

Mentoring Opportunities for Graduate Students

Navigating the field of biblical studies can be difficult for even the most seasoned scholars, so it comes as no surprise that students of biblical studies who are newer to the field can have an especially difficult time trying to explore various avenues of study and find their niche. While many schools are well equipped to give students the resources they need to thrive in more “traditional” settings, students whose interests go beyond the traditional boundaries of biblical scholarship may find themselves at a loss when it comes to finding guidance through a maze of newer and less traditional approaches. Students can be left feeling as though their differences are irreconcilable and ultimately become frustrated and discouraged.

At the 2012 Annual Meeting, a coalition of program units involved in “non-traditional hermeneutics” (including, but not limited to, Feminist, Womanist, African-American, Asian and Asian-American, LGBT/Queer, Latino/a, Postcolonial, Minoritized criticism, etc.) is finding ways to allow both students and more seasoned scholars to embrace their unique interests by co-sponsoring a double session around the topic of “Difference.” This coalition is working to educate the SBL and mainstream in “alternative hermeneutics.” These two sessions will be split in half to form four “mini-sessions” all centered around a main topic and will include a “state of the field” panel, a session studying a text together, a pedagogy panel, and a session on mentoring students (see full program below).

This final session, “Encouraging Hermeneutics of Difference,” will be geared specifically toward mentoring graduate students. Many students interested in non-traditional hermeneutics find it difficult to identify mentors both inside and outside of their own programs, yet they seek further knowledge and development in these areas. This session is designed to facilitate conversation and collaborative opportunities between both new and experienced scholars interested in non-traditional hermeneutics. The session will give participants an opportunity to articulate topics around which graduate students are interested and seeking mentoring and will provide ample time for small group conversations around these topics. Students from both Masters and PhD programs are encouraged to bring particular questions and ideas, including questions about research and writing processes, finding mentor relationships, articulating projects, professional development, and the like. Several established scholars who are known for their work in non-traditional hermeneutics have already agreed to participate in this session in order to begin thinking with graduate students about future work related to their respective areas of study.

If you are interested in finding out more about this exciting session or have questions, the organizers of the session are excited to hear from you. James Hoke, a PhD student in New Testament and Early Christianity at Drew University, can be reached by e-mail at jhoke@drew.edu. Melanie Howard, a PhD student in New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, can be contacted at melanie.howard@ptsem.edu. Lynn Huber, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Elon University and Acting Director of the Elon Center for the Study of Religion, may be reached at lhuber@elon.edu.

Full Program

Difference, part I

State of the Field Panel

Erin Runions, Pomona College, Presiding

Randall Bailey, Interdenominational Theological Center, Panelist (10 min)

Justine Smith, Harvard University, Panelist (10 min)

Francisco Lozada, Brite Divinity School (TCU), Panelist (10 min)

Monica Melanchthon, Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Panelist (10 min)

Ken Stone, Chicago Theological Seminary, Panelist (10 min)

Althea Spencer Miller, Drew University, Panelist (10 min)

Discussion (15 min)

Break (5 min)

Study Together Session (primary texts to be announced)

Jione Havea, Charles Sturt University, Presiding

Althea Spencer Miller, Drew University, Presiding

Discussion (70 min)

Difference, part II

Difference and Pedagogy

Jacqueline Hidalgo, Williams College, Presiding

Steed Davidson, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Panelist (25 min)

Andrew Wilson, Mount Allison University, Panelist (25 min)

Tina Pippin, Agnes Scott College, Panelist (25 min)

Encouraging Hermeneutics of Difference: Mentoring session for graduate students

Lynn Huber, Elon University, Presiding

Melanie Howard, Princeton Theological Seminary, Presiding

James Hoke, Drew University, Presiding

Discussion (75 min)

Confirmed mentors: Margaret Aymer, Michael J. Brown, Lynn Huber, Susan Hysten, Joseph Marchal, Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Tina Pippin, Erin Runions