



INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS (BSHM 5310)

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division

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May 2021 Intensive

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NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a study of the principles of biblical interpretation, an introduction to the major resources available for biblical interpretation, and an exegetical study of selected passages from the various types of biblical literature. The major focus of the course is practical—the course goal is that the students develop sound methods of exegesis and application of biblical texts.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

The desired student outcomes for this course include the following:

1. Students should understand the guidelines for interpreting the various genres of the Bible.
2. Students should gain an increased appreciation for how solid exegesis is essential for accurate proclamation and teaching of the message of the Bible
3. Students should acquire the ability to apply a sound exegetical method for interpreting the text

COURSE TEACHING METHODS:

This course is a study of the principles of biblical interpretation, an introduction to the major resources available for biblical interpretation, and an exegetical study of selected passages from the various types of biblical literature. The major focus of the course is practical—the course goal is that the students develop sound methods of exegesis and application of biblical texts.

TEXTBOOKS:

The basic texts include the following:

- Bible in modern translation: RSV, NRSV, NASV, NIV, GNB, NLT
- Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (= FS)
- Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (= KBH)

Several other works are helpful as supplementary aids, such as concordances, Bible dictionaries, background studies of the Biblical world, introductory books on the OT and NT, and exegetically based commentaries. Computer software for Bible study is also highly recommended and will be used in the teaching of the class by the professors.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

PRE-ASSIGNMENTS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE INTENSIVE

1. **Reading Report (15%).** Students are to read the required texts prior to coming to the intensive. On the first day, students will report their reading of the required texts in two ways:

a) students will sign a report form and indicate what percentage of the reading of the texts they have completed, and b) students will submit four (4) 1 page summaries of the guidelines for the interpretation of specific genres presented in selected chapters of the texts (from FS, one summary on an OT genre and one summary on a NT genre; from KBH, one summary on an OT genre and one summary on a NT genre, resulting in summaries of four different genres).

2. **History of Interpretation Report (15%)**

Based on your readings in KBH, outline the first segment according to the following major headings and provide for each section: 1) a quarter page summary containing a reflection of the major ideas expressed, and 2) one question raised by the reading under each heading: (about 2 to 3 total pages for this part)

Jewish Interpretation

The Apostolic Period

The Patristic Period

The Middle Ages

The Reformation

The Post-Reformation Period

The Modern Period

Outline the second segment, divided into two major parts, according to the following subheadings under the two major headings and provide for each subsection: 1) a quarter page summary containing a reflection of the major ideas expressed, as well as 2) one question raised by the reading for each part: (about 2 to 3 total pages for this part)

Literary Criticism

Structuralism

Narrative Criticism

Poststructuralism

Social-Scientific Approaches

Classifications

Advocacy Groups

The content of these reports will serve as a partial basis for class discussion on the subject.

WORK TO BE COMPLETED DURING THE INTENSIVE

3. **Background Study (15%).** Compile a background study about the historical and cultural context for an assigned passage. Students will be given a guide for completing this assignment. Due at the *beginning of class*, Thursday, May 27. Late penalty is five points per day, beginning at the class hour of the due date.

4. **Word Study (15%).** Complete a word study on a word indicated from an assigned text. Students will be given a guide for completing this assignment. Due at the *beginning of class*, Friday, May 28. Late penalty is five points per day, beginning at the class hour of the due date.

POST-ASSIGNMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED AFTER THE INTENSIVE

5. **Project (40%).** The major project in the course is an exegetical paper, which is to be produced in two stages (specific instructions found at the end of the syllabus).

Part 1, The First stage (30%). The *first stage* is a thorough exegetical study that is to follow the attached guidelines, 10-15 double-spaced pages in length, not counting the bibliography. At the end of this stage, the student should have gathered all the essential knowledge from the text and be ready to begin the task of constructing a sermon or a teaching lesson. **THIS ALSO SERVES AS THE EMBEDDED ASSIGNMENT** for this course. Due on Friday, June 11. Late penalty is five points per day.

Part 2, The Second stage (10%). The *second stage* is a polished, written paper, 5-6 double-spaced pages in length. The purpose of this stage is to synthesize the data you have gathered in the first stage paper into a well-written presentation that may take either of two forms: (1) a sermon

manuscript, i.e., written out word-for-word, ready to deliver orally, or (2) a teaching plan, fully developed. This paper should have an interesting introduction, developed body, and a conclusion that ties all of the components together into a compelling focus. This stage contrasts with the first stage in that the first stage was a step-by-step exegesis of the passage, whereas this second stage is a finished and polished presentation with application being central. Be sure to consider your audience in choosing the presentation format and in shaping the material for presentation. See below for more details for this stage. Due on Friday, June 25. Late penalty is five points per day.

