

## **TBE 517 H4 -- Hermeneutics and Bible Study Methods**

Thursdays, 1:30 – 4:20 pm, Myers 102  
Talbot School of Theology, Fall 2008  
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Office Hours: T, W 2-4 pm

Meetings are by appointment only. Please e-mail me to make an appointment. (If you cannot meet during my office hours I will try to work out another time but can't promise to be available.)

### **Catalogue Description**

"A study of principles for sound interpretation and application of the Bible, including analysis of presuppositions, general rules and specialized principles for the various biblical genre and phenomena. A presentation of various approaches to studying the Bible. Required of M.Div. and M.A. students."

### **Objectives**

The student will

- understand and be able to relate the basic flow of the history of hermeneutics, the emphases of the various hermeneutical periods, and their influence on contemporary methodologies.
- gain a basic familiarity with the contemporary discussion of where "meaning" resides and be able to give a solid defense of the classical position.
- become more sensitive to his or her cultural and personal presuppositions as an interpreter of God's Word and begin to minimize their influence in his or her interpretations.
- understand the basic principles, and begin to gain facility in the practice, of grammatical-historical exegesis.

### **Course Requirements**

The student will be required to

- read the assigned portions of the required texts prior to coverage in class lectures and report compliance according to the schedule in the course calendar.
- write five reflection papers, due according to the schedule in the course calendar.
- complete six exegetical task papers, due according to the schedule in the course calendar. These will be turned in at the end of each class meeting (you will need them for class discussion). Instructions for each assignment will be given in the class meeting prior to its due date.
- complete an exegesis project, due according to the schedule in the course calendar.

#### The grading scale:

5 reflection papers @ 10 pts ea = 50 pts      6 exegetical task papers @ 15 pts ea = 90 pts  
3 reading reports @ 10 pts ea = 30 pts      exegesis project = 80 pts

A	240-250	B	220-229	C	200-209	D	180-189
A-	235-239	B-	215-219	C-	195-199	D-	175-179
B+	230-234	C+	210-214	D+	190-194	F	0-174

This scale may be normalized at the discretion of the professor.

Late Work: All work is due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the course calendar. Late work will be accepted but penalized according to the following schedule. Work turned in within 24 hours of the due date will lose 5 percentage points. Work turned in 24 hours to a week late will lose 15 percentage points. Work more than one week late will only be accepted after consultation with and approval by the professor.

Exceptions may be granted for severe and UNFORESEEABLE circumstances only.

Plagiarism: Talbot School of Theology sees any form of plagiarism as a serious problem with serious consequences. Please refer to the academic integrity statement and article on plagiarism in the Talbot Graduate Student Handbook.

Grading Standards for Written Work: Whereas Talbot School of Theology desires to maintain the highest standards with respect to the composition of all written work, any student paper exhibiting poor grammar, spelling errors, typographical errors, or other substandard academic expression shall have the overall grade for that paper reduced accordingly. Generally, a paper will be deemed substandard and ineligible to receive an “A” grade when it averages three or more compositional errors per page. Moreover, at the discretion of the professor, the substandard paper may be returned to the student for correction and resubmission with appropriate grade penalties. Graduate papers are expected to demonstrate a higher level of academic expression than undergraduate papers. Students deficient in writing skills may seek assistance at the Biola Writing Center.

Reports Delayed: A report delayed will ONLY be granted under the following conditions:

- 1) The student has arranged for and had a personal interview with the professor in which the professor has been satisfied that
- 2) the student has a valid medical or personal excuse for delaying the completion of the course requirements,
- 3) the student has shown good faith in attending classes and in completing required work prior to the interview with the professor,
- 3) the student has had the interview with the professor at the earliest possible date after the requirement of a report delayed was suspected as necessary by the student,
- 4) all other possibilities for completing the required coursework on time have been exhausted.

Students with Disabilities: Students desiring accommodations for this class on the basis of physical, learning, psychological, or emotional disability are to contact The Learning Center which houses both learning assistance and disability services. The Learning Center is located upstairs in the Biola Library and can be reached by calling 562.906.4542 or extension 4542 from on campus.

