BI 412 Biblical Hermeneutics

Fall Semester, 2017

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

**INSTRUCTOR:**  Jerry E. Shepherd, Ph.D.
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**SCHEDULE:** Tuesdays, 8:30 AM—12:15 PM, September 5—December 12

**CREDITS:** 3 [90 hours of work outside of class time]

**PREREQUISITES:** [omit if there are no prerequisites]

**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.

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this course, the student should:

1. Develop the skills necessary to interpret the Bible in its various contexts: linguistic, cultural, literary, historical, canonical, and Christological.
2. Develop the ability to interact with both popular and critical commentaries on the biblical text.
3. Develop a competency in the use of the various tools available to the student of the Scriptures: concordances, lexicons, word-study aids, dictionaries, atlases, encyclopedias.
4. Develop an appreciation for the history of biblical scholarship and interpretation.
5. Develop an attitude of humility before God and his word.
6. Develop skill in biblical research methods and documentation.
7. Know God more fully.
**TEXTBOOK:**

The Bible.


ISBN-10: 0310524172

The student must also have a copy of the Guide for Research and Writing (SBL style). This is available online on the seminary web site, 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)


**OTHER RECOMMENDED READING:**


REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class attendance and contribution. Though there is no actual percentage attached to this requirement, unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade.

2. The reading of the assigned textbook, articles, and pages from Group One. Again, no percentage is attached, but failure to do the assigned reading could lower your grade. (45 hours)

3. Seven typed 2-4 page exegetical papers using principles learned in texts and class lectures. (70%; 30 hours)

4. 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@urba nsanctuary.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. (10%; 5 hours)

5. Final exam on all readings and lectures during exam week. (20%; 10 hours)

EVALUATION: [give percentage allotted to each item that will be graded]

Exegesis Papers 70%
Spiritual Direction Sessions 10%
Final Exam 20%

PENALTIES:

All of the exegetical assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned dates. Unless there is a valid excuse late assignments will be charged a penalty of 5% per regular school day. Also, because the exegetical papers will be discussed at the beginning of class on their assigned due dates, if you have not completed an assignment, you will be asked to absent yourself from that particular discussion.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

As already mentioned, excessive unexcused absences and lack of participation may adversely affect your grade. More than three unexcused absences may result in failure for the course.

FINAL REMARKS:

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” (Guidelines for Research Writing, 2003, Rev 1.2; p. 11). 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.

Note that this course will also serve as an introduction to the use of the Guide for Research and Writing (SBL style) and to the proper methods of biblical research and documentation which you will be using throughout your seminary career.

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.

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 Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies (Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 2014) which is in Reading Room.

Moodle

There is a companion Moodle web site for this course located at https://moodle.sfseminary.edu All registered students will be given instructions for accessing the site. A number of important resources and links will be posted there.

General

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.
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
      2.5.2 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
## ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 5</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>Have read Poythress, “Divine Meaning of Scripture”</td>
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<td>Sept 19</td>
<td>First Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>Have read Steinmetz, “The Superiority of Pre-critical Exegesis,” and Waltke, “Is it Right to Read the New Testament into the Old?”</td>
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<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Second Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Third Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>Reading Week (no class)</td>
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<td>Oct 31</td>
<td>Fourth Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td>Nov 7</td>
<td>Fifth Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>Sixth Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td>Nov 28</td>
<td>Have read Poythress, “Christ the Only Savior of Interpretation”</td>
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<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>Seventh Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have read Shepherd, “Christological-Canonical Approach”</td>
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<td>Dec 12</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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