EXTRA CREDIT ACCEPTED UP TO 3 WEEKS AFTER THE INTENSIVE

6. **Extra Credit.** (up to +3 points on final average) Review one of the following books (2 to 3 pages), due in professor's office, Friday, June 18.
- Corley, Lemke, and Lovejoy. *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed.
 - Kaiser, Jr., Walter C. and Moises Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*
 - Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary, OT (5 vol) & NT (4 vol): Any 200 page section = + 1 point on the final average with a proper reading report.
 - Silva, Moises. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*
 - Stein, Robert H. *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*
 - Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*
 - Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*

WRITING STYLE GUIDE: Writing assignments should follow the **NOBTS/Leavell College Manual of Form and Style**. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Blackboard shell or can be located online at the Writing Center's page on the seminary website at: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>.

PLAGIARISM ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

HELP FOR WRITING PAPERS AT "THE WRITE STUFF:" NOBTS maintains a Writing Center to help improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

NEED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE? CONTACT THE ITC TODAY!

Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)

BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.

ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.

504.816.8180 - Call for any technical questions/support requests.

www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

SCHEDULE:

Monday (May 24): Introduction, Model, Historical Review, Interpreter, Goal, Application, Translations, Tools

Session 1—1:00–4:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Introduction and Components of a Model (FS: 9–27; KBH: 3–20)
2nd Hr: History of Biblical Interpretation (KBH: 21-51; 427-57)
3rd Hr: Principles and Process of Interpretation (KBH: 155-71)

Session 2—6:00–9:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Principles and Process of Interpretation (KBH: 377-99)
2nd Hr: Interpreter, Goal, and Application (KBH: 81–151; 377–425)
3rd Hr: Translations, Basic Tools (FS: 28–44; 246–49; KBH: 53–78; 459–91)

Tuesday (May 25): Background and Word Studies, General Rules, Epistles

Session 1—9:00–12:00 AM

- 1st Hr: Background Studies (KBH 172-83); Word Studies (KBH 183-214)
2nd Hr: Library Practicum; Basic Tools for Interpretation (KBH 459-86)
3rd Hr: Library Practicum; Commentaries (FS 246-49; KBH 487-91)

Session 2—1:00–4:00 PM

- 1st Hr: General Rules for Interpretation
2nd Hr: Interpreting the Epistles 1 (FS: 45–77)
3rd Hr: Interpreting the Epistles 2 (KBH: 352–65)

Wednesday (May 26): Narratives, Gospels, Parables

Session 1—9:00–12:00 AM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting OT Narrative 1 (FS: 78–93)
2nd Hr: Interpreting OT Narrative 2 (KBH: 259–73)
3rd Hr: Interpreting NT Narrative—Acts (FS: 94–112; KBH: 344–51)

Session 2—1:00–4:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting the Gospels (FS: 113–34; KBH: 323–43)
2nd Hr: Interpreting the Gospels (FS: 113–34; KBH: 323–43)
3rd Hr: Interpreting the Parables (FS: 135–48)

Thursday (May 27): Law, Prophets, Poetry

Session 1—9:00–12:00 AM

- 1st Hr: *Background Study due* Interpreting Law 1 (FS: 149–64)
2nd Hr: Interpreting Law 2 (KBH: 274–83)
3rd Hr: Interpreting Prophets 1 (FS: 165–86)

Session 2—1:00–4:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting Prophets 2 (KBH: 292–312)
2nd Hr: Interpreting Psalms 1 (FS: 187–205)
3rd Hr: Interpreting Psalms 2 (KBH: 284–91)

Friday (May 28): Wisdom, Apocalyptic, Final Projects

Session 1—8:00–12:00 AM

- 1st Hr: *Work on Word Studies*, Word Studies due at 9 am
2nd Hr: Interpreting Wisdom (FS: 206–30, KBH: 313–22)
3rd Hr: Interpreting Apocalyptic—Revelation (FS: 231–45; KBH: 366–74)
4th Hr: Open discussion and overview of remaining assignments

Post-Intensive Due Dates:

- (1) Project, Stage 1: Friday, June 11
- (2) Extra Credit: Friday, June 18
- (3) Project, Stage 2: Friday, June 25

GUIDELINES FOR EXEGETICAL PAPER

Stage One

This paper assignment contains the primary steps to be taken in a full-blown exegesis of a Biblical passage. When it is completed, you should be ready to add the homiletical components of sermon or teaching preparation and then to present the passage with solid applications based on the exegesis. The paper *must* follow the following steps, *in order*. In your paper, please give each heading and then do the work asked for. This paper is *not* a typical term paper in the sense of having an ordered introduction, statement of purpose, development of thought, and conclusion. These are not needed. You should begin on the first page with the “Text” section and proceed through the paper according to the outline below. The final product will be a collection of the separate sections below, but they are all ordered in a logical sequence that should help in teaching and sermon preparation. Note that the time and research required for this paper will undoubtedly be more than you will have available to you week-by-week for teaching and sermon preparation. However, in doing this in-depth exercise, you should learn the essential steps for a proper exegesis. The more you do this, such preparation will become easier and second nature. Enjoy!

