

## **HOUSTON GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

### **BI 510 Biblical Hermeneutics**

Spring 2014, Jan.-May; Mondays, 5:30-8:15 PM

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*The mission of Houston Graduate School of Theology is empowering spiritual leadership through the intellectual, spiritual, and vocational development of men and women in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.*

### **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study of the methods and principles involved in the study of the Bible with attention to studying the Bible in its historical, literary, and cultural contexts. Students will also intertextual interpretation and learn methods for application of biblical truths in the modern world. 3 credits.

### **II. COURSE OBJECTIVES** The student will (in papers):

- A. Develop and utilize basic interpretive skills in interpreting the Bible (outcome 1, this is the focus of each assignment).
- B. Articulate an approach for interpreting the biblical text and explain one's methodology and rationale in texts (outcomes 3 & 5, accomplished in each assignment).
- C. Analyze samples of different genres of Scripture including covenant, narrative, parable, and epistle. Each of these are exegesis, exposition (including historical, cultural, grammatical, figures of speech, and any doctrines evident in the passage), and explaining applications for a contemporary context (outcomes 1, 2, 4 & 6, this is the focus of each assignment).

### **III. TEXTS**

#### **Required:**

**O** Osborne, Grant. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006. 13: 978-0-8308-2826-5.

**S** Sandy, Brent and Giese, Ronald. *Cracking Old Testament Codes*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995. 0-8054-1093-7.

A few chapters of **W** Walton, John. *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989. 0-310-36590-2 on reserve.

**Recommended** Commentaries & Dictionaries to help in assignments:

- Alexander, T. Desmond & Baker, David W. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003. 0-8308-1781-6
- Arnold, Clinton E. *Ephesians. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9* (revised). and *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*. Word Biblical Commentary 6A and 6B. Word, 2001 and 2002.
- Craigie, P. C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Davies, W. D. and Allison, Dale. *A Critical and Exegetical commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew. ICC. Vol. 3 Commentary on Matthew XIX-XXVIII*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997. Especially if you have Greek experience.
- Green, Joel; McKnight, Scot; Marshall, I. Howard. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992. 0-8308-1777-8
- Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 1-13. Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas, Word Books, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Matthew 14-28. Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas, Word Books, 1995.
- Hawthorne, Gerald; Martin, Ralph; Reid, Daniel. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993. 0-8308-1778-6
- Keener, Craig. *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 0-8028-3821-9
- Lincoln, Andrew. *Ephesians. Word Biblical Commentary 42*. Dallas: Word Books, 1990. 0-8499-0241-X
- Mayes, A. D. H. *Deuteronomy*. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants, 1979.
- McConville, J. G. *Deuteronomy: Apollos Old Testament Commentary*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002. 0-8308-2505-3
- Walton, John. *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989). 0-310-36590-2

Recommended Books for historical and philosophical issues include:

Burrows, Mark and Rorem, Paul. *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. 0-8028-3693-3

Farrar, Frederic. *History of Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961. 0-8010-3489-2

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. New York: Crossroad, 1984. 0-8245-0431-3

Hauser, Alan and Watson, Duane. *A History of Biblical Interpretation. Vol. 1 Ancient Period*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 0-8028-4273-9

Hauser, Alan and Watson, Duane. *A History of Biblical Interpretation. Vol. 2 Medieval and Reformation Periods*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 978-0-8028-4274-9

Hirsch, E. D. *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967. 0-300-016921

Kennard, Douglas Welker. *The Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, Press, 1999. 0-7734-8217-2

Ludin, Roger; Walout, Clarence and Thiselton, Anthony. *The Promise of Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 0-85364-900-6

Porter, Stanley and Robinson, Jason. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction to Interpretive Theory*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976. 0-912646-25-X

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967. 0-8070-1567-9

Thiselton, Anthony. *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. 0-8028-0006-8

Thiselton, Anthony. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 9780802864109 0802864104

Vanhoozer, Kevin. *Is There Meaning in this Text?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998. 0-310-21156-5

#### **IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- A. The student will read assignments in text according to schedule. 10% of final grade. Reported at the end of the semester.

