



Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics
BSHM5310 Fall 2021 Tu/Th 9:30-10:50am
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division

Instructors:

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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 purpose for this course is to discover the principles and methods of sound interpretation of the biblical text and make application in written assignments. 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 student would develop sound methods of exegesis and application of biblical texts.

Student Learning Objectives

Knowledge (Cognitive)

Students who complete this course successfully should:

- Understand the significance of hermeneutics for biblical exposition
- Know the basic methods of biblical interpretation that have been practiced throughout history • Know basic principles of grammatical-historical interpretation that lead interpreters to discover the meaning intended by the biblical author
- Know the major genres of scripture and the hermeneutical principles that should be applied to each genre
- Know the important tools that may be useful in the study of the biblical text • Know principles that guide modern preachers and teachers in applying biblical truths to our contemporary context

Attitudes & Values (Affective)

Students who complete this course successfully should:

- Appreciate the complexities of the exegetical task
- Recognize the importance of sound exegesis
- Be more confident in interpreting biblical texts

Skills (Psychomotor)

Students who complete this course successfully should be able to:

- Contextualize New Testament texts within their ancient historical, cultural, social, and literary settings for the purpose of interpretation
- Prepare word studies that lead the interpreter to understand better the biblical author's usage of special vocabulary significant to the exegetical task

- Write a formal paper using required form and style guidelines that integrates learning activities of the course into the sound exegesis of an assigned passage
- Derive timeless truths from the biblical text and show how these should affect the beliefs and behavior of contemporary Christians

Embedded Assignment

Students will compose an application-rich presentation of the contemporary impact of a passage of scripture on the basis of their exegetical research. This Stage 1 assignment of 1,500 to 2,000 words will build upon prior historical, lexical, and interpretative work done throughout the semester.

Textbooks

1. Any modern English translation of the Bible
2. Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014 (“FS”)
3. Klein, William, Blomberg, Craig, and Robert Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Third edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017 (“KBH”)

Course Teaching Methodology

Class sessions will consist of presentations overviewing units of study followed by general discussion. Readings and lectures are central to covering the knowledge base needed for the course. Biblical texts are used as examples to illustrate hermeneutical principles discussed in class. The combination of reading, lectures, multimedia, class discussions, and small groups should help build appreciation for sound exegesis of the Bible. Class preparation will consist of textbook readings according to the syllabus schedule and execution of written assignments. The student’s skills as an exegete are developed through written assignments related to word studies, background studies, and an exegetical paper.

Course Requirements

Reading, Attendance, and Participation

Students are required to read the assigned pages of each textbook prior to each class period and arrive on time prepared to discuss the topic of the day. This requirement is crucial to the student’s ability to absorb lecture material presented during the workshop. More than nine hours of class attendance missed results in a failing grade. Exceptions for excessive absences must be based upon medical and/or administrative approval.

Historical Background Study (3,000 to 4,000 words)

The student will compile a background study into the historical and cultural context for an assigned passage. The study should include primary and secondary sources and the student’s own evaluation of the subject in light of the sources. The student will address these components of a background study: (1) authorship, audience, occasion, and date; (2) the sociocultural and/or theological themes explicitly or implicitly addressed in the assigned passage.

Word Study (1,500 to 2,000 words)

The student will compile a word study on a subset of significant words within the assigned passage using the tools discussed in the course.

Exegetical Paper Stage 1 (5,000 to 6,000 words)

This is the embedded assignment for this course, and will be graded according to the rubric attached to the end of this syllabus. A sample outline is also available at the end of the syllabus for further guidance on structuring this part of the paper. The exegetical paper will be submitted in two stages. This first stage of the final paper contains the primary steps to be taken in a full-blown exegesis of a biblical passage.

The paper must follow the steps listed below, in the order given. This paper is not a typical term paper in the sense of having an ordered introduction, purpose statement, thought development, and conclusion. The final product will be a collection of the separate sections, but they are all ordered in a logical sequence that should help in sermon preparation. In doing this exercise, the essential steps for a proper exegesis are learned.

Historical Background Study *Reshaped* (2 pages). Drawing the most pertinent information from your earlier background paper (don't just copy and paste), explain clearly how the historical background affects the interpretation of your text.

Word Study *Reshaped* (1 page). Include here the major results of the previously completed word study. Explain clearly how the word study affects the interpretation of your text. Do not include all of the raw data presented earlier.

