Course Profile

Course # and Title  RHS 417    Feast and Famine: Biblical Imagery of Abundance and Scarcity
Instructor:  Mercedes L. García Bachmann   Semester/Year:  Spring 2017

Course Rationale and Description
In this course we will do theology (talk about God) by looking at texts related to foodstuff. From creation in Genesis to the new world promised in Revelation, the Bible shows signs of preoccupation with food, nourishment, abundance and dearth of food and beverages: milk, water, wine, bread, fish, gardens, medical plants, mana—even pistaccios! Each class will concentrate on a topic or text, leaving the last classes for theological synthesis. The instructor will present background material but each student will contribute to the general discussion of the issue and text(s).

Course Learning Outcomes (Learners will be able to):
Deepen their competency in Religious Heritage: Scripture: Drawing the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in Scripture into active engagement with emerging challenges.
In this course, students will be able to:
• Analyze biblical texts, mostly from the Hebrew Bible but also from the New Testament, in which some form of food plays a key role. They will become more alert to how important such a subject was in the Bible and the Ancient Near East.
• Practice the basic exegetical tools learned so far, such as close reading of biblical texts using multiple translations and own translation.
• Become more attuned with elements we often take for granted, such as abundance on our table. Recognize this is not always the case today.
• Become more alert to the great differences in food distribution and consumption in our world, including waste.
• Through analysis of diverse texts, students will recognize different theologies within the Bible (for example, Deuteronomy, Daniel, Mark or Paul do not say the same about God).
• Hopefully, they will enjoy looking at their Bibles from another perspective than the usual ones (e.g., Pentateuch or lectionary readings).

Strategies for Learning:
• Weekly close reading in several translations, or translation for those with biblical language skills, and analysis of a biblical text, mostly from the Hebrew Bible but also from the NT.
• Reading in English (or other language) of additional biblical texts for comparison or complementarity.
• Critical reading of secondary literature, including one presentation in class.
• Presentation of a particular project.

Assessment (Course Requirements):
Satisfactory completion of all course assignments is required to insure a passing grade in this course:
• **Attendance and Active Class Participation**: Consistent class attendance and participation are required of all persons taking the course for credit. Each participant is expected to engage in discussions, pose questions, and make informed comments in class.

• **Reading Respondent**: All participants will have one (1) opportunity to lead the class in a discussion of the reading materials. Participants are expected to present a brief summary of key points in the assigned readings by evaluating how the methodologies utilized by the author(s) assist (or does not) the author(s) in engaging with issues of ideology, poverty, and other issues of importance when dealing with nourishment. A critique of the reading materials that indicate the strengths and weakness of the argument in the readings with at least two critical questions generated by these readings will also be required. This assignment will be submitted in writing on the same day as its oral presentation.

• **Project**: Participants will craft a project that demonstrates an in-depth examination and application of the materials covered in the course. The course project integrates the topics and materials of the course with the participant’s individual vocational, ministerial, and/or academic goals. The contents of the project are primarily in the hands of the participant, but each person is required to consult with the instructor in order to receive approval on the project.

  The project must include: an exegesis of a text(s) of your choice (excluding texts studied in class; a list of suggested texts will be provided), an analysis of the various motifs and themes in your selected passage(s), and an examination of its theology.

  These projects may include (but are not limited to):
  - an exegesis paper (around 7,000 words maximum with a section on hermeneutics)
  - an audiovisual project
  - creative writing and/or historical fiction
  - developing a Bible Study for your congregation

• **Presentation of Projects**: At the end of the semester participants will present their work in progress on their final projects. Participants should divide their time to include both a presentation of the project and a class discussion in order to receive feedback on how to improve their work. In addition, participants are encouraged to provide the class with presentation aids in order to illuminate and bring clarity to the project and discussion, either through a PowerPoint presentation, handouts, or other materials. Final projects are due **May 12** in electronic format.

• **Assessment**: Students will be graded on the quantity and quality of their class participation (including translation/s of assigned texts), their reading respondent presentation (once in the semester), and their final project.

**Basic Bibliography:**

PLEASE NOTE: More specific bibliography will be presented at a later stage. Since the instructor cannot access electronic materials from JKM library from home abroad, these were selected as general inputs to be used in the course and available already at the library. Students are NOT encouraged to buy all
materials, but first to use the library copies, surf through chapters and journal articles and only buy once acquainted with what is most useful for them.

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<tr>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN# (Required)</th>
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**OTHER SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

| "Did the ancient Israelites drink beer?" | Homan, Michael | BAR 36 (2010) 48-57. |