

Introduction to an Old Testament Book (TMM1607)

Common Awards



Level 4 Module

Diversifying the Curriculum

Books



Dharamraj, Havilah (2019) *Ruth: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary*. Carlisle: Langham Publishing.

Content:

This innovative commentary explores the book of Ruth from a South Asian perspective. In this book Dharamraj explores the authorship, dating, canonical position, historicity, genre, purpose and outline of the book of Ruth in a concise and clear way for students to understand. She then carries out an in-depth close exegetical commentary on each chapter of the book of Ruth, relating it to the South Asian (Indian) context.

Author:

Havilah Dharamraj is an Indian Old Testament scholar based at the South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore, India.



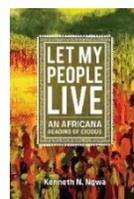
Havea, Jione (2021) *Losing Ground: Reading Ruth in the Pacific*. London: SCM Press.

Content:

Informed by Pasifika Bible studies (PBS) conducted in a wide range of Pasifika communities, this book explores how the dominant Western interpretive boundaries of the book of Ruth can be extended by reading *with* “ordinary people” who “have not undertaken western formal or theological education”. Framed by the overall theme of climate change, Havea explores what it can look like to read the book of Ruth with indigenous communities and through the Pasifika practice of *Talanoa* (an approach that breaks social and educational barriers by taking orality and storytelling seriously).

Author:

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



Ngwa, Kenneth N. (2022) *Let My People Live: An African Reading of Exodus*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Content:

In this book, Ngwa explores the book of Exodus through a postcolonial African lens. Through this lens Ngwa highlights the Israelites’ triple experience of being “erased, marginalised/alienated and confined/singularised” (15) throughout the book of Exodus. This African interpretation of Exodus takes African experiences and realities seriously. In the Introduction Ngwa outlines his approach to reading Exodus that is not just about interpreting the text, but also about “hermeneutics as defiance and resistance against erasure – colonial, racist, gendering, ecological, or imperial” (29).

Author:

Kenneth N. Ngwa is a Cameroonian biblical scholar based at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in the US.

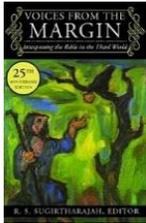
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Vaka'uta, Nasili (2016) 'Voices of the Whenua: Engaging 1 Kings 21 through a Māori Lens.' In: Sugirtharajah Rasiah S. (ed.) *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World, 25th Anniversary Edition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

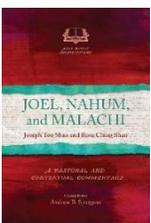
Books.

Content:

In this very short and accessible 6-page chapter Vaka'uta draws on his home context of Aotearoa (New Zealand) to explore what it can look like to read 1 Kings 21 from a Māori perspective. Framed within the multifaceted Māori concept of *whenua* (which references the land and a powerful living female intergenerational earth mother), Nasili Vaka'uta presents a reading of 1 Kings 21 that moves away from dominant Eurocentric methods of interpretation and is rooted in the "people on the ground" in Oceania.

Author:

Nasili Vaka'uta is a Tongan scholar and Principal of Trinity Methodist Theological College in Auckland, Aotearoa.



Shao, Joseph T. and Shao, Rosa C. (2021) *Joel, Nahum, and Malachi: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary*. Carlisle: Langham Publishing.

Content:

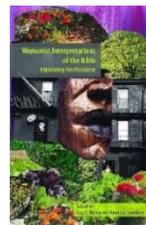
This concise book written by husband-and-wife Joseph T. Shao and Rosa C. Shao, explores the books of Joel, Nahum and Malachi from an Asian (Filipino) perspective. Shao and Shao explore the authorship, date, historical context and main theological themes contained within these books, before conducting an in-depth exegetical

study of each book. They also explore the connections that exist between these books and the New Testament text.

Authors:

Joseph T. Shao and Rosa C. Shao are both Asian scholars based at the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines, Manila.

Book Chapters



Anderson, Cheryl B. (2016) 'The Song of Songs: Redeeming Gender Constructions in the Age of Aids.' In: Gay, Bryon L. and Lovelace, Vanessa (eds.) *Womanist Interpretations of the Bible: Expanding the Discourse*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press.

Content:

This chapter offers a womanist interpretation of the Songs of Songs that challenges the historical response of the church to HIV in America. This past response has historically condemned homosexual and premarital sex and has thus left young people at risk of contracting HIV (who statistically are already sexually active). In her womanist interpretation Anderson highlights the fact that the "female lover" [in Song of Songs] is an active sexual participant and not a passive one and that "procreation is not the purpose of their encounters" (82). Anderson argues therefore that Song of Songs offers a liberative model for how the church should respond to HIV in a way that teaches young people to embrace their sexuality and their God given sexual desires whilst educating them effectively about contraception.

