

BI 338

OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS:  
EXPLORATIONS IN TRAUMA AND BIBLE

SPRING 2021

Mon., 7:00 PM–9:00 PM  
Virtual

Paul K.-K. Cho, Instructor

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OFFICE HOURS: by appointment (email to set up an appointment for a phone or Zoom conversation)

(Note: The best way to contact me is via email. If you do not receive a response within one business day, please feel free to contact me again.)

Course Website: The Blackboard course website is accessible through [www.wesleyseminary.edu/MyWesley](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu/MyWesley). There, students can find this syllabus, course reading materials, and other information.

### Course Description

Exploration of the relevance of trauma to the study of the Bible and of the Bible for a traumatized world through select readings in the Bible and trauma theory.

Any 2 of BI-101, BI-102, BI-171, BI-172 are prerequisite.

(Note: Due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, all class sessions will be conducted online using a variety of tools, including synchronous Zoom sessions during the scheduled class time and asynchronous online discussions. Please see the technical requirements below.)

### Objectives

1. To examine closely and to appreciate select biblical texts through the lens of trauma.
  - a. To demonstrate familiarity with the content and shape of select biblical texts.
  - b. To demonstrate understanding of the trauma studies and its relevance for the composition, transmission, and reception of biblical traditions.
2. To engage critically and practically trauma studies for the study of biblical traditions and the Bible for trauma studies.
  - a. To engage and evaluate various trauma informed approaches to the interpretation of the Bible.
  - b. To discover and communicate how the Bible has and can continue to inform Christian faith and practice, especially as it relates to trauma.

## Requirements

- Attendance and Participation (15%):** Regular preparation of course materials as reflected in class attendance and participation in discussion.
- Class Session and Short Paper (30%):**
  - A class session** (10–15 minutes) on a topic or passage led by students. The topic or passage must be approved by the instructor. Students are encouraged to consider presenting on specific themes or a well-defined passage. Group projects are welcome. **Sign-up for session dates will occur week 2.**
  - A short paper** on the topic or passage (4–6 pages). **Due one week after the class session.**
- Exegetical Paper (40%):** An exegetical paper (10–12 pages) on a passage and topic based on research and the student’s interpretative work.
  - Please consult the methodology as outlined in W. P. Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis* (Louisville: WJK, 2017) or F. Tiffany and S. Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).
  - The paper itself should be an organic whole that presents a critical argument. This means that an issue must be precisely identified, the data accurately surveyed, the different positions fairly and dispassionately set forth, and the preferred interpretation rationally defended.
  - Submit an electronic copy on Blackboard on or before the due date.
  - Due April 26, 2021** (for graduating students) **or May 3, 2021** (for all others).
- Communication Event (15%):** A presentation (10–15 minutes) based on the exegetical paper using creative means to communicate to a non-academic audience. The use of the arts (literary, musical, visual, etc.) is encouraged. Group projects are welcome. Please provide a one-paragraph description of the event introducing the topic and connection to the course. **On April 26 or May 3, 2021.**
- Final course grade will be assigned according to the following scale: A = 93–100; A- = 90–92; B+ = 87–89; B = 83–86; B- = 80–82; C+ = 77–79; C = 73–76; C- = 70–72; F = 0–69

## Wesley Curricular Objectives

Area	Religious Heritage			Cultural Context			Ministerial and Public Leadership			Personal and Spiritual Formation		
<b>Goal</b>	(I) Students will cultivate deep roots in the foundational biblical and theological traditions of the Christian faith			(II) Students will engage diverse cultural contexts sensitively, critically and constructively			(III) Students will hone their own skills for ministry and enable the ministry and leadership of others			(IV) Students will strive toward deeper integration intellectually, morally, emotionally and spiritually		
<b>Objectives</b>	IA	IB	IC	IIA	IIB	IIC	IIIA	IIIB	IIIC	IV A	IV B	IV C
<b>Course Objectives</b>	x	x	x		x				x			
<b>Requirements</b>	123	1234	1234	4	123	4	24		4	1	1	1

## Course Policies

- Participation:** Class attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences will negatively affect the course grade. Please come to class on time. Excessive and repeated tardiness constitutes absence.
- Bible:** Bring your Bible to class.

