



*To develop Christ-minded leaders who make a difference in the world.*

## **BI 412 Biblical Hermeneutics**

Fall Semester, 2018

**INSTRUCTOR:** Jerry E. Shepherd, Ph.D.  
Office Phone: (780) 431-5250  
Home Phone: (780) 434-1164  
Email: jerry.shepherd@taylor-edu.ca

**SCHEDULE:** Online

**CREDITS:** 3 [130 hours of work]

### **DESCRIPTION:**

An introductory study of the science and art of biblical interpretation and exposition. Principles for interpreting the various types of literature within the Bible will be discussed. Three credits.

### **TARGET STATEMENTS:**

Knowledge: Students will

- Provide evidence in writing of skills acquired that are necessary to interpret the Bible.
- These include linguistic, cultural, literary, historical canonical and Christological skills.
- Provide a biblical overview of the history of biblical scholarship and interpretation.
- Provide evidence of their understanding of the exegetical process that moves from word, to sentence, to discourse and to the whole canon.

Character: Students will

- Attend classes regularly, participate meaningfully and do required reading.
- Demonstrate an attitude of humility before God in their written work and in class discussion.
- Express a growing knowledge of God through 5 sessions of spiritual direction.
- Convey reverence for the biblical text.

Ability: Students will

- Demonstrate skillful ability in biblical research methods and documentation.
- Demonstrate ability to use various tools that are available to students of the Scriptures: e.g., concordances, lexicons, word-study aids, dictionaries, atlases and encyclopedias.
- Provide at least (one or more?) example(s) of an ability to interact with popular and critical commentaries on the Biblical text.
- Demonstrate ability to carry out a word study and critically interact with texts and interpreters.
- Provide evidence for their understanding of the impact of context at the sentence level.
- Provide evidence for their ability of analyzing the flow of thought of a discourse.
- Provide evidence of interpreting the biblical text canonically.

## TEXTBOOK(S):

The Bible.

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.

ISBN-10: 0310524172

ISBN-13: 978-0310524175

Also available on Kindle

The student should also have a copy of the *Guide for Research and Writing (SBL style)*. This is available online on the seminary website, as well on the Moodle site for the course.

## OTHER ASSIGNED READING:

(On the course web site, I will provide electronic links for most of the following articles)

Poythress, Vern S. "Divine Meaning of Scripture." *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986): 241-79.

Steinmetz, David C. "The Superiority of Pre-critical Exegesis." *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27-38. Also republished in *Ex Auditu* 1 (1985): 74-82.

Waltke, Bruce K. "Is it Right to Read the New Testament into the Old?" In "Current Religious Thought." *Christianity Today*, 2 September 1983, 77.

Gaffin, Richard B., Jr. "Contemporary Hermeneutics and the Study of the New Testament." Pages 3-18 in *Studying the New Testament Today*. Edited by John H. Skilton. The New Testament Student 1. Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974.

Poythress, Vern S. "God's Lordship in Interpretation." *Westminster Theological Journal* 50 (1988): 27-64.

Poythress, Vern S. "Christ the Only Savior of Interpretation." *Westminster Theological Journal* 50 (1988): 305-21.

Waltke, Bruce K. "Hermeneutics and the Spiritual Life." *Crux* 23, no. 1 (1987): 5-10.

Fuller, Daniel P. "The Holy Spirit's Role in Biblical Interpretation." Pages 189-98 in *Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation: Essays Presented to Everett F. Harrison by His Students and Colleagues in Honor of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*. Edited by W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

## REQUIREMENTS:

1. Reading of all posted lectures and other material. (30 hours).

2. Reading of the assigned textbook, and articles. No percentage is attached, but failure to do the assigned reading could lower your grade. You will be asked on the final exam to indicate your completion of this assignment. (25 hours)
3. Two online forum postings each week. One posting will be in response to the lecture and/or posted articles for that week (at least 200 words); the other will be in response to another student's post (at least 100 words). (20%; 20 hours)
4. Four short, 3-5 page, exegetical papers using principles learned in texts and class lectures. The schedule for these papers will be posted on the course website, along with detailed instructions for each assignment. Due dates for these assignments are Sept 20, Oct 4, Oct 11, and Oct 31. (30%; 20 hours)
5. One longer, 10 page (2500 word) hermeneutical assignment, incorporating all the principles assimilated from course content, and incorporating the skills acquired from the prior shorter exegetical papers. Due date for this paper is Dec 6. (40%; 30 hours)
6. Five one-hour spiritual direction sessions with the staff of Urban Sanctuary. The student will, within the first two weeks of the semester, contact Urban Sanctuary to set up a schedule for these sessions. The person to contact is Mark Elvin, Associate Director for Urban Sanctuary. You may reach him by email at [mark@urbansanctuary.ca](mailto:mark@urbansanctuary.ca). The goal of these sessions is to provide spiritual direction for the student, especially as it relates to the practice of reading and interpreting Scripture, which, in turn also reads us. It also reinforces one of the stated objectives of the course: to know God more fully. Note: if you are also simultaneously enrolled in a Field Education course which incorporates spiritual direction sessions, you will only need to do the ones for the hermeneutics course. For those students who are not in the Edmonton area, arrangements can be made to do these sessions via Skype or some other platform. (10%; 5 hours)

#### **EVALUATION:**

Assignment 1	00%
Assignment 2	00%
Assignment 3	20%
Assignment 4	30%
Assignment 5	40%
Assignment 6	10%

The exegesis papers and online postings are due each week by the time specified in the weekly instructions. Unless there is a valid excuse, late assignments will be charged a penalty of 5% per regular school day.

