BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS AND PREACHING SCR 5501
Spring Term 2013

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Introduction

The field of Biblical Interpretation is not only vast and complex, but also foundational to the disciplines of theological study. Accordingly, the purpose of the course on Interpretation is to introduce the student to some of the major issues encountered in the interpretation of the Biblical text. Our goal is to help the student become an accurate and perceptive interpreter of the text so that, in the midst of a postmodern world confused by skepticism as well as moral and cultural relativism, the Scriptures can be proclaimed with clarity and authority.

Course Vision:

This is an introductory course concerning the interpretation of Scripture. The purpose of this course is to develop competence in exegetical method while introducing important tools and concepts and skills.

This course introduces the student to the theory and practice of biblical interpretation. Critical issues are explored including, among other things, the history of biblical interpretation, the qualifications of the Biblical interpreter, pre-understanding, and literary genre. The course also introduces the student to some of the indispensable tools of Bible study. Students are then given the opportunity to sharpen hermeneutical skills through careful analysis of selected biblical passages through the discipline of observation, interpretation, and application.

This course also enables the students to approach biblical texts with an appropriate blend of confidence and humility. There would be confidence that when the methods they have learned are applied to the text. Those methods will open up meaning that will allow God to speak from his word a message that is coherent with the original purpose of the author and with the whole of biblical revelation. There would be humility that the method neither controls nor limits the power of the Holy Spirit to speak through the text. There would be confidence that every exercise of exegesis may produce the joyful surprise of being addressed by God in unexpected ways.

Course Caution

Because this course takes a strongly methodological approach to the interpretation of Scripture the students may discover some of their meaningful and fondly held understandings of the Bible challenged. It is not the purpose of the course to undermine, much less attack, personal faith. It is the conviction of the professor and the experience of most alumni of the course that faith is strengthened by a stronger understanding of and capacity to interpret Scripture with methodological self-awareness. However, such fruits require both the disciplined work expected in this class and the maintenance of an expectant spirit toward the Bible.

COURSE OUTCOMES:

Knowledge

Students who complete this course successfully should:
Understand the significance of hermeneutics

Know the basic methods of biblical interpretation that have been practiced throughout history

Know basic principles of grammatical-historical interpretation that lead interpreters to discover the meaning intended by the biblical author

Know the major genres of scripture and the hermeneutical principles that should be applied to each genre

Know the important tools that may be useful in the study of the biblical text

Know principles that guide modern preachers and teachers in applying biblical truths to our contemporary context

Attitudes

Students who complete this course successfully should:
Appreciate the complexities of the exegetical task
Recognize the importance of sound exegesis
Be more confident in interpreting biblical texts

Skills

Students who complete this course successfully should:
Research cultural and historical background that may shed light upon the biblical text

Prepare word studies that lead the interpreter to understand better the biblical author's usage of special vocabulary significant to the exegetical task.

Determine how the literary context affects the meaning of a text.

Derive timeless truths from the biblical text and show how these should affect the beliefs and behavior of contemporary Christians

Course Requirements

- Students will complete **weekly exegetical exercises** applying the hermeneutical principles covered each session to representative texts (see outline below).
- **Essays.** 2 Essays of 5 pages each on biblical passages incorporating concepts and tools introduced through the class texts and lectures

- **Word Study**: Two biblical words will be studied and presented in the class – two pages long.
- **Final Exam**. The final exam will consist of multiple choice, matching, short answer or essays. The format of the exam is subject to change.

Course Evaluation:

Weekly Exercises and participation:	20%
Essays	20%
Word Study	20%
Final Exam	40%

<u>Academic Integrity</u>

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. This includes buying or submitting a paper written by a third party. All are considered forms of "plagiarism" and a violation of the Seminary's academic integrity policy. Instances of plagiarism may be reported to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include probation, suspension or withdrawal.

The first instance of plagiarism in this course, the student must repeat the assignment. If the student plagiarizes again, the student will receive an "F" for the course.

