

BT101: Syllabus
Winter 2004
January 5-March 22
Section I: Tuesdays, 1:00-4:30 p.m.

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Hermeneutics

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the relationship of writer, text, and reader in the interpretation process (philosophical hermeneutics) and to methods for studying the Bible (exegesis). Students will gain practical skill in interpreting the primary literary genres of Scripture. This course should be taken as soon as possible after entering seminary.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The goals of this course are to introduce students to basic issues in biblical hermeneutics and to develop those skills by which the students will become careful interpreters of the biblical text. The objectives for each student are:

1. Develop a conceptual framework for understanding the roles of the author, text, and reader in the interpretive process.
2. Gain an awareness of the variety of biblical literary genres, and understand how genre affects interpretation.
3. Increase, through practice, skill in interpreting biblical texts in light of their literary and historical contexts.
4. Develop skill in applying hermeutical theory in ministry situations.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

OSBORNE, GRANT R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991. ISBN: 0-8308-1288-1

WOOD, D.R.W., ed. *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996. ISBN: 0-8308-1439-6 (**Note:** If you already own the 1982 2nd edition it is not necessary to purchase the 3rd edition.)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

These works are not required, but you may wish to consider adding one or all of them to your library.

ADLER, M. J. and C. VAN DOREN. *How to Read a Book*. Revised and Updated edition. New York: Touchstone, 1972. ISBN: 0-671-21209-5

BARTHOLOMEW, CRAIG, COLIN GREENE, and KARL MÖLLER, eds. *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. ISBN: 0-310-23411-5

DUVALL, J. SCOTT. and J. DANIEL HAYS. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. ISBN: 0-310-22832-8

VANHOOZER, KEVIN J. *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998. ISBN: 0-310-21156-5

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (PROVIDED TO STUDENTS):

BLOMBERG, CRAIG L. "The Globalization of Hermeneutics." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38 (1995): 581-93.

BRAY, GERALD. "Social Trends in Interpretation," and "Evangelical Trends in Interpretation." In *Biblical Interpretation Past & Present*, 507-83. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.

FEE, GORDON D. and DOUGLAS STUART. "The Basic Tool: A Good Translation" and "Appendix: The Evaluation and Use of Commentaries." In *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*, 2nd ed., 28-44, 246-54. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.

NEWBIGIN, J. E. LESSLIE. "Can the West Be Converted?" *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 6, 5 NS (1985): 25-37.

STEIN, ROBERT H. "The Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44,3 (2001): 451-66.

BT101 Hermeneutics CD ROM (2 Vol.). *Note: You will be billed \$5 to your student account for this CD ROM set.*

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Reading** (10%): All readings are to be completed as listed in the class schedule. Readings are to be completed by the start of the indicated class session. At the end of the course, students will submit a signed statement indicating what percentage (not pages read) of the reading was completed, and whether it was completed on time. Please keep track throughout the course of your completion of the reading.
2. **Exegesis Papers** (30%): One of the goals of this course is to enable the student to interpret biblical texts more effectively. To that end, students will engage in careful exegesis of three texts using methods taught in class. Specific instructions for these assignments are provided in this syllabus, and will be explained further in class or on the course CD ROM. All exegesis papers should be typed, except where handwriting is necessary in the passage map to show relationships. Exegesis papers are due at the start of class on January 27, February 17, and March 9 (see Course Schedule).
3. **Mini-Exams** (30%): There will be two mini-examinations in this class. The first is to be completed in Blackboard during the week of February 2 (must be completed no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 6). The second will be given at the beginning of class on March 16. A mini-exam is more substantial in length than a quiz, but less than a full examination. You will have about 25 minutes to complete the mini-exam. The mini-exam will consist of a variety of questions (true/false, multiple choice, short answer, essay) covering material dealt

with to that point in the course. Further information about the mini-exams will be provided in class.

