his/her arguments applicable to all cultures as a theological reflection on Scripture?

Important note: The presenter is expected to do more than just read the assigned essay/article. The presenter should add a research component to his or her presentation and consult other secondary sources. You can consult reviews of the book. If, for example, you disagree with a particular author's reading of a biblical text, then please consult other commentaries/secondary sources as you offer an alternative interpretation of the very same texts.

The grade for this assignment is dependent on the written paper, not so much one's oral presentation. If necessary, you may have to coordinate your oral presentation with another student but *each student must submit his/her own separate paper to the instructors of the course.*

**Final Paper (200 pts)**

You will be asked to write an 5-6pp. research paper (single-spaced; or 10-12 double-spaced) evaluating two ethnic-American biblical interpreters (they must be from different cultural locations: that is, choose two out of one Asian-American, one Latino/a-American, and one African-American biblical scholar). Examine the strengths and weaknesses of their interpretation of a particular biblical text. If their reading is problematic in any way, be sure to provide your own exegesis of the biblical passage in your critical evaluation of their respective interpretative models. What standard interpretation of the text does each author overturn, modify, or advance? What contributions does their interpretation make for the life and ministry of the church?

Which biblical interpreter and what text he/she examines are up to you, but as much as possible, try to find two interpreters who examine *the same text* or *the same canonical book* so as a closer means of comparison between the two authors. The topic must receive *the approval of the instructor* beforehand.

The student should provide a **written proposal for the topic and a preliminary bibliography** on the secondary sources used for the paper in seeking the instructor's approval.

### ***Participation and Attendance***

You are expected to be present during class as the class is heavily discussion oriented. Absences from part of the class during any of the sessions may result in the lowering of the participation grade. You are expected to be prepared to discuss the biblical texts and the secondary reading for each session. It is not enough to be just present but you must be prepared to participate.

### ***Make-up work***

Work should be turned in on time. Late papers/assignments will be deducted 10pts for each day it is late (excluding weekends/holidays). No assignments will be accepted 1 week after the due date.

### **Grading System**

The final percentage will be calculated from the total points earned over the total points possible. The following scale is used for your final grade:

93-100%	A	77-79	C+	60-62	D –
90-92	A–	73-76	C	0-59	F
87-89	B+	70-72	C –		
83-86	B	67-69	D +		
80-82	B –	63-66	D		

This scale is absolute. On a rare occasion, the above scale *may* be curved at a later point, but only if the overall class grades are too low, but it is up to the instructor of the course to decide if the final grades should be curved up or not. *Just assume **no** curve will be applied* so you will not expect a boost in your scores and be disappointed when it is not given.

### **Ethical Standards**

Cheating of *any kind*, whether plagiarism in written assignments or the giving/receiving of information during quizzes/exams, will result in an F for the assignment, and most likely an immediate F in the course. There also may be additional penalties (e.g., suspension, expulsion) lodged against the student. If you have any questions on what constitutes plagiarism or what constitutes acceptable exam-taking practice, please ask the instructor.

### **Disability Accommodations**

North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services as soon as possible. If desired or necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Act Services is found in the Student Academic Handbook.

## Class Schedule

Wk	Date	Topic/Description	Assignments
1	Feb 2	Introduction to the Course and Syllabus What is Ethnic American Biblical Interpretation?	Be prepared to discuss for Thurs 2/4:
	Feb 4	Hermeneutical Tools for the Study of Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics: Inter(con)textuality, Postcolonialism, Deconstruction, and Cultural Hermeneutics	<b>EABIR:</b> Liew, <i>The Politics of Parousia</i> , pp. 22–45 [= ch. 2: “Inter(con)textuality: Questions of Textuality, Subjectivity, and Agency”]
2	Feb 9, 11	Presentation given by the Instructor	<b>EABIR:</b> Liew, <i>The Politics of Parousia</i> , pp. 81–108, 149–68 [= ch. 4, part.: “Subjects of Authority,” and ch. 7 = “Conclusion”]
		Colonial Mimicry: Does God Use the Same Weapons of the Enemy to Defeat the Enemy?: Liew’s Reading of Mark’s Gospel in the Chinese Immigrant Context	Texts: Mark 8:27–38; 12:1–12; 12:13–17; 14:56–65
3	Feb 16, 18	Student Presentation #1	<b>EABIR:</b> Kim, <i>Identity and Loyalty in the David Story</i> , pp. 54–60; 77–103; 198–222
		Machiavellian David and Marginalized Uriah: Does the semantics of Hebrew <i>hesed</i> include Korean <i>jeong</i> ?	Texts: 1 Sam. 16–31; 2 Sam. 11–12; Psalm 51; 1 Chr. 10:11–47
4	Feb 23, 25	Student Presentation #2	<b>Yeo</b> , <i>What Has Jerusalem to Do with Beijing?</i> , 25–47 (ch. 2), 51–64 (ch. 3), 165–97 (ch. 7)
		A Christo-Centric Model for Cross-Cultural Hermeneutics: Looking at the Yin/Yang of YHWH in Genesis/Exodus and the Taoism of Beijing in Acts	Texts: Gal. 2:15–16; 3:1–20; Exod. 3:12–16; Gen. 1:26–28; Acts 17:22–31
5	Mar 2	Student Presentation #3	<b>EABIR:</b> Liew, <i>What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics?</i> , pp. 1–17 (ch. 1); A.Y. Lee, “Reading the Bible as an Asian American,” in <i>Ways of Being, Ways of Reading</i> , pp. 60–69
	4	Class Discussion:  Hagar as White, Latina, Black, and Asian	<b>EABIR:</b> Simopoulos, “Who Was Hagar?” in <i>Reading Other-wise</i> , pp. 63–72; Ngan, “Neither Here nor There,” in <i>Ways of Being, Ways of Reading</i> , pp. 70–83  Texts: Gen. 16; 21
SB	Mar 8–12	Spring Break (no class)	Reminder: <b>Critical Book Review</b> on K.K. Yeo is due vial email ( <a href="mailto:mlee1@northpark.edu">mlee1@northpark.edu</a> ) by 11:59pm on Tues 3/16