1. **Text**. Write out the text of the passage chosen, *single-spaced*, including verse numbers *with* indications of your own paragraph divisions, from one of the following translations: KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, CSB, HCSB, NIV, NJPSV, REB, RAB, NLT. Note any major textual variants in your passage by way of listing them. **(1/2 to 1 page)**
2. **Historical Background/Context**. Focus here is on information such as dates, international situation, events, and people mentioned in the text as well as the larger context of the book, author, and recipients/audience. Include here the major results of your previous historical background study. Also remember that you will need to add more general background information for this larger project, as well as other information based on specific historical, cultural topical studies. Outside sources (such as Bible commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, or histories) *should* be used here. The goal here is to paint a solid picture of the historical context for understanding the passage—what is happening, why is it happening, when is it happening, and to whom is it happening. **(2 to 3 pages)**
3. **Literary Context**. (1) Discuss the *placement* of the passage in its immediate and larger contexts within the book, and (2) justify the paragraph divisions you have provided above. Look for clues in the immediately preceding and following contexts (the surrounding paragraphs and chapters) that show how the passage you are considering fits into its context (i.e., why it is where it is). Some use of commentaries may be helpful. **(1 to 2 pages)**
4. **Paragraph Analysis**. Identify the theme of each paragraph or thought unit in the text with one sentence per paragraph or thought unit. The theme may be a key sentence taken directly from the text *or* a statement in your own words. *Justify your judgment in each case (i.e., give your reasons for it)*. **DO NOT USE COMMENTARIES HERE. (1 to 1/5 pages)**
5. **Verse Analysis**. Comment here on important features of individual verses (or paragraphs in a longer passage). *Do not* simply summarize the text or restate the obvious, but rather delve into the details of the passage, the flow of the argument or story line from verse to verse, and address why certain things are stated in a particular way, why certain statements are included where they are, etc. Comment as needed on important theological words and concepts, including your previous work on a word study (you’ll likely need to cover more

words). You may use concordances and other resources here, including cross-reference guides such as those found within most Bibles. Also, *feel free to* use exegetical, critical commentaries (not devotional or application ones). Do your own work and feel free to express your own thoughts about the passage's exegetical/historical meaning. **(3–6 pages)**

6. **Summary of the Exegetical Meaning and Principles in the Passage**. Based upon the work up to this stage, now seek to give a concise statement of the major themes, principles, and life struggles addressed in the passage. **(1 to 2 pages)**

Note 1: Commentaries and resources used in this section should be limited to critical commentaries that deal specifically with the historical meaning of the text and resources that provide background information for the context of the text and the words used in the text. On the other hand, be very sure to include your own insights into the text versus just including what others have said about the text.

Note 2: Page numbers here are suggested guides only. The major concern is that you accomplish the required work. However, the final product should be no less than ten (10) and no more than fifteen (15) pages, double-spaced.

Stage Two

This stage is a polished paper that is based on presenting the information gathered in the first stage in a contemporary setting where the teaching or preaching now needs to interact with the current struggles and concerns of those being addressed. The paper may take one of two forms: 1. A short sermon manuscript, i.e., written out word-for-word, ready to deliver orally, or 2. A teaching paper and plan, fully developed. In either case, this stage should have an interesting introduction, a developed body, and a conclusion that ties the paper together. Thus, this stage contrasts with the first stage in that the first stage is merely a step-by-step distillation of your findings. The second stage is a finished and polished work. Be sure to consider your audience in choosing the format of the paper and in shaping the material for presentation. In this stage, feel free to include illustrative and insightful information from more devotional and application oriented commentaries and resources. (5-6 pages, double-spaced)

Style and Formatting Guidelines for Papers

Both papers are to be neatly typed, *doubled-spaced* (except for the “Text” section, which is to be single-spaced), using no larger than a 12-point font. Please number the pages, use a “ragged right” margin (i.e., not justified right), and *staple* the pages together (upper left corner; *no covers*). The NOBTS Style guide should be followed. Also, full and proper documentation must be provided for any sources used (listings should be by author and title of book, commentary, or article [*not* editor!], with series name and editor appearing at the appropriate place), and a bibliography should be included in the paper (but note that this is not part of the 10 to 15 pages for Stage 1 or the 5 to 6 pages for Stage 2). Standard academic writing procedures must be followed, including writing in your own words, giving proper credit when quoting or referring to material from another work, and writing in good English. Students who may have trouble with writing of English are expected to have their papers proofread by someone conversant in English writing skills *prior to* production of the papers. Also, use of the NOBTS Writing Center is highly encouraged.