3. **Computer:** The use of computers and other devices during class is prohibited except for in-class related activities. Violations will be marked as an unexcused absence.
4. **Assignments:** Written assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the due date. Upload an electronic copy of the paper on the class Blackboard site, preferably as a Word file. A 3% deduction will be applied for every weekday that the paper is late. Extensions are granted only because of emergencies and must be requested in writing in advance of the due date.
5. **Writing:** Students are encouraged to avail themselves of the services of the Writing Center. For more information, contact Rev. Raedorah C. Stewart, the Director of the Writing Center (tel: 202-885-8671; email: [writingcenter@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:writingcenter@wesleyseminary.edu)).
6. **Communication:** The best way to contact the instructor is by email at [pcho@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:pcho@wesleyseminary.edu). If the instructor does not respond within one business day, you may send him another email.

### **Institutional Policies**

1. **Accommodations:** Once admitted to Wesley, students needing accommodations must communicate with the Associate Dean for Community Life. Students will submit to the Office of Community Life relevant, current documentation from a qualified professional, which will be evaluated by a consultant with a degree in special education. All accommodations for classes are made by the Office of Community life on behalf of the student. Please see our [page on Disability Accommodations for more information](#).
2. **Academic Integrity:** The rules governing academic integrity at the Seminary (see *Wesley Theological Seminary Catalog 2020-2021*, pp. 129-30) will be strictly observed. Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on exams, plagiarism) will not be tolerated under any circumstance and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The Faculty regards the following as forms of academic dishonesty: copying from another's paper; giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination; using unauthorized material during an examination; and borrowing and presenting as one's own (i.e., without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.
3. **Communication:** The Seminary considers your Wesley email account an official means of communicating with students. Blackboard accounts are also linked to your Wesley email. Please check your Wesley account regularly or have it forwarded to another account.
4. **Respectful Language:** The Seminary expects course discussion and written work to employ language that respects the equal dignity and worth of all human beings. In particular, linguistic sexism and racism are to be avoided.
5. **SafeAssign:** You may be asked to submit one or more of your writing assignments to Blackboard's SafeAssign plagiarism prevention service. Assignment content will be checked against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other Wesley Theological Seminary students for common or borrowed content. SafeAssign generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in the submitted paper. The report may be submitted directly to the instructor or the instructor may elect to have students submit initial drafts through SafeAssign so that you will receive the report allowing the opportunity to adjust and ensure that all source material has been properly cited.

## Technical Requirements

### Microsoft Windows

- Windows 8 or 10
- Intel Core i5 or higher or AMD equivalent
- At least 16GB of free storage space

### Mac OS/X

- OS/XMac OS X 10.14 or newer
- Intel processor and at least 4 GB of RAM

### All Systems

- Up-to-date browser: Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Edge ([click here for Blackboard browser checker](#))
- Up-to-date PDF reader ([Adobe](#) or [Foxit](#))
- Up-to-date version of [Adobe Flash Player](#)
- Up-to-date video player:
  - Windows Media player or
  - [VideoLAN VLC media player](#)
- Up-to-date Word processor and presentation package ([Wesley Theological Seminary offers free Office 365 Basic for students click here for instructions on how to download](#))
- High speed internet connection
- Students should all have a web cam and microphone. USB headset and microphone are ideal for course meetings.

## Required Texts

1. A Study Bible.  
Recommended translations and annotated editions include
  - NRSV. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, 3d augmented ed. Ed. M. D. Coogan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
  - NRSV. *The Harper Collins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books with Concordance*. Eds. H. W. Attridge, W. A. Meeks, and J. M. Bassler. San Francisco: Harper, 2006.
  - NJPS. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Eds. A. Berlin and M. Brettler. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
2. Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
3. Boase, Elizabeth and Christopher G. Frechette. *Bible through the Lens of Trauma*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.
4. Some required reading assignments (marked in the calendar with an \*) will be made available on Blackboard.
5. Other required reading assignments (marked in the calendar with a #) will be available through the library, either as a reserve item, online, or in the reference section.