Author:

Cheryl Anderson is an African-American woman and an Old Testament professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

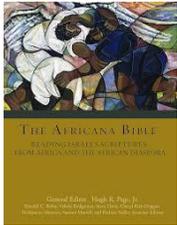
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Franklin, Naomi P. (2024) 'Proverbs.' In: Bridgeman Valerie, et al. (eds) *The Africana Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Content:

This short 6-page chapter offers an insight into the book of Proverbs from a womanist perspective. By adjusting the Hebrew translations of 'virtuous' to 'courageous' and 'wife' to 'woman', Franklin offers a womanist reading of the woman in Proverbs 31 that African-American women struggling in America can relate to. Franklin asks new and exciting questions of the woman in Proverbs 31 that puts into question her status as a wealthy, high status woman, and introduces the possibility that she may have been an ordinary mum struggling to feed her children. This chapter will give students a whole new perspective on the proverbs 31 woman and offers a rich and pertinent reading through a female African-American lens.

Author:

Naomi P. Franklin is an African-American female scholar of the Hebrew Bible based at Virginia Union University in the US.



Lee, Archie C. C. (2008) 'Engaging Lamentations and *The Lament for the South: A Cross-Textual Reading*.' In: Mandolfo, Carleen., and Lee, Nancy. C. (eds) *Lamentations in Ancient and Contemporary Cultural Contexts*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press.

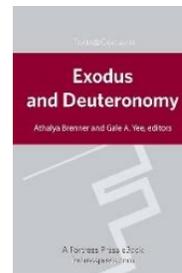
Content:

In this chapter Lee presents a cross-textual reading of the book of Lamentations that draws parallels with the

historical painful lived experiences of the Chinese people. By placing Lamentations in conversation with the literary poem *The Lament for the South* (513-81) written by Yu Xin, Lee explores how the book of Lamentations can be read from a Chinese perspective.

Author:

Archie C. C. Lee is a Chinese professor in the Religion department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, China.



Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. (2012) 'How Liberating Is the Exodus and for Whom? Deconstructing Exodus Motifs in Scripture, Literature, and Life.' In: Brenner, Athalya and Yee, Gale. A. (eds) *Exodus and Deuteronomy*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Content:

In this chapter Kirk-Duggan offers an African-American interpretation of the book of Exodus that questions whether it is a purely liberative text. By highlighting the "divine scapegoating of Pharaoh and the marginalization and manipulation of the Egyptians in response to the hope and deliverance of Israel" (26), this chapter encourages students to read Exodus through a nuanced lens that problematises the concept of 'liberation'.

Author:

Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan is an African-American womanist scholar and Professor of Women's Studies at Shaw University Divinity School, US.

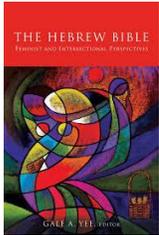
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Lovelace, Vanessa (2018) 'Intersections of Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, and Nation.' In: Yee Gale. A. (ed) *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspective*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

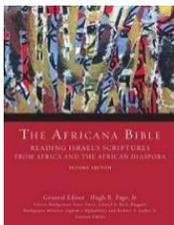
Content:

In this chapter, Lovelace explores the Deuteronomistic Narrative/History of the Hebrew Bible (comprising the books: Deuteronomy and Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) from modern day feminist and intersectional perspectives. Drawing on themes of identity, belonging and land possession, this chapter will introduce students to an intersectional feminist approach to the Hebrew Bible.

Author:

Vanessa Lovelace is an African-American Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

Edited Volumes



Bridgeman, Valerie et al. (2024) *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

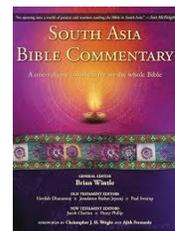
Content:

This amazing new commentary, containing a wide variety of contributions from authors all over the African continent, explores the Old Testament from a variety of African perspectives. With individual chapters on each book of the Old Testament, split into the helpful sections of 'Torah', 'Prophets' and 'Writings', this volume has been highly recommended and requested by TEIs. It is an invaluable resource that will help Level 4 students to

encounter the Old Testament through African and African diasporic perspectives and epistemologies.

Editor:

Valerie Bridgeman is an African-American woman and Associate Professor of Homiletics and Hebrew Bible at Methodist Theological School of Ohio, USA.



Wintle, Brian et al. (2015) *South Asia Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic.

Content:

This volume contains a collection of works written exclusively by South Asian scholars. It explores every book of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation from the cultural context of South Asia. Dharamraj specifically writes a short accessible section entitled Introduction to the Old Testament where she outlines an overview of all the sections within the Old Testament canon. After this, a brief overview of each Old Testament book is given, followed by a detailed verse by verse exegetical commentary.