## **Texts**

### Required Texts

William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993. [Solid, all-purpose first hermeneutics text with something good on history, meaning, general and specific rules, genres, and application.]

### Other Useful Texts Related to the Subject

David Alan Black. *Linguistics for Students of the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988. [Not hermeneutics, but a very readable introduction to linguistics from the perspective of Biblical exegesis. Assumes Greek facility, but not necessary]

Gerald Bray. *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Books, 1996. [This is a very fine evangelical and readable survey of the history of biblical hermeneutics divided into three parts: 1) before the historical critical method, 2) from the 1700s-1875, and 3) the contemporary scene.]

D.A. Carson. *Exegetical Fallacies*. 2d Ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996. [Useful guide to avoiding fallacious exegesis. Full of real examples and fun to read!]

\_\_\_\_\_. *New Testament Commentary Survey*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Baker.

- Peter Cotterell and Max Turner. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1989. [An introduction to linguistics with a view toward Biblical exegesis.]
- David S. Dockery. *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. [Helpful work showing the history behind principles and debates in hermeneutics back to the early church.]
- David S. Dockery, Kenneth A. Matthews, and Robert B. Sloan. *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994.
- Richard J. Erickson. *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Exegesis: Taking the Fear out of Critical Method*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2005. [A replacement for Fee, aimed at the beginning student. Discusses exegetical method well in a simple, step-by-step approach.]
- Gordon D. Fee. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Rev. ed. Louisville: Westminster, 1993. [Especially for students of the Greek New Testament, though still very useful for those with no Greek. Discusses exegetical methodology in a clearly outlined step-by-step approach.]
- E. D. Hirsch, Jr. *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967. [The most influential text in shaping this generation of evangelical hermeneutics scholars. Challenging, but must reading for the serious interpreter, especially regarding intrinsic genre.]
- Elliott E. Johnson. *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. [The very best evangelical view of Hirsch and particularly strong on "intrinsic genre," but is somewhat wordy and not clearly written; therefore, now out-of-print.]
- Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
- Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993. [A solid introductory text with excellent discussion on meaning from two diverse evangelical viewpoints. A helpful work.]
- Sakae Kubo and Walter F. Specht. *So Many Versions? Rev. and enl.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983. [An in depth assessment of most English versions of the Bible. Dated now, but still very useful.]
- William J. Larkin, Jr. *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988; reprint ed., Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993. [Conservative, helpful view of culture's role in the interpretive process, especially re: application.]
- Longman, Tremper, III. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. 3d ed. Baker.
- Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton. *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Wheaton: BridgePoint/Victor Books, 1994. [A very helpful introduction that is strong on presuppositions and theory and lighter on genre and practical emphases.]
- Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, editor. *The Hermeneutics Reader. Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*. New York: Continuum, 1988. [11 sets of readings from the most influential German scholars who have set the hermeneutical agenda for over 300 years. Very advanced.]
- Grant R. Osborne. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991. [Both an introduction and an intermediate hermeneutics text with excellent discussions of the issue of meaning and helpful, if not well illustrated, discussions of the genre of the Bible].
- Leland Ryken. *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and Get More Out of It*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Tom Schreiner. *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 199. [A great introduction to various issues involved in exegesis generally and Paul's letters especially. This is part of a series edited by Scot McKnight that covers the interpretation of each corpus of the NT.]

Moisés Silva, General Editor. *Foundation of Contemporary Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. [Six smaller hermeneutical books were combined in this one volume and cover topics like the history of interpretation, literary approaches, the language of the Bible, biblical history, science and hermeneutics, and the study of theology. Helpful discussions at a readable level.]

\_\_\_\_\_. *Biblical Words and Their Meaning*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983. [Not hermeneutics, but an introduction to the field of lexical semantics with a view to Biblical exegesis. Assumes Biblical language facility, but not necessary.]

Robert H. Stein. *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994. [A highly readable and helpful discussion of the general rules of hermeneutics and the specific rules for the various genres].