4. **Hermeneutics in Practice (30%):** All students will complete the Case Studies assignment (letter a, below). Students will then choose **either** option (b) or (c).
 - a. **Case Studies:** Read through the scenarios described on the case study page in this syllabus. In no more than 1000 words (approximately 500 words per case study), sketch out your response to the people described in each case study. You will be evaluated in terms of how you use biblical texts in your response, and/or how you apply hermeneutical theory to the discussion (as appropriate). Your responses should move beyond “proof texts” and should demonstrate sensitivity to genre, context, etc. Do not limit yourself to one or two texts (or even one Testament) in formulating your response.
 - b. **Sermon Evaluation:** Listen to the sermon “Going On,” (on Amos 3) available on cassette and CD ROM in the library, or via streaming audio on the Internet (available at http://www.bethel.edu/seminary_academics/inmin/Courses/BT101V/bt101v1.ram). In 650-800 words, address the following:
 1. In terms of the hermeneutical theory and exegetical method discussed in class, how well has the preacher identified the meaning of the text? Be specific as to why you think as you do, and cite evidence for your view from the sermon.
 2. How well has the preacher taken into account the literary and historical contexts of his text?
 3. Are the implications identified in the sermon consistent with the pattern of meaning of the text? Why or why not?

IMPORTANT NOTE: The purpose of this project is **not** to evaluate the *preaching* of the sermon. The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the delivery, illustrations, etc., is not to be a part of your analysis. Rather, I am strictly interested in your analysis of the preacher’s use of the text (i.e., the hermeneutics).

- c. **Adult Education Course:** Develop an outline for an adult education course titled “How to Study Your Bible” that would be appropriate for use in your particular church setting. The course should involve 4-6 sessions of about one hour in length. Incorporate the following elements:
 1. Audience – describe the target audience for the course as specifically as possible. Include (at a minimum) descriptions in terms of age, culture, education level, spiritual maturity, and denomination.
 2. Goals and objectives in teaching the course.
 3. Session outlines – describe what will be taught in each session, including any practical exercises you will include. This should be outlined to 3 levels of detail (I, A, 1). That is, I should be able to tell what you are going to cover, and you should provide me with enough detail so that I can evaluate whether you understand what you are planning to teach.
 4. Rationale for what you have chosen to cover and what you have omitted.

5. Bibliography of resources you will use to prepare, and those you will recommend to your audience. You should have at least 5 resources *in addition* to resources used in this course.

Note that this is *not* a course about a particular book of the Bible using principles of hermeneutics. Rather, this is a lay-oriented course *about* hermeneutics.

All projects should be typed, double-spaced. *Handwritten assignments will not be accepted.* Both Hermeneutics in Practice projects are due on March 16 (see Course Schedule).

GRADING

Your work will be graded according to the following scale:

- 95 – 100 = A
- 85 – 86 = B-
- 75 – 76 = D+
- 93 – 94 = A-
- 83 – 84 = C+
- 72 – 74 = D
- 91 – 92 = B+
- 79 – 82 = C
- 70 – 71 = D
- 87 – 90 = B
- 77 – 78 = C-
- 69 and below = F

In addition to the student meeting due dates and using correct English, the following will serve as general criteria for grade levels:

A	Excellent work submitted; outstanding evidence of ability to synthesize and utilize course knowledge; initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments; creativity and originality manifested in assignment process and outcomes; positive contributions verbalized in class; and consistency and thoroughness of work submitted.
B	Good work submitted; substantial evidence of ability to analyze and utilize course knowledge; positive contributions verbalized in class; and consistency and thoroughness of work submitted.
C	Satisfactory performance and thoroughness of work submitted; moderate evidence of ability to utilize knowledge of the subject; and satisfactory class contribution.
D	Poor performance in comprehension of work submitted; and meets minimal credit standard of the professor.
F	Inadequacy of work submitted or performance and attendance in class.

Please note that satisfactory completion of the assigned work does not result in a grade of A. I expect that as graduate students you are all able to complete the assignments satisfactorily. Grades of A are given to work that is consistently outstanding.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Any work that involves plagiarism or cheating will be assigned a grade of “0.” Repeated or especially egregious violations may result in the denial of credit for the course, in accordance with the policy outlined in the current catalog. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse. If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, it is up to you to take the initiative to find out.

LATE WORK AND INCOMPLETES

All assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the date indicated on the course schedule. Unless *prior* arrangements are made with the professor, late work will be penalized 10% for each day it is overdue, beginning with the first day. (That is, an assignment turned in after the start of class but on the

same day is still penalized 10%. The next 10% is taken off 24 hours after the start of class.) *No assignments will be accepted more than five days late.* Students should take the initiative as much in advance as possible to alert the professor to extenuating circumstances. I am more than willing to take emergencies and crises of various sorts into account. Note, however, that though they often precipitate a crisis or emergency of one kind or another, procrastination, over-scheduling, and over-committing (even in the context of a worthwhile endeavor like ministry) do not constitute a crisis or emergency. Circumstances that a congregation would accept for a pastor's missing a Sunday sermon would constitute an emergency and crisis for which latitude will be granted.