- B. Assignment 1: Interpret Epistle: Interpret and explain the meaning of Ephesians 1:1-14. (1) Establish the text through textual criticism. The easiest way to do this is look up on reserve this passage in Roger Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament*. Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2006. Another way to do this is to compare when a King James Bible has words that are not within NASB, NIV or RSV. Write what the textual critical issues are, what decision you have made, and why. Use epistle form criticism to inform your interpretation. (2) Use diagramming of sentences to explain grammatical relationships. (3) Explain: each important term from a first century cultural & Pauline perspective, each preposition as it informs relationships occurring in the text, and figures of speech. Also explain how this passage contributes to important theology evident in the passage. Notice textual emphasis and use near textual appeals to support your statements. Use and cite commentaries. (4) For whom is this text applicable? How is this text to be applied? 30% final grade.
- C. Assignment 2: Deuteronomy 28. (1) OT textual critical issues are simpler, often you can assume the text as is. (2) Interpret and explain the meaning of Deuteronomy 28 in light of suzerainty treaty and its historical context. This text becomes the foundation from which OT and Jewish writing considers covenant nomism. (3) Itemize as many figures of speech as you can using categories from Osborne, pp. 124-30 and explain them. Explain what is being promised and connect it with events that happen in Israel's historical context. Notice textual emphasis. Use and cite commentaries. Also explain how this passage contributes to important theology evident in the passage. (4) For whom is this text applicable? How is this text to be applied? 30% final grade.
- D. Assignment 3: Matthew 19:16-20:16. (1) Establish the text through textual criticism. The easiest way to do this is look up on reserve this passage in Roger Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament*. Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2006. Another way to do this is to compare when a King James Bible has words that are not within NASB, NIV or RSV. Write what the textual critical issues are, what decision you have made, and why. (2) Interpret Narrative (of rich ruler & disciple's response), Enigmatic sayings (last first & first last), and Parable (landowner & laborers): Interpret and explain the meaning of Matthew 19:16-20:16. (3) Itemize and explain figures of speech. Notice textual emphasis by identifying multiple themes that permeate these sections. Does the meaning change if you allow one or a different theme to be more dominant? Use and cite commentaries. Also explain how this passage contributes to important theology evident in the passage. (4) What is the relationship between the narrative, enigmatic sayings, and the parable? What are the unifying themes in the context? (5) For whom is this text applicable? How is this text to be applied? 30% final grade.

## V. Grading Scale

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-69
- D 60-69

## VI. Policies

- A. Any late papers will have the grade deducted at a rate of 3% per calendar day, so include the date on which you turned in the late paper, or the date on which it is found will be assigned to it.
- B. Attendance is expected at all classes. Class participation is 10% final grade. Missing 4 classes constitutes failing the course.
- C. Electronic Equipment in Class  
It is expected that students will use technology (cell phones, laptop computers, iPads, etc.) during classes only for the purposes of class work. Therefore, students should turn off cell phones and refrain from texting and using laptop computers during classes except for the purposes of taking notes or doing research specifically authorized by the course instructor. Students who have emergency needs not covered by this policy must ask for an exception from the course instructor.
- D. Incompletes  
In cases of extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the instructor, a student may request and apply for an extension on all required assignments, which are not completed by the end of the semester or term, subject to a 5-point grade reduction on the final grade of each assignment. If an extension is granted, the instructor will record a grade of "I" (Incomplete) and set an extension of time, not to exceed thirty calendar days from the end of the class, within which to complete the work. Additional extensions may be granted only by the Academic Dean or Associate Dean and only after a student has petitioned the Dean in writing. If the course work is not completed within the extended time allotment, the grade of "I" will be converted to the grade earned by the student up to that point. The student is responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted to the registrar's office by the deadline published in the school calendar.
- E. Seminary Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is presenting the work of another person as one's own without giving proper credit for the use of the information. Students must not quote or paraphrase books, articles, essays, or Internet sites without giving proper credit to the author(s). Students should guard against plagiarism by crediting the original author through use of proper citations. Internet plagiarism is a particularly easy and tempting form of intellectual theft. Cutting and pasting sentences and paragraphs from the Internet without citations is plagiarism. Failure to cite Internet sources is plagiarism. Any student who is found guilty of plagiarism is subject to a range of consequences as outlined below.
  - 1. If a faculty member suspects plagiarism, the instructor will investigate. If suspicions are confirmed, the faculty member will present the evidence to the appropriate Associate Dean as a record of the offense. If the Associate Dean concurs with the allegations, the following procedures should be implemented as applicable:
    - a. The faculty member may discuss the offense with the student following consultation with the Associate Dean, but the student will meet with the Associate Dean.
    - b. For a first offense, the faculty member, in consultation with the Associate Dean, may give opportunity for a rewrite of the assignment or may assign a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment.

- c. For a particularly egregious case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the consequences could result in automatic failure of the course.
2. The student may appeal the above-mentioned decisions of the faculty member in writing to the Dean of the Faculty.
3. The second confirmed offense will result in expulsion from school. The student will be notified by a letter from the Dean of the Faculty. His or her only opportunity for appeal will be to the President in writing. The President's decision will be final.