It is my desire to be as helpful to you as possible. Please feel free to call me at any time (within reason), or email me with questions or problems that you may be having. I will pray for you and request that you do the same for me. Let us be sure to encourage one another as together we grow in the knowledge of our great God and prepare for service in his Church.

#### *Permission for Use of Student Assignments*

As part of Taylor Seminary's accreditation process, the faculty is required annually to review anonymized examples of student assignments from selected core courses in our Masters degrees.

If you do not wish your assignment to be anonymized and then included in the random sample from which assignments will be chosen for review, please request an abstention from your course instructor.

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

### 1. MOODLE

Taylor Seminary's Moodle is located on a shared platform with our partner seminary, Sioux Falls Seminary. Bookmark this site on your computer for easy, regular access: <https://moodle.sfseminary.edu>

Moodle log-in is the first initial of your first name and your last name - all in lowercase, with no spaces. For example, if your name is John Calvin, you would log-in as jcalvin

The default enrolment key is the course code (all in lowercase, with no spaces). The course code consists of the course prefix followed by the course number.

For example, Old Testament Introduction's key is: ot417

If you are having trouble logging into Moodle or self-enrolling, please email [teresa.seibel@taylor-edu.ca](mailto:teresa.seibel@taylor-edu.ca)

### 2. COURSE WRITING

#### *Formatting*

All studies and papers should be typed and formatted according to the Society of Biblical Literature writing style as outlined in the Seminary's *Guidelines for Research Writing in Religion & Theology (SBL)*. For the full stylesheet, please refer to Patrick H. Alexander, et al., ed., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014) which is in Reading Room.

#### *Research Language.*

You should employ acceptable research language for your paper which is not too informal yet reads inclusively. Avoid the use of gender specific language (e.g., Do not refer to "man" generically or to "mankind," "men," "he"; rather use "humankind," "humanity," "person," etc.)

#### *Plagiarism.*

Academic honesty and integrity is essential to the academic enterprise and the Seminary community. All written work submitted *must* be your own. *Guidelines for Research Writing* defines plagiarism as the failure to give credit where credit is due: "To plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written something original which in fact you have borrowed from another without acknowledging that other person's work" (*Guide for Research and Writing*, 2016, p. 11-13). If you borrow ideas or distinctive phrases, or include direct quotations in your written assignments, you must acknowledge your source(s) properly by in-text citation or footnote. It is also wrong to copy another person's work or to submit an assignment previously handed in for credit in another course. **Students guilty of plagiarism may receive a grade of zero for the assignment and may be brought to the attention of the Seminary's Academic Committee.**

### 3. COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

After the period for which tuition refunds are available, a "W" will be placed on the transcript of a student who withdraws from any course. Beyond those dates, an "F" will be recorded on the student's transcript.

## **COURSE OUTLINE:**

- 1 Prolegomena
  - 1.1 Definition of hermeneutics
  - 1.2 Need for hermeneutics
  - 1.3 The hermeneutical spirals
  - 1.4 Special problems to be encountered
  
- 2 History of Interpretation (Post-biblical)
  - 2.1 Early Church
  - 2.2 Middle Ages
  - 2.3 Reformation
  - 2.4 18th and 19th century developments
  - 2.5 20th century developments
    - 2.5.1 Within the larger circles of biblical scholarship
    - 2.5.1 Within Evangelicalism
  
- 3 History of Interpretation (Biblical period)
  - 3.1 The Old Testament use of the Old Testament
  - 3.2 The New Testament use of the Old Testament
    - 3.2.1 Backgrounds
    - 3.2.2 Jesus and his Apostles
  
- 4 A Christological-Canonical Approach to Hermeneutics
  - 4.1 Christ is Canon over the canon
  - 4.2 Christ is Canon over the interpreter
  
- 5 The Interpretive Process
  - 5.1 Pre-hermeneutical
  - 5.2 Hermeneutical proper
  - 5.3 Post-hermeneutical

## ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Bartholomew, Craig G. *Introducing Biblical Interpretation: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015.
- Bray, Gerald L. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Carson, Donald A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
- Dockery, David S. *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Gorman, Michael S. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Rev. and exp. ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Grant, Robert M., with David Tracy. *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*. 2d ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Gruenler, Royce Gordon. *Meaning and Understanding: The Philosophical Framework for Biblical Interpretation*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1991.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. Rev. and exp. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Richard D. Patterson. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.
- Kugel, James L., and Rowan W. Greer. *Early Biblical Interpretation*. Library of Early Christianity 3. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.
- Longman, Tremper III. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1987.
- Long, V. Phillips. *The Art of Biblical History*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 5. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1994.
- Maier, Gerhard. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Trans. Robert W. Yarborough. Wheaton: Crossway, 1994.
- McCartney, Dan G., and Charles Clayton. *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Wheaton: Victor, Bridgepoint, 1994.
- Meadors, Gary T., ed. *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. (Contributors: Walter Kaiser, Daniel Doriani, Kevin Vanhoozer, William Webb; reflections by Mark Strauss, Al Wolters, Christopher Wright).
- Muller, Richard A. *The Study of Theology: From Biblical Interpretation to Contemporary Formulation*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 7. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1987.

- Osborne, Grant. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive to Biblical Interpretation*. 2d ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Porter, Stanley E., and Beth M. Stovell, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012.
- Poythress, Vern A. *Science and Hermeneutics: Implications of Scientific Method for Biblical Interpretation*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 6. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1988.
- Silva, Moisés. *God, Language and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 4. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1990.
- Silva, Moisés. *Has the Church Misread the Bible: The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1987.
- Thiselton, Anthony. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.