Anthony C. Thiselton. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992; and *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. [The best and most thorough evangelical interaction with all influential contemporary hermeneutical theories. For those with a serious interest in hermeneutics and preferably, some philosophical training. Very advanced.]

Robert A. Traina. *Methodical Bible Study: A New Approach to Hermeneutics*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Robert W. Traina.

## Course Projects

*In general...*

- 1) Examples of each project are on reserve in the library.
- 2) Always keep a copy of any paper turned in. **SUBMIT PAPER STAPLED AND WITHOUT ANY TYPE OF BINDING OR PLASTIC COVER.**
- 3) Please turn in hard copies. Electronic versions will generally not be accepted unless the student has made prior arrangements with the professor.
- 4) All projects are graded on both style and substance. They are expected to be complete, legible, and free from spelling and grammatical errors. Greatest consideration in grading will be given to proper use of methodology and depth of interaction with the material in accordance with the following scale.

A+ (100%) = Absolutely perfect

A (96-99.9%) = Technically perfect and depth of interaction exceptional

A- (94-95.9%) = Technically perfect or nearly perfect and depth of interaction impressive

B+ (92-93.9%) = Technically solid and depth of interaction strong

B (88-91.9%) = Technically solid and depth of interaction good

B- (86-87.9%) = Technically or reflectively problematic but otherwise good

C+ (84-85.9%) = Technical and depth of interaction problems but acceptable work

C (80-83.9%) = Greater technical and depth of interaction problems

C- (78-79.9%) or "Redo" = unacceptable work: generally, problems are such that the student did not do what was asked of them

## Reading Reports

On a chart presented in class, the student will indicate the number of points he or she earned for his or her reading according to the following scale.

100 % read	= 10 pts
80-99 % read	= 8 pts
60-79 % read	= 6 pts
0-59 % read	= 0 pts

## Reflection Papers

Reflection papers (RPs) will generally be no more than 2-5 pages in length.

RPs 1-3 will consist of the following items:

- (1) a list of questions generated by the passage,
- (2) a statement of your personal theological and/or cultural presuppositions that may hinder a proper interpretation or appropriation of the passage,
- (3) a one-sentence statement of the “Big Idea” of the passage, [NOTE: If the form of the Big Idea is incorrect, the highest grade possible on a reflection paper is a “B.”]
- (4) a list of relevant personal applications of the passage.

Details of each item will be given in a lecture in the first class meeting.

RPs 4-5 will include items (1), (3), and (4) above but will substitute for item (2) a semantic diagram and will present a more precise reflection for item (4), according to methods to be taught in class.

### **Exegetical Task Papers**

Directions for each task paper (ETP) will be given one week prior to their due date. Detailed instructions for each project can also be found on the web site (<http://people.biola.edu/faculty/alanh/Handouts/TBE517/>) and on reserve in the library. Papers will be graded especially on proper methodology.

### **Exegesis Project**

The student will write a paper of 20-35 pages briefly analyzing a Biblical text to be chosen by the professor and announced to the class sometime around the sixth week. The primary purpose of this project is to allow you to carry through to conclusion on one passage the basic exegetical method you will have learned in class (it is NOT a major purpose of this project to get the exegesis of your passage “correct”). Many sections of the project consist in revised versions of your ETPs. The project will be graded most heavily on depth of reflection and correctness of exegetical methodology, though style, format, and completeness will also be taken into account.

The paper will include the following (use this outline to structure your paper):

#### **I. Context (Determine the historical and literary setting of the passage)**

- A. Historical context: write a paragraph or so establishing why this book was written. Include discussion of the author, readers, and situation behind the letter as determined by your research. Books that are especially helpful here are NT Introductions, Bible encyclopedias/dictionaries (articles under the name of the Biblical book), and the introductions to commentaries. Use at least three sources and be sure to cite them with page number. I've put several NT Introductions and commentaries on reserve in the library. You can also check the reference section of the library.
- B. Literary context:
  1. Write a paragraph describing the genre of the passage and how that knowledge contributes to your exegesis of the passage.
  2. Write a paragraph or so establishing where the passage falls in the flow of thought of the book. Include discussion of the theme of the book, the basic structure, and argument. Use your outline (ETP 1) and the sources noted above for Historical Context. Attach your outline following these paragraphs.