## Recommended Reading

- Alexander, Jeffrey C. *Trauma: A Social Theory*. London: Polity, 2012.
- Carr, David M. *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Felman, Shoshana. *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Janoff-Bulman, Ronnie. *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma*. New York: The Free Press, 1992.
- Janzen, David. *Trauma and the Failure of History: Kings, Lamentations, and the Destruction of Jerusalem*. Atlanta: SBL, 2019.
- Kelle, Brad E. *The Bible and Moral Injury: Reading Scripture Alongside War's Unseen Wounds*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2020.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Linafelt, Tod. *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament, and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- O'Connor, Kathleen M. *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012.
- Rambo, Shelley. *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010.
- van der Kolk, Bessel A. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York: Viking, 2014.

### Course Calendar

\*Calendar may be adjusted as necessary throughout the semester.

	Class Date	Primary Text	Secondary Reading		Topic
			1), 2), #) = Required Reading. * = available through Blackboard (OR) = optional reading # = on reserve at the library		
1	1/25		1) *Briere and Scott, "What Is Trauma?" 9-23. 2) *Garber, "Trauma and Biblical Studies," 24-44.  _____ (OR) *Briere, Scott, and Jones, "The Effects of Trauma," 25-61.		<i>introductory remarks; what is trauma?</i>
2	2/1	Gen 1:1-2:4a	1) Frechette & Boase, "Defining 'Trauma' as a Useful Lens for Biblical Interpretation," 1-23.		<i>traumatic beginning of creation</i>