#### F. EXTERNAL LIBRARY SERVICES

A student's ability to get the most out of library resources will enhance the possibility of earning a high grade in this class. Therefore, students should consider using, in addition to the HGST library, [Search HGST Library Holdings](http://66.196.218.34/common/servlet/presenthomeform.do?l2m=Home&tm=Home&l2m=Home) (<http://66.196.218.34/common/servlet/presenthomeform.do?l2m=Home&tm=Home&l2m=Home>), one or more of the following libraries.

Your ability to get the most out of library resources will enhance the possibility of your earning a high grade in this class. Therefore you should consider using, in addition to the HGST library, one or more of the following libraries.

*Houston Public Library*— Any resident of Texas can obtain a free Houston Public Library card. Library cardholders have access to all of the books in the library system as well as the use of free interlibrary loans, meaning that HPL cardholders can borrow almost any book available. Cardholders can use the library's website, [www.houstonlibrary.org](http://www.houstonlibrary.org), to search electronic research tools which include the "religion and philosophy database" by Ebsco, and JSTOR. They can also search the catalog and manage interlibrary loans. The website also contains links to WorldCat and other online databases that will enhance your research. The HPL location that is closest to HGST, the Collier Regional Branch (832.393.1740), is located at 6200 Pinemont, which is less than three miles from campus. A better option would be the newly expanded and renovated Central Library (832.393.1313), which is located downtown at 500 McKinney. In addition, HPL has many other locations. The HGST library can give you an application for an HPL library card, or you can print the application form from their website. (For more information, please visit [www.hpl.lib.tx.us](http://www.hpl.lib.tx.us)).

*Fondren Library at Rice University*— The Fondren Library (713.348.5113) is located at 6100 Main. For more information, please visit [www.rice.edu/fondren](http://www.rice.edu/fondren). The procedure for borrowing books at the Fondren Library is, first, go to the online catalog [[www.rice.edu/fondren](http://www.rice.edu/fondren)] to search for available books; second, go to the HGST library and fill out a form, signed by HGST library personnel, to take with you to the Fondren Library for each book; third, retrieve the book(s) yourself; fourth, take the book(s) and the signed form to the circulation desk to complete checkout (return the yellow copy to the HGST library; when the book(s) are returned to the Fondren Library, they will indicate so on the pink and gold copies; return the pink copy to the HGST Library and keep the gold copy for your records). Free parking is available on Wraxton near Ashby.

*Cardinal Beran Library at St Mary's Seminary*—the home of an extensive theological library, St Mary's Seminary (713.686.4345) is located at 9845 Memorial Drive, only 4.6

miles from HGST. For more information, please visit <http://beran.stthom.edu>. The Doherty Library on the main campus of University of St Thomas is also an option.

*Lanier Theological Library* – the home of an extensive private library with an online catalog. Go to <http://www.laniertheologicalibrary.org/> 14130 Hargrove, Houston, 77070, hours 9-5 M-F, 281-477-84500.

*Library of the Presbytery of the New Covenant* – as an HGST student you have borrowing privileges at this library located at 1110 Lovett Blvd, Houston. To search their online catalogue, go to <http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/cgi-bin/rqm/rqm.cgi>.

Other options include Harris County Public Library ([www.hcpl.net](http://www.hcpl.net)), where cardholders may use electronic research tools including the “religion and philosophy database” by Ebesco. Also available are the libraries at the University of Houston and Houston Baptist University.

## VII. Notes for Writing Assignments

- A. The instructor requires the use of footnotes for documentation. The student should number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers should be in the upper right hand corner, except for the first page of the paper (not counting the title page). Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings require a two-inch top margin.
- B. The student should utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.
- C. Critical or formal writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly. Failure to do so will be penalized.
  1. Avoid 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person references (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
  2. Never use contractions.
  3. Avoid passive voice construction (i.e. The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
  4. Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
  5. Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Failure to spellcheck will result in a substantive reduction on the grade for written assignments.
  6. Grammar check works as well!
  7. All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
  8. Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.

**VIII. CLASS SCHEDULE:** When assignments are due.

Jan.	27	Syllabus
Feb.	3	O: Intro, ch. 3, and appendix 1 & 2
	10	O: ch. 1, 2, 5; S: 1-3
	17	O: ch. 4, 14, 15, 13
	24	O: ch. 6; S: 6; W: 4
Mar.	3	<b>Assignment 1;</b> O: ch. 7; S: 4 & 5
	10	W: 1, 2
	24	O: ch. 10; S: 7 & 8
April	7	<b>Assignment 2;</b> O: ch. 11; S: 9
	14	O: ch. 9, 12; S: 12 & 13
	21	O: ch. 8; S: 10 & 11
	28	O: ch 15, 16; S: 14
May	5	O: ch 17, 18; <b>Assignment 3</b>
	1	<b>All graduates work must be turned in.</b>