

Birmingham Theological Seminary
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INSTRUCTOR/CLASS INFORMATION

<u>Instructor:</u>	Rev. Lyle Lee
<u>Email:</u>	lyle@lincolnvillageministry.com (preferred method of contact)
<u>Course:</u>	ST3550 Bible Interpretation
<u>Term:</u>	Spring, 2020
<u>Class Time:</u>	Tue 5:30-7:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a foundational course on biblical interpretation which will provide students with the basic exegetical tools required to interpret and appropriate the biblical text. The student will learn to recognize and work with the different literary genres of the Bible and will gain an overview of various hermeneutical approaches to Scripture. In the process, the student will be introduced to various research tools, methods, resources and practical skills for interpretation in order to appropriate the Bible well in our contemporary context. REQUIRED FOR M.Div., M.A.B.C., M.A.B.S., M.A.M., C.B.S.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. Knowledge and Understanding

1. recognize the importance and value of responsible and careful exegesis and interpretation of a biblical text.
2. demonstrate a knowledge of the literary genres of the Bible and the rules for their interpretation.
3. describe the history of interpretation of the Bible, including contemporary approaches and methods of interpretation.
4. apply the necessary research tools, skills and various methods for interpreting the Bible and appropriating its message.
5. recognize the importance of contextual analysis in determining word meanings, the structure and literary features of a biblical text.
6. develop observational skills in doing a close reading of the biblical text.
7. evaluate the validity of an interpretation and/or appropriation of a biblical text.

B. Discipline-specific Skills

1. analyze and exegete a biblical text.
2. learn the skills to examine and interpret a biblical text in its historical and cultural context.
3. learn how to examine the meaning of words in their context and do word studies.
4. assess and evaluate various approaches taken in interpreting Scripture.
5. critically evaluate commentaries and articles written on the Bible.
6. seek practical ways in which the message of a biblical text can be interpreted and appropriated to the Church today in our contemporary context.
7. use Logos Bible Software for analyzing the various nuances of Hebrew and Greek words in different biblical passages.

C. Transferable Skills

1. use the available resources for doing biblical studies.
2. foster the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing by participation in small discussion group and through writing papers.
3. develop critical thinking skills to analyze, evaluate and synthesize a wealth of material.
4. learn self-disciplined study habits and the ability to meet fixed deadlines as set out by the course outline.
5. foster a desire for life-long learning in the study of Scripture.

COURSE TEXTS

Required:

- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Third Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. ISBN: 9780310524175.
- Logos Bible Software

COURSE TEXTS

Recommended/Bibliography:

- Webb, William J. Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001. ISBN: 0-8308-1561-9.
- Bauer, David R. and Robert A. Traina. Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Fee, Gordon D. New Testament Exegesis. Third edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. How to Read the Bible for all its Worth. Fourth edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

- Evans, John F. A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works. 10th edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation Workbook. Third Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.
- Hebrew-English and Greek-English Concordance (either computer version or hardcopy [e.g. Kohlenberger]).
- Interlinear Hebrew-English OT or Interlinear Greek-English NT (either computer version or hardcopy)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. All students are expected to read assigned materials and be prepared to participate fully in class.
2. **Attendance:** The student is expected to attend all classes unless providentially hindered. If the student must be absent from a class, they must contact the professor prior to class. Student is still responsible for all assignments to be completed as per syllabus. More than two unexcused absences drops final grade one letter grade.
3. **Assignment One: Bible Translations and Textual Matters: Due on Jan 28; 15 % of final grade.**
 Read the preface and translators' preface in the ESV, NIV, NKJV, NLT, and NRSV Bibles (copies are available on the course page) and then compare 1 John 5:1-12 in each translation. In light of your reading, discuss the following questions: 1) What approaches to translating the Bible are adopted by each translation? 2) What manuscripts form the basis of each translation? 3) What significant differences are evident in the way each translation renders 1 John 5:1-12? 4) What are the strengths and/or limitations of each translation in terms of when to use a certain translation? In other words, in what ways or in which contexts may certain translations be more helpful and preferred over others?
 Length: 3–4 pages typed, double-spaced (Use font: New Times Roman; size: 12 point. This applies to all your papers).
4. **Assignment Two: Historical Background Study of Biblical Books: Due on Feb 11; 15% of final grade.**
 - a. Choose either the book of Ruth or Philippians and do a study of the historical background of either book. First, try to determine the historical and cultural context inductively from clues given in the book itself. Write up your observations and support your conclusions with Scripture references from the book.
 - b. Secondly, only after completing this first task, you may then consult secondary resources like commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc., to consider the historical background to the book. In this second part, elaborate on what you learned from the secondary sources about the historical background of the book.