			<p>2) *Becker, “‘Trauma Studies’ and Exegesis: Challenges, Limits and Prospects,” 15-29.</p> <p>3) *Cho, “The Sea Myth and Creation,” 67-69, 76-87.</p> <hr/> <p>(OR) *Albertz, “Israel in the Exilic Period,” 70-111.</p>		
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3	2/8	Gen 29-30, 34	<p>1) Herman, <i>Trauma and Recovery</i>, 7-32.</p> <p>2) *Brown, “Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma,” 100-112.</p> <p>3) *Claassens, “Reading Trauma Narratives: Insidious Trauma in the Story of Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah and Margaret Atwood’s <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i>,” 10-31.</p> <p>4) *Claassens, “Vulnerable Bodies: The Rape of Dinah (Genesis 34) and the Stalking of Middle Sister, <i>Milkman</i> (Anna Burns),” 98-126.</p> <hr/> <p>(OR) Jones, <i>Trauma and Grace</i>.</p>		<i>trauma and gender</i>
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4	2/15	2 Kings 21-25 (also read other passages discussed in Janzen’s article);	<p>1) *Alexander, “Cultural Trauma: A Social Theory,” 6-30.</p> <p>2) *Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 253-64 (esp. IX)</p> <p>3) *Janzen, “Kings, the Deuteronomistic History, and the Creation of History and Collective Trauma,” 41-69.</p> <p>4) Herman, <i>Trauma and Recovery</i>, 33-50.</p> <hr/> <p>(OR) LaCapra, <i>Writing History, Writing Trauma</i>.</p> <p>(OR) Janzen, “Claimed and Unclaimed Experience: Problematic Readings of Trauma in the Hebrew Bible,” 163-85.</p> <p>(OR) Caruth, <i>Literature in the Ashes of History</i>.</p>		<i>collective trauma; biblical historiography (DtrH)</i>
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5	2/22	Judges 13-16	<p>1) *Cho, “Samson Will Be Redeemer.”</p>		
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			<p>2) *Junior &amp; Schipper, <i>Black Samson</i>, 1-22.</p> <p>3) Herman, <i>Trauma and Recovery</i>, 51-73.</p> <hr/> <p>(OR) *Eyerman, "Social theory and trauma," 41-53.</p>		<p><i>collective trauma;</i> <i>biblical historiography (DtrH);</i></p>
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			READING WEEK		
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6	3/8	Lamentations	<p>1) *Dobbs-Allsopp, <i>Lamentations</i>, 1-48.</p> <p>2) *Linafelt, <i>Surviving Lamentations</i>, 35-61.</p> <p>3) Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," 57-74.</p> <p>4) Herman, <i>Trauma and Recovery</i>, 74-95.</p> <hr/> <p>(OR) Rambo, <i>Spirit and Trauma</i>, (OR) Boase, "The Traumatized Body: Communal Trauma and Somatization in Lamentations," 193-209.</p>		<p><i>testimony and bearing witness</i></p>
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7	3/15	Isaiah 1–55 (esp. 5-12, 24-27, 37-38, 39-45, 49, 52-53, 55)	<p>1)*Caruth, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History (Freund, <i>Moses and Monotheism</i>)," 10-24.</p> <p>2) *Frechette, "Daughter Babylon Raped and Bereaved (Isaiah 47): Symbolic Violence and Meaning-Making in Recovery from Trauma," 67-83 in Boase &amp; Frechette, <i>Bible through the Lens of Trauma</i>.</p> <p>3) Markl, "The Babylonian Exile as the Birth Trauma of Monotheism," 1-25.</p> <p>4) Herman 133-54.</p> <hr/> <p>Berges, <i>The Book of Isaiah</i>.</p>		<p><i>memory</i></p>
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8	3/22	Isaiah 56-66 (esp. 56, 60-62, 65-66)	<p>1) *Frechette, "Isaiah as Resilience Narrative."</p> <p>2) Herman, <i>Trauma and Recovery</i>, 155-74.</p>		<p><i>resilience</i></p>
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			<p>_____</p> <p>(OR) *Frechette, "The Old Testament as Controlled Substance: How Insights from Trauma Studies Reveal Healing Capacities in Potentially Harmful Texts," 20-34.</p>		
9	3/29	Psalms (esp. 1, 10, 18, 74, 79, 89, 137)	<p>1) *Wilson, "Shape of Psalm," 129-42</p> <p>2) *Frechette, "Destroying the Internalized Perpetrator: A Healing Function of the Violent Language</p> <p>3) *Hopkins and Koppel. "Lament Psalms through the Lens of Trauma: Psalms 74, 79, and 137," 7-31.</p> <p>4) Strawn, "Trauma, Psalmic Discourse, and Authentic Happiness," 143-60 in Boase &amp; Frechette, <i>Bible through the Lens of Trauma</i>. against Enemies in the Psalms," 71-84.</p> <p>5) Herman, <i>Trauma and Recovery</i>, 175-95.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(OR) *Cho, "Sermon: Meditating on the Psalms."</p>		<i>from lament to praise?</i>
10	4/5	Job	<p>1) Janoff-Bulman, <i>Shattered Assumptions</i>, 3-25, 49-69.</p> <p>2) *Cho, "Suicide in Job," 208-34.</p> <p>3) *West, "Between Text and Trauma: Reading Job with People Living with HIV," 209-30 in Boase &amp; Frechette, <i>Bible through the Lens of Trauma</i>.</p> <p>4) Herman, <i>Trauma and Recovery</i>, 196-236.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(OR) *Cho, "Integrity of Job 1," 230-51.</p> <p>(OR) *Cho, "Job 2 and 42:7-10 as Literary Bridge and Theological Pivot," 857-77.</p>		<i>shattered assumptions</i>
11	4/12	Job	<p>1) *van der Kolk, "Looking into the Brain: The Neuroscience Revolution," 39-47.</p>		<i>creation, again; language</i>



			2) *Felman, "A Ghost in the House of Justice: Death and the Language of the Law," 351-86. 3) *Fishbane, "A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," 151-67.		
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12	4/19		TBA		<i>retrospective</i>
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13	4/26		Communication Event		
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14	5/3		Communication Event		
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