Editors:

Brian Wintle was a British born theologian who lived most of his life in India and taught at the Faculty of the Union Biblical Seminary.

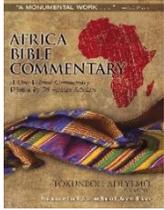
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Adeyemo, Tokunboh (2010) *Africa Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic.

Content:

This volume, written by over 70 African biblical scholars contains succinct introductions to every book of the Old Testament and “section by section detailed exegesis... as seen through the eyes of African scholars” (ix). This up-to-date volume is also interspersed with specialist articles that relate portions of the Old Testament to the specific socio-political issues affecting the continent of Africa such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, war etc.

Editor:

Tokunboh Adeyemo was a Nigerian scholar who served as the General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa.

Videos

[A Feminist Reading of Scriptures: Isaiah 55 with Dr Mercedes García Bachmann \(13:50\)](#)



Content:

In this short 14-minute video, Mercedes García Bachmann walks students through the practical steps of how to read a text from a feminist perspective. Using Isaiah 55 as an example, Bachmann stresses the importance of students reflecting on their positionality before interpreting Scripture, as all interpretation is contextual. She also teaches students to notice the presence/absence of women within the biblical text in order to promote gender justice and equality.

Speaker:

Mercedes García Bachmann is a pastor in the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and an Old Testament lecture based in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

[Introduction to Losing Ground: Reading Ruth in the Pacific \(2001\) by Jione Havea \(34:31\)](#)



Content:

In this 35-minute video Havea introduces his book *Losing Ground* (2001). It begins with Havea sharing his commitment and passion for giving a voice to native Indigenous and student voices in Oceania, before explaining the practicalities behind how he conducted the 20 Pasifika Bible studies (PBS) that are used in this book. Havea also explores the 2-part meaning behind the title of the book ‘Losing Ground’, that both refers to the ‘ground’ that Oceania lost historically to the colonial project, and the ‘ground’ that the colonial project is now losing due to upcoming native and indigenous interpretations of the Bible.

Speaker:

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

Journal Articles

[Ryu, Chesung J. \(2009\) ‘Silence as Resistance: A Postcolonial Reading of the Silence of Jonah in Jonah 4.1-11.’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34\(2\): 195-218.](#)



Content:

This article offers a postcolonial reading of Jonah 4 that takes seriously the pain and suffering that the Israelites

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faced at the hands of the Ninevites. Ryu argues that dominant Western interpretations of this passage have not taken this injustice seriously in favour of a theology that God has a universalised love for everyone (both Ninevah and the Israelites). By challenging the negative portrayal of Jonah for being angry at God, and his silence at the end of the passage as his agreement with God's decision, this article offers a postcolonial reading of the text that argues Jonah's anger was justified in light of their colonial suffering, and that his silence at the end of the book was in fact an act of resistance against God's unjust decision.

Author:

Chesung Justin Ryu is a postcolonial Korean scholar.

Cuéllar, Gregory L. (2015) 'J. Severino Croatto's "Rereading of Empire in Isaiah 47".' *Biblical Interpretation* 23(2): 222-247.



Content:

Using Croatto's interpretation of Isaiah 47 in his Spanish commentary (entitled 'Isaías: La palabra profética y su relectura hermenéutica, Vol 2: 40-55: La liberación es posible' [Isaiah: The Prophetic Word and Its Hermeneutical Rereading, Vol 2: 40-55: Liberation is Possible]) as a case study, this article demonstrates the significant contribution that Latin American scholar José Severino Croatto has made to biblical scholarship. Although this article in its entirety may be better suited to Level 5 students and above (as it is 40 pages long and contains quite detailed exegesis of Isaiah 47), the first 8 pages (222-230) will be accessible to Level 4 students. These pages introduce students to Croatto as a key Argentinian Latin American scholar and show how reading the Bible through the lens of empire, power and

oppression can significantly impact how we read the biblical text.

Author:

Gregory L. Cuéllar is Latin-American biblical scholar based in the US.

Masenya, Madipoane (1997) 'Proverbs 31: 10-31 in a South African context: A reading for the liberation of African (Northern Sotho) women.' *Semeia* (78): 55.



Content:

In this article Masenya offers a *Bosadi* (Womanhood) reading of the Proverbs 31 woman that is committed to the lived experiences of South African and African (Northern Soho) women. It begins by giving an overview of the four main issues affecting African women ("racism, classism, sexism and the African culture" (56)), before exploring how the 'Woman of Worth' in Proverbs 31 can provide *some partially* "liberating possibilities for an African Woman in South Africa" (64).

Author:

Madipoane Masenya (Ngwan'a Mphahlele) is Professor of Old Testament Studies in the Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies at the University of South Africa, Pretoria.