Literary Analysis (3-5 pages). Using commentaries and other sources, outline the thematic development of your book. Based on that preliminary outline, create a verbose, detailed outline presenting the immediate context of your passage, explaining how the structure of your assigned passage fits into both the larger context and the more immediate context. Use indentations to show the subordination or coordination of ideas in each paragraph. Be innovative yet faithful to the nuances embedded by the original author.

Thematic Analysis (1 page). In single-sentence statements, identify the themes (explicit and implicit, major and minor) of each thought unit. This may be a key sentence taken directly from the text or a formulation of the major thoughts, ideas, or topics at work in the passage. Justify the judgment in each case.

Verse-by-Verse Analysis (3-5 pages). Comment on important features of individual verses. (In a longer passage, focus on each paragraph instead of each verse.) Do not merely summarize each verse (or paragraph) or re-state the obvious. Do comment on the flow of the argument or storyline from verse to verse (or paragraph to paragraph), including comments upon why certain things are stated in the particular way they are, why certain statements are included where they are, why there may be omissions of expected materials, etc. Comment as needed on important theological words or ideas. Notice where else in the book or in other biblical books certain words or ideas are found. Provide a running commentary on the text in light of the historical context, special vocabulary, and topical thematic analyses. Be sure to identify intertextual quotations. The student may address allusions and echoes, but the purpose of this project is not to pursue those ideas beyond understanding the assigned text in and of itself. Concordances, theological word books, and cross-referencing guides may be used, but YOU SHOULD NOT USE COMMENTARIES FOR THIS SECTION.

Commentary Comparison (1-2 pages min.). Include here any additional essential insights gleaned from three exegetical commentaries. These must be insights not already addressed in the exegetical work. Consult the sample outline at the end of the syllabus for further guidance on structuring the final paper. For the purposes of this paper, commentaries should NOT be consulted EXCEPT when working on the Literary Analysis and Commentary Comparison sections.

Exegetical Paper Stage 2 (1,500 to 2,000 words)

Stage 2 is all about application of the biblical passage. The following three areas must be addressed: (1) Connect the contemporary audience with the text by creating a means by which your hearers hear and see what the original audience understood. Use insights drawn from your Stage 1 exegesis. (2) Establish the intended purpose of the text by helping your audience see, based on clues embedded in the text, how the author accomplished this purpose. (3) Provide appropriate points of application so that the contemporary audience can readily perceive how the text demands a response from them. Using the research developed in Stage 1, the student is to write a polished paper demonstrating the understanding of appropriate principles guiding the exegetical process for the particular genre assigned.

They are to demonstrate the use of appropriate tools, methods, and resources in the application of sound exegetical principles and communicate the meaning of the text, keeping in mind the contemporary audience. The paper may take two forms: (1) a ready to deliver, word-for-word sermon manuscript, or (2) a teaching article or outline, as could be found in a publication or small group literature. Use bullet points or paragraph narrative indicating how this text should be presented in the context of your choosing. Specify the context in the paper, and develop the application(s), employing insights from all Stage 1 components. Using tools discussed in the course, Stage 2 should build upon, not simply repeat, earlier assignments.

Sample outline of exegetical paper

Stage 1

1. **Introduction:** Build interest; indicate the purpose for the paper, the general nature of the passage being studied, and the exegetical promise of the passage
2. **Text, Background, and Word Study:** Provide the translation for the assigned passage. Include results of your word study and background study, along with other background to the document under study.
 - a. **Text**—Provide your translation with verse numbers and paragraph divisions. If an English exegesis, provide the text of the English version you are using, and footnote the bibliographic data of this publication.
 - b. **Historical Background**—Summarize in a concise and condensed form your previous background study of a key topic in the passage. Give historical background material pertinent to the specific document and author and the particular passage being studied.
 - c. **Word Study**—Summarize in a concise and condensed form your previous word study of a theologically significant term in the passage.
3. **Exegetical Analysis:** Provide the basic exegesis of this biblical passage. This exegesis should be focused on the principal literary context of the passage or topic at hand, as well as a literary analysis of the material.
 - a. **Literary Context**—Overview the literary context of your particular passage in terms of its placement in the immediate and larger outline of the document.
 - b. **Literary Analysis**—Indicate the internal structure of the logic and argument of the passage and an exegetical outline, with critical commentary of the verses.
 - c. **Conclusion/Central Theme**—Conclude by summarizing the main results of the research, what has been learned from the background and exegetical analysis. Finally, state the central theme of the passage in one concise sentence as supported by the exegetical analysis, and then expand on the idea. Indicate a central biblical truth supported by the passage to guide teaching and preaching.

