

Methods of Reading the Bible (TMM1047)

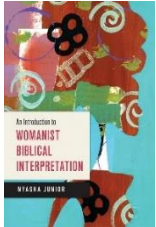
Common Awards

Level 4 Module

Diversifying the Curriculum



Books



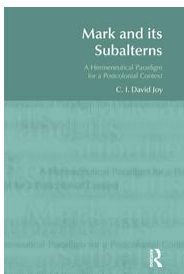
Junior, Nyasha (2015) *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Content:

This book provides a brief introduction to 'Womanist' biblical interpretation, a method born out of the African-American female experience and context. Part 1 of this book outlines the history behind the development of this biblical method, whilst Part 2 goes into further detail about what exactly this method entails. Chapter 6: 'Womanist Biblical Interpretation' specifically outlines the pioneering African-American women who founded this method and details the huge impact that womanism has had on the field of biblical studies.

Author:

Nyasha Junior is an African-American female biblical scholar.



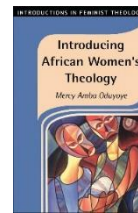
Joy, David (2014) *Mark and its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context*. Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing.

Content:

This book introduces students to postcolonial methods of reading the Bible. Using the book of Mark as an example, particular attention is given to women, the marginalized, poor and oppressed. In Chapter 2: 'Hermeneutics: Indian Methods – Postcolonial Biblical Hermeneutics' Joy outlines in detail what it means to read the Bible from a postcolonial Indian perspective.

Author:

David Joy is an ordained presbyter of the Church of South India and is currently teaching New Testament at the United Theological College in Bangalore.



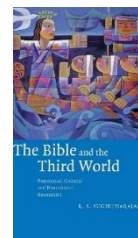
Oduyoye, Mercy (2001) *Introducing African Women's Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Content:

This book constructs a method specifically for African women to read the Bible. In Chapter 1: 'Presenting the Study', Oduyoye outlines the great need for African women to have a specific and unique method for interpreting the Bible from their context and experiences. In Chapter 2: 'Significant Contexts of African Women's Theology' Oduyoye then outlines the specific interpretive interests of African women that arise from the context of Africa.

Author:

Mercy Oduyoye is a Ghanaian scholar and founder of the Circle of Concerned African Theologians in Ghana in 1987.



Sugirtharajah, Rasiah S. (2001) *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Content:

In this book Sugirtharajah maps the Bible's influence on the Third World from pre-colonial times through to the present postcolonial era.

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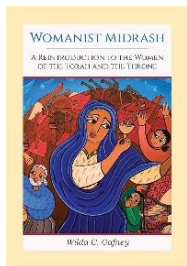
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Chapter 6: 'Desperately Seeking the Indigene: Nativism And Vernacular Hermeneutics' (173-174) outlines the method employed by colonized and marginalized people when reading the Bible, called 'vernacular hermeneutics'. This method of reading the Bible is unique to the Third World and prioritizes the languages, idioms and culture of the local people.

Author:

Born in Sri Lanka, Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah is a biblical hermeneuticist and an Emeritus professor at the University of Birmingham.



Gafney, Wil C. (2016) *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

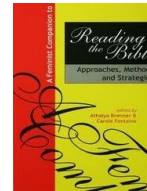
Content:

In this book, Gafney outlines her womanist Midrash interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, rooted in the Hebrew language and her experience of preaching as an African-American woman. Chapter 1: 'Women of the Torah and the Throne' is a great introduction to Gafney's unique and creative methodology to engaging with the Hebrew Bible.

Author:

Wil Gafney is an African-American Hebrew scholar based in the US.

Book Chapters



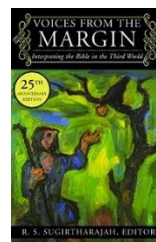
Kwok, Pui-Lan (1997) 'Overlapping Communities and Multicultural Hermeneutics.' In: Brenner, Athalya and Fontaine, Carole (eds.) *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Content:

In the chapter entitled 'Overlapping Communities and Multicultural Hermeneutics' Kwok addresses the importance of using multicultural methods when studying the bible. Kwok uses the Syro-Phoenician woman in Mark 7:25-30 and Matthew 15:21-28 as an example to show the richness that emerges from the text when using a multicultural approach.

Author:

Kwok Pui-Lan a Hong Kong-born feminist theologian who lives in the US.



Havea, Jione (2016) 'Reading Islandly.' In: Sugirtharajah, Rasiah S. (ed.) *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World, 25th Anniversary Edition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Content:

In this short 9-page article, Havea explores what it looks like to read the bible from an Islander perspective. Moving beyond "'Westoxification' or put islandly, in Samoan, fia-pâlagi (wannabe white)" modes of biblical interpretation, Havea outlines the Islander worldviews (on Islander space, sea, land and borders) that underpin

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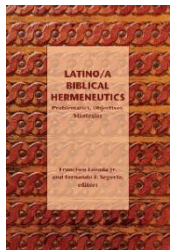
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the variety of methods of biblical interpretation originating from a diverse Islander context.