#### **II. Text (Determine the original wording of the passage)**

- A. Attach your English Translation comparison (ETP 2) and note especially those words and phrases that the ET comparison reveals as possible questions concerning the original text (i.e., your "textual questions").
- B. Answer the textual questions using Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT*, which I've placed on reserve, and/or critical commentaries that address textual issues (like the Word Biblical Commentary).

#### **III. Analysis (Determine the ambiguities in the passage)**

- A. Attach your Syntactical and Semantic diagrams (ETP's 3, 4)

B. Attach your long list of questions (ETP 6)

#### IV. Resolution of Ambiguities (Answer the exegetical questions)

Give brief (3-5 sentence) summary CONCLUSIONS of your research on your SHORT list of questions. (I.e., don't tell me what everybody said about the topic, tell me what you've concluded about it as a result of considering what everybody said.) Use all appropriate reference materials (lexicons, concordances, Bible encyclopedias/dictionaries, commentaries – a list of appropriate references will be handed out in class and is available as well on the web site), and use at least 3 sources for each question. Do NOT use only commentaries (far less, only one or two commentaries) to answer your questions. Your choice of sources will affect your grade. Be sure to cite your sources, including page numbers, in your paper.

V. Conclusions (State what the author intended to communicate to his audience in this passage and how that is applicable to you)

A. Big Idea:

1. Write a Big Idea sentence formulated in two parts (subject and predicate)
2. Give a brief (3-4 sentence) description of the how the author develops the Big Idea in the passage

B. Exegetical Idea: provide a brief statement of how you think, given the situation for which the author writes the book, the author intended his audience to respond to the passage. What did he want them to know/believe, feel, and/or do? (You may also want to consider what the author teaches or presupposes about who God is, how He works, and/or what He requires of us.)

C. Principles: provide a list of universal principles derived from the exegetical idea.

D. Application: provide a paragraph or so describing how one or another of the principles derived from the exegetical idea applies to you. Make sure the application is personal and specific (i.e., "Therefore, this week I will...")

#### VI. Bibliography

Attach a properly organized bibliography of all works cited.

Course Calendar

Week	Date	Lecture	Assignment due	Reading
				KBH
1	Aug 27	Intro to course—What is Hermeneutics? Revelation, Inspiration, Authority		3-20 103-119
2	Sept 4	The Goal of Hermeneutics: Meaning Pre-Understanding, The Interpreter	RP 1 (1 Pet 1:1-2)	23-103
3	11	The Bible as Literature: Context, Genre, Truth Claims	RP 2 (1 Pet 1:3-12)	135-212
4	18	Exegetical Method, Exegetical Questions, The Big Idea Outlining a Book (Intro's)	RP 3 (1 Pet 1:13-21)	213-239
5	25	Differences Among ET's, Translation Theory, Textual Criticism Comparing English Translations	Book Outline (1 Peter) Reading Report 1	119-134
6	Oct 2	Syntactical Diagramming	ET Comparison	257-272
7	9	Semantic Diagramming	Syntactical Diagram	
8	16	Lexical Semantics	Semantic Diagram	240-256
9	23	<i>Torrey Bible Conference (No class)</i>		
10	30	Background Research Application	Word Study	451-504 (505- 543)
11	Nov 6	Narrative/Gospel (Horizontal and Vertical Analysis)	Exegetical Questions Reading Report 2	323-336, 399-426
12	13	Poetry	RP 4 (Mk 3:31-35) [hereafter include diagram and more precise application]	273-323, 351-358
13	20	<i>ETS</i>		
14	27	<i>Thanksgiving Recess (No class)</i>		
15	Dec 4	Parable/Wisdom	RP 5 (Psalm 1)	387-397 (411- 414)
16	11	Epistle/Law		341-350, 426-440
17	18	Prophecy/Apocalypse	Final Project Reading Report 3	359-386, 440-450