Stage 2

4. **Practical Application:** Anticipate an application of this passage in a ministry setting. This application is your choice, and could be a bible study, a sermon, a women's conference, a retreat, or some other ministry setting.
 - a. **Title**—Give a title for the application that either invokes a key idea or teases the audience with an interesting angle (not trite, though, such as silly puns or simplistic play on words).
 - b. **Truth**—State the central truth or Christian living key to come from studying or preaching this passage, derived directly from the theme indicated above.
 - c. **Objective**—Provide a clear, concise statement of the desired lesson or sermon outcome and an appropriate audience response.
 - d. **Outline**—Not the same as the exegetical outline, which follows grammar and logic flow, this outline is based upon the exegetical work but is developed topically or logically for teaching or preaching the passage.
 - e. **Development**—This might include your opening attention getter or illustration or activity, and a fleshing out of the outline with points and appropriate illustrations; f. **Conclusion**—This might include your final illustration, activity, or teaching aid that reinforces the focal truth or challenge.

Evaluation of Grade

Preparation, textbook readings, and participation:	10%
Background study:	20%
Word study:	20%
Exegetical paper stage 1 (exegesis):	25%
Exegetical paper stage 2 (application):	25%

Extra Credit (1,500 to 2,000 words)

Extra credit may be earned by formally reviewing one of the following books (due along with stage 2 of the final paper at the time of the final exam):

Corley, Lemke, and Lovejoy. *Biblical Hermeneutics*
 Crenshaw, James. *Trembling at the Threshold of a Biblical Text*
 Dyrness, William. *How Does America Hear the Gospel?*
 Felder, Cain Hope, ed. *Stony the Road We Trod*
 Kaiser, Jr., Walter C. and Moises Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*
 Silva, Moises. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*
 Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*
 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*

Special Note to graduating seniors. All submissions must be made by 12/2/21, unless otherwise approved by the professor.

Ricky's rubric for evaluation of written assignments

	Substance (40%)	Research (30%)	Composition (20%)	Presentation (10%)
A	<p>Presentation of original concepts with subtlety and depth in conversation with major sources</p> <p>Strong, complete arguments with clear connection to data</p> <p>Research question relevant to the nature of the text, the needs of the church, and the norms of the academy</p> <p>Discovery, use and presentation of significant quantity of high-quality data</p>	<p>Thorough representation of the field</p> <p>Meaningful use of sources</p> <p>Responsible interaction with sources</p> <p>Transparent acknowledgment of sources</p>	<p>Compelling, readable prose</p> <p>Unique, confident authorial voice establishing rapport with reader</p> <p>Serious style but not stuffy</p> <p>Very well-ordered thinking and wording</p>	<p>Clean text without distractions</p>
B	<p>Promising but inconsistent or incomplete arguments</p> <p>Competent conceptual development</p>	<p>Serviceable representation of the field</p> <p>Ambiguous acknowledgment of sources</p>	<p>Serviceable presentation of research</p>	<p>Minor errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or formatting</p>
C	<p>Failure to connect arguments with data</p> <p>Ambiguous concepts</p> <p>Inaccurate data</p> <p>Relevance is obscure</p>	<p>Shallow representation of the field, or reliant on small subset of sources</p> <p>Ambiguous acknowledgment of sources</p>	<p>Inconsistent language sometimes obscuring content or degrading research credibility</p>	<p>Frequent errors obscuring content</p>
D	<p>Derivative arguments</p> <p>Obscure concepts</p> <p>Grossly inaccurate data</p> <p>Research is off-topic or irrelevant</p>	<p>Inaccurate representation of the field</p> <p>Irresponsible or insignificant handling of sources</p>	<p>Damaged language obscuring content and degrading research credibility</p>	<p>Pervasive errors obscuring content</p>
F	<p>No effort evident</p>	<p>No effort evident</p>	<p>No effort evident</p>	<p>No effort evident</p>

Resources

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Writing Style Guide

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>

Help with Writing

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Policy

Attendance: See current Graduate catalog.

Completion of all assignments: Students are expected to complete and submit all assignments during the semester in order to receive a passing grade for this course.