- c. Thirdly, reflect on the whole learning process by commenting on how these secondary sources helped you understand the historical context of the book in a way which you could not by simply reading the book inductively without the aid of secondary sources. How much of the historical background did you understand before reading the secondary sources? Please include a bibliography with a minimum of three academic secondary sources. **Length: 4–5 pages typed, double-spaced.**
5. **Assignment Three: Interpretation and Appropriation: Mar 3; 15% of final grade.**
 - a. The purpose of this exercise is to move from the question of “what it meant” in its original context to “what it means” for us in our 21st century context. Examine Isaiah 1:10–20 and consider how this passage is relevant to today. First consider the question of how the text was applicable in its original context.
 - b. Second, outline any principles arising from the text which can be appropriated at all times. Here you need to consider the question whether there are issues/events discussed in the text which were only applicable for its original audience?
 - c. Third, consider how this passage is relevant for today. Here you should list appropriate meaning and application for the community of faith as a whole, as well as individual and personal application. In doing this, you need to identify your own social location and consider how this context influences your interpretation and appropriation. In giving personal application, include specific examples and a suggested implementation plan. Please include a bibliography with a minimum of three academic secondary sources. **Length: 4–5 pages typed, double-spaced.**
6. **Word Study as part of the Exegesis Paper using Logos Bible Software: Due on Apr 7; 15 % of the final grade.** First begin by familiarizing yourself with Logos Bible Software. You do not have to master the online program but you should watch a tutorial video on the site you choose. Only figure out how to search for a Hebrew word in the OT and a Greek word in the NT. Then choose a Hebrew or Greek word from the passage of Scripture you have chosen for the Exegesis Paper and do a word study on it, following the Word Study Instructions demonstrated and handed out in class. You need to discuss the various nuances of the word and then decide which nuance is used in the passage you are exegeting.
7. **Exegesis Paper: Due on Apr 21; 40% of final grade.**
 - a. Choose ONE of the following passages of Scripture and write your exegesis paper on it: Genesis 18:16–33; Genesis 45:1–15; 1 Samuel 3:1-21; Mark 2:1–12; Acts 3:1-10; 1 Peter 4:12–19. Specific instructions for doing the exegesis paper will be given during class.
 - b. Length: 7-11 pages, double-spaced, not including the cover page, footnotes, bibliography and the Word Study. Please NOTE: Going under/over the allowable page limit by more than one page will result in a reduction in the grade.
 - c. Learning Outcomes for the final culminating assignment, the exegetical paper: The student will present an exegesis paper in which he/she will demonstrate the

ability to: Understand the passage within its literary context, genre and, at a basic level, its historical/cultural/social setting. Do an in-depth, close reading of a biblical passage, by analyzing key words and phrases, and grammatical, syntactical and literary features of the text. Summarize the main themes and theological message of a biblical text. Identify the key places within the passage where various interpretive options present themselves, and, at the most important points of the text under study, weigh the validity of various/alternate interpretations of that passage or book in a discerning, responsible and thoughtful manner, and express his/her preference among the various options. Demonstrate (hermeneutical) humility towards the correctness of one's own interpretive decisions. Show the theological implications of the exegetical study by identifying and outlining principles, core values and virtues arising from/out of/present in the biblical text. Appropriate the biblical text for today by re-contextualizing its meaning and significance in the life of the (individual) believer and the community of faith as a whole, with an awareness of the similarities and differences between the ancient and contemporary contexts/horizons. Use various Greek-English and/or Hebrew-English tools such as concordances and lexicons to enable beginning-level skills in word studies and biblical theology. Gather excellent academic (not popular) resources such as commentaries, periodical or dictionary articles, monographs, etc., to enable an informed reading and exegesis of a particular biblical passage.

BTS Format and Style Standards

BTS uses the Turabian style of formatting as a standard for papers. However, students should regard individual professor preferences if they communicate any variance in outlining their requirements for papers. Professors retain discretion in determining how "formal" a paper must be. In this technological age, information is readily available; make sure that you understand about giving reference sources the proper recognition. Please refer to the BTS Student Handbook section on plagiarism for guidance.

COURSE GRADING

Expressed in detail above.

Course Outline (Subject to adjustments)

Date	Class Activities	Readings Due this Date
1/21	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Textual Criticism</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduction/Syllabus Review</p>	N/A
1/28	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Need for Hermeneutics</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DUE:</u> Assignment One: Bible Translations and Textual Matters</p>	Chapter 1
2/4	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The History of Interpretation</u></p>	Chapter 2
2/11	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Recent Literary and Social-Scientific Approaches to Interpretation</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DUE:</u> Assignment Two: Historical Background Study of Biblical Books</p>	Chapter 3
2/18	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Canon and Translations</u></p>	Chapter 4
3/3	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Interpreter</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DUE:</u> Assignment Three: Interpretation and Appropriation</p>	Chapter 5
3/10	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Goal of Interpretation</u></p>	Chapter 6
3/17	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>General Rules of Hermeneutics:Prose</u></p>	Chapter 7
3/24	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>General Rules of Hermeneutics:Biblical Poetry</u></p>	Chapter 8

3/31	<u>Genres of the OT</u>	Chapter 9
4/7	<u>Genres of the NT</u> <u>DUE:</u> Word Study as part of the Exegesis Paper	Chapter 10
4/14	<u>Using the Bible Today</u> <u>Application</u>	Chapters 11 and 12
4/21	Due: Final Exegesis Paper	N/A

***Syllabus copied/heavily influenced by DR. REBECCA G. S. IDESTROM Biblical Interpretation syllabus ***