In accordance with the policy in the current catalog (p. 86), a grade of incomplete is granted only by written contract. Please see the catalog for full details.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and on-time class attendance is a necessary part of the learning experience. Unexcused absences beyond one class period (or equivalent) will result in a grade reduction. Absences will be excused at the professor's discretion, according to the standards described above regarding late assignments. Please make every effort to attend every class session, and to be on-time.

ACCESSIBILITY

Please contact me as soon as possible if disability-related accommodations are needed. Accommodations for students with documented disabilities are set up through the Office of Disability Services. Contact Kathy McGillivray, Director of Disability Services, at (651) 635-8759.

PO Boxes

Please ensure that your Seminary PO box number appears on every assignment you turn in.

AN INVITATION

Please let me know if I can help you in any way. Feel free to stop by my office, or make an appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	COURSE TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
1/6	Course Introduction Why Hermeneutics?	
1/13	The Locus of Meaning Exegetical Method	Read: Osborne Introduction, chs. 1-2 <i>New Bible Dictionary</i> , "Texts and Versions," pp. 1164-79 Fee & Stuart Essays View: Guidelines for Exegesis
1/20	Interpretation of Biblical Narrative	Read: Osborne chs. 6, 11 1 Sam 1:1-2:11 2 Sam 11-12
1/27	Vocabulary for Interpretation	Read: Stein article Osborne chs. 9-10 Due: Exegesis Paper One
2/3	Study Break – No Class	Read: Osborne chs. 3-4 Due: Mini-Exam #1 (in Blackboard) by 5:00 p.m. on 2/6
2/10	Study Break – No Class	Read: Osborne pp. 149-51; chs. 7-8 Psalm 32 View: CD ROM lecture "Interpretation of Biblical Poetry" (On vol. 1)
2/17	Presuppositions and Interpretation	Read: Blomberg essay Newbigin Essay Osborne ch. 5 Gen 1-2 Due: Exegesis Paper Two
2/24	Interpretation of Epistles	Read: Osborne ch. 12 Philemon Philippians
3/2	Validity in Interpretation	Read: Osborne Appendices 1 and 2 View: Hermeneutics Video (Disk 2)
3/9	Trends in Interpretation	Read: Bray Essays Osborne chs. 13-14 Due: Exegesis Paper Three
3/16	Mini-Exam #2 From Text to Application	Due: Hermeneutics in Practice Projects Due: Reading Report (on Miniexam)

Hermeneutics in Practice: CASE STUDIES

Due: March 16

(note that one other project is also due; see page 3)

Case Study 1:

Your longtime friend, Darnell, comes to you one day and wants to talk. He is not a Christian, and has shown little interest in matters of faith. Recently, however, he has begun to ask searching questions about the meaning of his life. He respects your faith, and is willing to listen to you.

“I just heard some preacher on the radio,” he says, “going on about homosexuality. What is it with Christians and homosexuality? Doesn’t the Bible prohibit all sorts of things that we do everyday? I seem to remember that the Bible says you can’t wear clothes made out of two kinds of fabric, or cook a kid in his mother’s milk. And doesn’t the Bible also say women can’t wear gold or pearls? Why is homosexuality such a big deal then? You know I’m not a homosexual, but I don’t see why it has to be such a big issue. What’s the difference between that and the other things that are prohibited?”

What would you say to Darnell?

Case Study 2:

You are having a conversation with Jayne, whom you have gotten to know only slightly in an adult Sunday school class. Jayne has been a Christian for just a couple of months. Jayne has been reading her Bible eagerly since her conversion, and is seeking to apply what she has read to her life and world. In the course of the conversation, the subject of helping the poor somehow arises. Jayne excitedly says, “I’ve been reading about that in the Bible. In Proverbs 10:3-4 it says, ‘The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry but he thwarts the craving of the wicked. Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.’ This means to me that poor people are lazy, and that’s why they’re poor. Also, they can’t be righteous, since the first verse says ‘the LORD does not let the righteous go hungry.’ So I think they are getting what they deserve.”

How would you respond to Jayne?

