

Signature Assignment for TRS # 1 & 3

Course: 211 Old Testament
Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Winter
Assignment Title: “Troubling Theological Texts”
Assignment ID: (To be assigned)

Outcomes to be Assessed: TRS/BA/1 - Articulate the basic doctrines, traditions, and scriptural interpretations of the Church.

TRS/BA/3 - Develop attitudes and skills necessary for ecumenical, interreligious, intercultural, and secular dialogue in mission.

Assignment Description: Drawing from our study of Hebrew Scripture, this assignment challenges you to engage with a “troubling” theological text. One of the most common questions asked of Christians is how they can call the Bible sacred, when it contains stories that are violent and disturbing. In order to clearly articulate the basic doctrines, traditions, and scriptural interpretations of the Church (TRS/BA/1), you will first write a paper in which you analyze one of these difficult stories. Then, you will present the results of your research to the class—thereby practicing skills that are necessary for ecumenical, interreligious, intercultural, and secular dialogue in mission (TRS/BA/3).

Your research paper should be approximately eight pages in length and must employ a minimum of four scholarly sources. Your presentation should be no longer than ten minutes in length and must use at least five Powerpoint slides. The paper and presentation should be organized as follows:

- (1) State the problem
(Why is this text so troubling?)
- (2) Explain the cultural context
(How was this text understood when it was written?)
- (3) Explain the theological context
(How ought this text to be understood now?)
- (4) Conclusion
(Restate the problem and summarize what you learned)

Keep in mind that your goal is not to “solve” the issue, but to engage with a difficult topic (through research) and to develop skills to share what you have learned with others (through presenting your findings to the class).

Evaluation Criteria:

The project will be evaluated based on the following criteria. See the attached rubrics for further details.

Paper (Written Communication VALUE Rubric)

1. Context and Purpose for Writing: Students will demonstrate awareness of the implied audience for this project, namely, a person who is struggling to engage with a troubling theological text.
2. Content Development: Students will explore the cultural and theological context behind a troubling theological text.
3. Genre and Disciplinary Conventions: Students will organize their writing by following the instructions provided in the assignment description.
4. Sources and Evidence: Students will engage with at least four scholarly sources.
5. Control of Syntax and Mechanics: Students will utilize language skills to cogently convey information.

Presentation (Oral Communication VALUE Rubric)

1. Organization: Students will organize their presentation by following the instructions provided in the assignment description.
2. Language: Students will utilize language skills to cogently convey information.
3. Delivery: Students will demonstrate the capability to speak clearly and to hold the attention of an audience.
4. Supporting Material: Students will engage their audience with succinct and aesthetically-pleasing Powerpoint slides.
5. Central Message: Students will convey their knowledge of the cultural and theological context behind a troubling theological text.

Formatting:

Use Chicago Style.

Times New Roman 12-point font; double-spaced; 1-inch margins

Possible Topics:

1. Creation and Evolution
2. The Binding of Isaac
3. The Plagues and the Killing of the Firstborn
4. Israel's "Holy War" against the Canaanites
5. Prophets and the Land / Ecological Consciousness