Embedded Assignment Grading Rubric

DOMAIN	LEVEL	INADEQUATE (0 POINTS)	BASIC (1 POINT)	COMPETENT (2 POINTS)	GOOD (3 POINTS)	EXCELLENT (4 POINTS)
UNDERSTANDING The Student:	Understood the principles guiding the exegetical process for biblical interpretation					
APPLICATION The Student:	Used appropriate tools to apply sound exegetical principles toward biblical interpretation					
COMMUNICATION The Student:	Communicated clearly the meaning of the biblical text to a contemporary audience					

Selected Bibliography

www.Denverseminary.edu has an annually updated bibliography for both OT and NT located in their Library section of their website.

www.bestcommentaries.com is another great website for finding commentaries.

General Introduction Books on Hermeneutics

- Dana, H. E. & Glaze, R. E. *Interpreting the NT*. Nashville: Broadman, 1961.
- Danker, Frederick W. *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*, Rev.. St. Louis: Augsburg, 1993.
- Fee, Gordon. *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in NT Hermeneutics*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991.
- Ferguson, Duncan S. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *An Introductory Bibliography for the Study of Scripture*. Rev. ed. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981.
- Mickelsen, A. Berkeley. *Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963.
- Ramm, Bernard L. et al. *Hermeneutics*. In *Practical Theology Series*. Grand Rapids: Baker, n.d.
- Sire, James. *Scripture Twisting: 20 Ways the Cults Misread the Bible*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1980.
- Smart James. *The Interpretation of Scripture*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961.
- Tate, Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991.
- Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Process of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Ward, Wayne E. *The Word Comes Alive*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1969.
- Wood, James. *The Interpretation of the Bible: A Historical Intro*. London: Duckworth, 1958.

The Text and Authority of the Bible

- Barr, James. *The Scope & Authority of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Bruce, F. F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
McKim, Donald, ed. *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
_____. *The Authoritative Word: Essays on the Nature of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerd, 1983.
Montgomery, John Warwick, ed. *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture*. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1974.
Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987. Nashville: Broadman, 1987.

The History of Interpretation

Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996.
Brown, Jerry Wayne. *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800-1870; The New England Scholars*. Middleton, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1969.
Cameron, Nigel. Ed. *Biblical Higher Criticism and the Defense of Infallibilism in 19th Century Britain*. In *Text and Studies in Religion*. Vol. 33. Lewiston: Mellen, 1987.
Evans, Craig A. and Stinespring, William F., eds. *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987.
Froehlich, Karlfried, trans. and ed. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*. In *Sources of Early Christian Thought*. Edited by William Rusch. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
Grant, Robert with David Tracy. *A Short History of Interpretation of the Bible*. Second ed., revised and enlarged. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
Neill, Stephen. *The Interpretation of the NT 1861-1961*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966.
Silva, Moisés. *Has the Church Misread the Bible? The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues*. In *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Vol. 1. Edited by Moisés Silva. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.
Wood, A. Skevington. *The Principles of Biblical Interpretation: As Enunciated by Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Luther and Calvin*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967.

Contemporary Methodologies

Hayes, John H. and Holladay, Carl R. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. Rev. ed. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987.
Kennedy, George. *NT Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1984
Krentz, Edgar. *The Historical-Critical Method*. In *Guides to Biblical Scholarship*. Edited by Gene M. Tucker. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
Russell, Letty M., Editor. *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.
Soulen, Richard *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, rev. ed. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.
Talbert, Charles. *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels*. Phila.: Fortress, 1977.
Wilson, Robert R. *Sociological Approaches to the OT*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Various Works on the Theory and Practice of Interpretation

Cotterell, Peter. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1989.
Cox, William E. *An Examination of Dispensationalism*. Philadelphia: P & R Publishing, 1963.
Johnson, Cedric B. *The Psychology of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.
Poythress, Vern & William Cox. *An Examination of Dispensationalism*. Philadelphia: P&R, 1963.
Johnson, Cedric B. *The Psychology of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.
Poythress, Vern Sheridan. *Science and Hermeneutics: Implications of Scientific method for Biblical Interpretation*. In *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Vol. 6. Edited by Moisés Silva. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.
Smart James D. *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church: A Study in Hermeneutics*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970.