Course Outline

Week one and two: *Understanding Theological Narrative* -

- Course introduction
- Unique nature of biblical narrative
- Structure of Old Testament narrative
- Recognizing "markers" and "links"
- *Assignment*: Read Genesis Chapter 1 & 2 Samuel, identifying all theological markers and links (showing what they are links to)

Week Three and four: *Analysis of Narrative Text* -

- Review assignment
- Recognizing narrative structure
- Interpreting narrative
- Teaching narrative passages
- *Assignment:* Outline, interpret and complete teaching outline for Exodus 7--11

Week Five: *Interpreting Psalms* -

- Review assignment
- What are the Psalms?
- Nature of Hebrew poetry
- Interpreting Psalms
- Teaching from Psalms
- *Assignment:* Outline, interpret and complete teaching outline for Psalm 23

Week six and seven: *Understanding Prophetic Literature* -

- Review assignment
- The prophetic ministry in historical context
- Structure of prophetic writings
- Prophetic hermeneutic: historical motif
- *Assignment*: Provide a structural outline of Hosea. Explain Hosea's use of Israel's experience in Egypt and the deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 1—19) as a prophetic motif.

Week seven: *Analysis of Prophetic Text* -

- Review assignment
- Prophetic hermeneutic: dreams, visions, and the end of the world
- Teaching the prophets
- *Assignment*: Explain the visions of Zechariah 4 and 5. How do they relate to Zechariah's day? Do they point to the distant future? Why or why not?

Week eight and nine: *Elements of Gospel Interpretation* -

- Review assignment
- What is a "Gospel"?
- Gospel as theological narrative
- "Fulfillment" in the Gospels
- *Assignment*: Outline Matthew. Explain the prophetic motif of Matthew 1—4

Week ten and eleven: *Analysis of Gospel Text* - Review assignment

- Jesus the teacher
- Interpreting Jesus' teaching
- Teaching the Gospels
- *Assignment*: Interpret each of the parables of Matthew 13:24—52, explaining how each extends our understanding of the mysterious nature of the kingdom.

Week twelve and thirteen: *Understanding Epistles* -

- Review assignment
- The nature and structure of epistles
- Recognizing and charting paragraph structure

Assignment: Write out a paragraph chart for each of the paragraphs in 2 Timothy

- Review assignment
- Theological and historical issues in epistle interpretation
- Teaching epistles
- *Assignment*: Complete inductive study of 2 Timothy 4:1—8, writing a detailed teaching outline.

Week fourteen and fifteen: Hermeneutics and the Ministry of the Word : Review assignment

- Developing a program of personal study and cell groups
- Preparation for final exam.

Week sixteen: Final Exam.

Text Books:

Biblical Dictionary and or Bible Encyclopedia

Theological and or Lexicon Dictionaries

Virkler, Henry. *Hermeneutics. Principles and Process of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 **ISBN-10:** 0801031389 $13.95

Klein, William, Craig Bloomberg and Robert Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993. **ISBN-10:** 0785252258 $22.39

Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) **ISBN-10:** 031024286X $19.44

Fee, G. and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982. **ISBN-10:** 0310211182 $12.91

Supplemental Works

Cotteral, P. and M. Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (1991)

Aune David E**.** *The New Testament in its Literary Environment (1986)*

Bruce, F.F. *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Scrolls* (1959)

Fee, G. *New Testament Exeges*is (1983)

Kaiser, W *Toward and Exegetical Theology* (1980)

Additional Reading:
Callen, Barry L. and Thompson, Richard P. eds. *Reading the Bible in Wesleyan Ways: Some Constructive Proposals*. Beacon Hill Press, 2004.
Davis, Ellen F. and Hays, Richard B. eds. *The Art of Reading Scripture*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.

Klein, William W., Blomberg, Craig L., and Hubbard, Robert L. Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Revised and Updated Ed. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004.
deSilva, David A. *New Testament Themes*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 2001.
Matthews, Victor H. *Old Testament Themes.* St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.

Recommended Texts:

Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present*. InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Soulen, Richard N. and Soulen, R. Kendall. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Revised and Expanded. Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.