Exegesis Paper One: Genesis 39

Due: January 27

1. Read Genesis 37-50. Since Genesis 39 is part of the overall Joseph narrative, you will need to be familiar with the flow of the entire narrative.
2. Read Genesis 39 carefully in at least two translations. Be sure to report which translations you consulted. In 200-400 words, describe the key features of this narrative by addressing the following issues (this is *not* an exhaustive list): What literary devices/techniques do you find employed in this chapter? What are key themes/ideas in it? What words/phrases are repeated? How do they contribute to the understanding of the author's intended meaning?
3. **Passage Map**
 - Divide the chapter into scenes, and provide a heading/title for each scene.
 - Prepare a graph of the text to show how tension builds and is relieved, as shown in class.
 - Identify the climax of the narrative.
4. In about 500 words, describe what you feel is the meaning of this text. Defend your answer with data from the text. Your answer should take into account the flow of the chapter itself, but also should take into account how this narrative supports the entire Joseph narrative of Genesis 37-50. Your analysis should clearly address *why* the author of Genesis included this particular narrative in the overall narrative of Genesis 37-50.
5. In 300-400 words, explain how this text could be applied to the church today (i.e., what are implications of this text).

Exegesis Paper Two: Psalm 46

Due: February 17

1. For background, read the articles “Psalms, Book Of,” and “Poetry (OT),” in *New Bible Dictionary*. For this exercise, you should *use the translation of Psalm 46 found in the NASB*.
2. **Passage Map**
 - ❑ Begin by identifying the major sections of the Psalm, based on form and content. Name each section with a brief heading.
 - ❑ Identify parallel lines in the psalm. Double space between each set of parallel lines. Bear in mind that there may be more than two lines in parallel with each other, though this is the most common.
 - ❑ Identify the relationship between the lines using the categories discussed on the CD ROM (e.g., synonymous parallelism, antithetical parallelism, synthetic parallelism, etc.).
3. **Imagery and Aesthetics.** Read through the psalm carefully and identify all the imagery in the psalm. In 400-500 words, discuss how these figures of speech enhance the reading/hearing experience of the original reader/listener. What emotional response is the author of the psalm attempting to evoke on the part of the original reader or listener? What would the psalm be like if these were replaced by non-metaphorical expressions of the same "truths"? How do the images relate to each other? Pay careful attention to contextual clues in your analysis.

Practice reading the poem out loud until your reading becomes unstilted and expressive, until your oral reading "explains" the psalm. You may be asked to share your oral interpretation of the psalm with the class.
4. Identify and discuss the communicative intention of the author of the psalm in about 250 words.
5. In 200-300 words, address how this text is relevant to a modern congregation.

Exegesis Paper Three: Romans 2: 6-11

Due: March 9

1. Read through the Book of Romans, and note any clues you find as to the situation being addressed by the letter. If you have access to Bible software (the program LOGOS is available on computers in the library) print a copy of the letter eliminating all headings from the text (they can be misleading) and chapter numbers. After you have noted all historical clues in the letter, read the article “Romans, Epistle To The,” in *NBD*. (You may want to also read the lengthy article “Paul,” but this is not required.) In 300-400 words, describe the historical situation addressed in the letter. Be sure to cite information from *NBD* with page numbers (e.g., *NBD*, 1035), and provide references for evidence from the letter itself (e.g., 1:27).
2. **Passage Map.**
 - ❑ Read Romans 2:6-11 again carefully. Key to understanding the text is understanding how it supports the overall argument of the letter. Using the translation provided below, divide the passage into separate propositions (a group of words with a verb). You do not need to separate relative clauses (beginning usually with who, which, etc.) into separate propositions (though you may if you wish).
 - ❑ Describe the relationship between propositions using the terminology taught in class, and on the handout “Logical Connections.” You will turn in this map of the passage. Include any other markings that are helpful to you in understanding the flow of the argument in this passage.
 - ❑ In no more than 500 words, describe the relationship between propositions. This will be primarily a prose explanation of the map you have already completed.
3. **Key Idea.** In 300-500 words, articulate and defend the meaning of this passage. Your statement of the meaning of the passage should be past tense, third-person. Your defense should cite contextual evidence, and should show how this passage relates to what immediately precedes and follows.