Wk	Date	Topic/Description	Assignments
6	Mar 16, 18	Student Presentation #4  Introducing Latino/a-American Biblical Hermeneutics: Paradigmatic Concerns over Marginality and Poverty	<b>Critical Book Review</b> on K.K. Yeo is due via email ( <a href="mailto:mlee1@northpark.edu">mlee1@northpark.edu</a> ) by 11:59pm on Tues 3/16  <b>González, <i>Santa Biblia</i></b> , pp. 11–75 (Introduction; ch. 1-2)  Texts: Acts 6
7	Mar 23, 25	Student Presentation #5  Immigration, Cultural Hybridity, and Racial Identity from a Latino/a-American Perspective	<b>González, <i>Santa Biblia</i></b> , pp. 77–118 (Ch.3–5; Conclusion)  Texts:
8	Mar 30, Apr 1	Student Presentation #6  Pride and Prejudice in Class-Divided America: Foreign Women in Nehemiah and a <i>Mujerista</i> Reading of Jesus’ Parables	<b>EABIR</b> : Ruiz, “They Could not Speak the Language of Judah,” in <i>They Were All Together in One Place?</i> , pp. 79–95; Isasi-Díaz, “A <i>Mujerista</i> Hermeneutics of Justice,” in <i>The Bible and the Hermeneutics of Liberation</i> , pp. 181–95  Texts: Neh. 13; Matt. 20:1–16
9	Apr 6, 8	Student Presentation #7  What Is Latino/a American Biblical Hermeneutics? A Discussion on Methodology	<b>EABIR</b> : Segovia, “Liberation Hermeneutics,” in <i>Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth</i> , pp. 106–32 (ch. 5); idem, “Toward Latino/a American Biblical Criticism,” in <i>They Were All Together in One Place?</i> , pp. 193-23  Be prepared to compare the methodological approach of <b>Segovia</b> with/vs. <b>González</b>
10	Apr 13, 15	Student Presentation #8  Introducing African-American Biblical Hermeneutics: What (White-) Evangelicals Need to Hear about the Contextual Nature of Biblical and Theological Interpretation	<b>Fields, <i>Introducing Black Theology</i></b> , pp. 11–69 (ch. 1–2)  Texts:  (Though the Nyvall Lectures are on 4/15, yes, we will <i>still</i> have class since NL ends by noon)
11	Apr 20, 22	Student Presentation #9  Reading the New Testament through the Eyes of (African-American) Men: Acts and Revelation	<b>EABIR</b> : Williams, “Upon All Flesh”, in <i>They Were All Together in One Place?</i> , pp. 289-310; Blount, “The Witness of Active Resistance,” in <i>From Every People and Nation</i> , pp. 28–46

Wk	Date	Topic/Description	Assignments
12	Apr 27, 29	Student Presentation #10  Reading Both Testaments through the Eyes of (Black) Women(ists): Hosea and Colossians/Ephesians	<b>EABIR:</b> Williams, “Gomer: Victim of Violence or Victim of Metaphor?”, pp. 87–104; Martin, “The Haustafeln (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation,” in <i>Stony the Road We Trod</i> , pp. 206–31;
13	May 4	Class Discussion  True Orthodoxy: Interpreting the Bible Theologically and Culturally for the Future of the (Evangelical) Church	<b>Fields</b> , <i>Introducing Black Theology</i> , pp. 71–105 (ch. 3)
	May 6–7	——— Final Exam Days (May 6–7) —— <b>No Final Exam:</b> please email <a href="mailto:mlee1@northpark.edu">mlee1@northpark.edu</a> your final papers for the course by 11:59pm Fri May 7	<i>Congratulations! You made it!</i>