Author:

Jione Havea is a native male pastor (Methodist Church in Tonga) and research fellow with Trinity Methodist Theological College, Aotearoa).



García-Alfonso, Cristina (2014) 'Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics, Problematic, Objectives, Strategies.' In: Lozada, Francisco and Segovia, Fernando F. (eds.) *Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics: Problematics, Objectives, Strategies*.

Atlanta, GA: SBL Press.

Content:

In this chapter García-Alfonso reflects on her identity as a Latina/Cuban woman and explores how it shapes her approach to reading the Bible. Informed by her upbringing in Cuba, 'survival' *resolviendo* (152), emotions and the body become important hermeneutical lenses through which to encounter the Hebrew Bible.

Author: Cristina García-Alfonso is a Latina/Cuban Hebrew Bible Scholar living in the US.

Podcasts

[A Biblical and Palestinian Theology of the Land with Munther Isaac \(Palestinian Biblical Scholar\) 36:31](#)



Content:

Drawing on his upbringing as a Palestinian Christian in Bethlehem, Isaac talks about his latest book *From Land*

to Lands (2015) – available now on the HUB. In this book Isaac takes a thematic approach to reading the Bible, by exploring both the Old and New Testament through the themes of land, occupation, reconciliation and peace-making, which are issues pertinent to the Palestinian context.

Speaker:

Munther Banayout Isaac is Academic Dean and Professor of Biblical Studies at Bethlehem Bible College in Bethlehem, Palestine.

[Beyond the Womanist Classroom: Season 1, Episode 1 'Introduction to Womanism and Biblical Interpretation'](#)



Content:

In this 30-minute podcast Mitzi Smith outlines the 4-part definition of womanist biblical interpretation and outlines its origins within Alice Walker's novel *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1983). Smith also highlights the intersectional approach that Black African-American women take when reading the Bible, and its inextricable link to justice.

Speaker:

Mitzi J. Smith is an African-American biblical scholar and Michael Willett Newheart is an American biblical scholar. Both are based in the US.

Videos

[Interpreting the Bible with an African Mindset: An Interview with Andrew Mbuvi \(57:14\)](#)



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Content:

In this compelling interview Mbuvi is very open and honest about how his biblical interpretation is informed both by his upbringing in Kenya, and his experience of living in the US. The section entitled 'Approved Methodologies' specifically dispels the myth that Euro-North American Biblical interpretation is neutral, 'objective' or universal and details the importance of context in all biblical interpretive methods.

Speaker:

Andrew Mbuvi is a Kenyan biblical scholar now based in the US.

[Revd Dr Oral Thomas Resistance
Hermeneutics \(16:22\)](#)



Content:

In this short 16-minute presentation, Thomas briefly explains Caribbean resistance hermeneutics and outlines the four hermeneutical questions that this method asks when approaching the Bible. Thomas then gives a practical example of what this method looks like by using an example from Amos 5:21-24.

Speaker:

Oral A. W. Thomas is President/Dean of the United Theological College of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.

Journal Articles

[Hall-Smith, Beverley M. \(2023\). 'A Māori woman encounters the "strange woman" in Proverbs 1–9.' *Anglican journal of theology in Aotearoa and Oceania* 2\(1\): 40-50.](#)



Content:

In this short 10-page article available [here](#), Hall-Smith explores what it might look like to read 'the strange woman' in Proverbs 1-9 (who is often portrayed as a sexual deviant in scholarship) from an indigenous female Māori perspective. Drawing from: (1) the personal experience of her mother Ani, who was ostracized within the Māori community; (2) *te ao Māori* (the Māori worldview) in which female sexuality is celebrated as a 'divine gift'; and (3) the personal stories of admirable post-colonial Māori women, Hall-Smith argues that Proverbs in 1-9 reflects a powerful sexually autonomous woman who challenges patriarchy.

Author:

Beverley Moana Hall-Smith is the first female Māori biblical scholar (of Te Rarawa and Ngāpuhi descent) and is based in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

[Adamo, David T. \(2015\) 'What is African biblical hermeneutics?' *Black theology* 13\(1\): 59-72.](#)



Content:

In this short article David Adamo defines African hermeneutics as "the principle of interpretation of the Bible for transformation in Africa" (62). He then outlines the purpose, approach, aims and legitimacy of African hermeneutics. Adamo explains this approach in a way that is really accessible for Level 4 students.

Author:

David Tuesday Adamo is Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies in Kogi State University, Nigeria.