Translation to be used for map:¹

⁶[For] God will repay each person according to his or her works. ⁷He will grant eternal life to those who by persevering in a good work seek glory and honor and incorruptibility. ⁸But he will inflict wrath and anger on those who act out of selfish ambition, disobey the truth, and submit to unrighteousness. ⁹There shall be tribulation and distress for every person who does what is evil, both the Jew first and also the Greek. ¹⁰But there shall be glory and honor and peace to everyone who accomplishes what is good, both to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹For there is no partiality with God.

¹ T.R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 112.

MINI-EXAM IN BLACKBOARD

Please follow these instructions carefully to ensure a smooth assessment experience.

1. The mini-exam is **closed book**. You may not use any books (including the Bible), notes, or other resources (including electronic media) in completing this exam.
2. You may take the mini-exam at any point you feel ready, but it must be completed by the dates indicated in the syllabus (see Course Schedule). To take the mini-exam, you must log on to Blackboard, at <http://blackboard.bethel.edu/>. You will need your login name and password for your Bethel computer account to access the site.
3. In Blackboard, you will see an announcements page and a number of buttons on the left hand side. The mini-exam is located in "Course Documents."
4. You will have a specific, limited period of time to complete the mini-exam. The amount of time is indicated in the instructions to the mini-exam. Blackboard will keep track of the time and will warn you when you are approaching the end of the allotted time. Please note that the clock runs from when you open the mini-exam, so plan accordingly.
5. If you get disconnected from Blackboard, you may not be able to submit your exam. To avoid this, you must make sure you have disabled call waiting (if you are working from home). In addition, you must know when (if ever) your Internet service provider (ISP) will disconnect you after periods of inactivity. (This is not applicable to those of you who are not using dial up connections.) Some ISPs will disconnect you if there is no web-browsing activity for a certain period of time. If it is a relatively short period of time (fewer than 30 minutes), you may get disconnected while taking the mini-exam, in which case you cannot submit your mini-exam, and your work will be lost. If your allowed idle time is short, open another browser window and refresh your home page occasionally while you take the test. (You can easily shift between open browser windows by using the key combination ALT + Tab.) This will ensure that there is sufficient browsing activity so that your ISP does not disconnect you. Please note that taking the mini-exam in Blackboard is not web-browsing activity. So, even though you are hard at work, your ISP will think you are idle, and may disconnect you. That is why you need to have a second browser window open that you can refresh to demonstrate to the ISP that you are using the connection.
6. It is advisable for all students to open a second window in Blackboard when you take the mini-exam. If you are disconnected for some reason, you MAY be able to submit your work by logging back in via the login in the second browser window. Once you have re-connected to Blackboard, you can try to submit your work. This may not work, however.
7. Once you open the mini-exam, you cannot leave it and come back later. That means, first, you need to allot an appropriate block of time where you can work uninterrupted and complete the mini-exam. If you go over the allotted time, you may not be able to submit the mini-exam. Even if you are able to submit, points will be deducted for going over time. The allotted time is ample to allow you to complete the mini-exam. If you attempt to re-enter after having opened the mini-exam, the system will not let you access the mini-exam again.

If there is a legitimate reason for which you exited the mini-exam without submitting, I may allow you to re-enter the mini-exam. Please note, though, that this will need to be a VERY

substantial reason (e.g., the house caught fire while taking the mini-exam so you had to exit immediately). I will be very strict on this, as I have no way of knowing how much of the mini-exam you would have seen. I have to be fair to all students, and giving one student a second chance after having seen the mini-exam would simply not be fair unless there was some very substantial reason for exiting the mini-exam. Should that situation arise, you may be required to complete an additional assessment in order to allow me to verify your apprehension of the material.

If you are unable to submit your mini-exam because you are disconnected, I may allow you to take the mini-exam over again. If, however, you did not take the precautions detailed here, I may impose a penalty on you, again in order to be fair to students who completed the mini-exam in one sitting without having seen the questions and having had a chance to think for a prolonged period about the questions. If you have taken these precautions and have experienced a problem anyway, there will be no penalty.

8. If you experience a problem, contact Scott Strand (s-strand@bethel.edu; 651-635-8587) and see if he can help you. You must also notify me as soon as possible about the problem you have experienced. Please think ahead about taking your mini-exam. If you decide to take the mini-exam on the day before it is due at midnight, you will not be able to get assistance if problems arise. It will minimize everybody's stress level if you plan ahead.