Make-Up & Extra Credit: Failure to submit any major assignment (worksheets) will result in failure of the course. Even if late work is allowed, there could be as much as a letter grade drop per day. Notifying the professor and grader of accidents, illness, or church/family-related- unavoidable delays can lessen this penalty or allow us to grant some measure of grace.

Citizenship/Conduct: Class participation (or lack thereof) directly affects the final grade for this course. Thus, proper behavior and attire are expected at all times in the classroom. Open food and drinks are not permitted, though bottled drinks are (so long as capped). Should the professor be delayed, students are requested to wait fifteen minutes before leaving. Class is then dismissed unless otherwise directed. For questions concerning these policies, please visit me at HSC 210.

Library: Students should be conscientious of other classmates when researching for the worksheets. In the event of classes moving to a BlueJeans virtual classroom, we will discuss an alternative research approach for the third worksheet.

Cell Phones: Conversations & texting are not allowed during class time. My policy is for phones to be on vibrate (but not answered) or off. Playing, surfing, answering calls, or texting can result in expulsion (with absence) from that class day. Repeated offenses can lead to permanent expulsion from class. Please be conscientious of others and turn off all cell phones. This behavior impacts attendance and participation grades.

Computers: The use of computers in the classroom is a privilege. Computers should be used to take notes or gain access to pertinent material for lectures. When caught using technology for surfing Social Media, news, games, email, etc. may result in reprimand, expulsion for the day (thus counted as an absence), loss of privilege for using technology for the remainder of the semester, or even dismissal from the class (for belligerent, repeated offenders).

Plagiarism: Students are given the task of writing reports & answering worksheet questions in order to help them learn how to think critically about the ideas of others and to present the result of their analysis in a readable form. Plagiarism defeats these purposes by cheating the student out of an opportunity to grow. Plagiarism is a failure to distinguish between the work of the student and the work of others, either intentionally or unintentionally. Students that plagiarize will be reported to the Dean of Students & a grade of “F” will be assigned. Self-plagiarism (reuse of assignments submitted in other courses) is not acceptable.

Course Schedule

Date	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1: Aug 17-19	Intro & Model Components FS: 17-31; KBH: 3-21	Ancient Jewish Models KBH: 23-31
Week 2: Aug 24-26	Ancient Christian Models to Reformation , KBH: 31-52	Post-Reformation to Postmodern Models KBH: 52-102
Week 3: Aug 31-Sep 2	Canon and Translation FS: 33-53, 265-75 KBH: 103-31, 505-43	Tools & Background studies <i>Choose study passage for project</i>
Week 4: Sep 7-9	Tools & Word Studies: Old & New KBH: 213-72	Library Practicum
Week 5: Sep 14-16	Interpreters and Goals KBH: 135-209	Narrative FS: 8-106 <i>Optional: Submit draft of background study for feedback</i>
Week 6: Sep 21-23	Narrative KBH: 323-41	Law FS: 163-80 KBH: 341-51
Week 7: Sept 28-30	Epistles FS: 55-70 KBH: 426-40	Epistles FS: 71-987 KBH: 477-504 <i>Background Study Due</i>
Oct 5-7	Fall Break (no class)	
Week 8: Oct 10-12	Gospels FS: 127-148	Gospels KBH: 399-418
Week 9: Oct 19-21	Parables FS: 149-62	Acts FS: 107-25 KBH: 418-26 <i>Word Study Due</i>
Week 10: Oct 26-28	Wisdom/Poetry FS: 225-48 KBH: 361-413, 451-61	Psalms FS: 205-24

Week 11: Nov 2-4	Prophecy FS: 181-204	Prophecy KBH: 359-87
Week 12: Nov 9-11	Apocalyptic (Old & New) FS 249-64	Apocalyptic KBH: 440-49 <i>Exegetical Paper Stage 1 Due</i>
Nov 16-18	Evangelical Theological Society Annual Meeting (no class)	
Nov 23-25	Thanksgiving Break (no class)	
Week 13: Nov 30-Dec 2	Special Topics	Special Topics
Dec 7	Final Exam Week (no class) <i>Exegetical Paper Stage 2 Due at Posted Time of Final Exam</i> <i>Graduating students must submit on last day of class (Dec 2)</i>	

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**Embedded Assignment Competency Assessment Rubric
BSHM5310 Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics**

Student: _____ **Site:** _____

Semester: _____ **Format:** _____

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. The student will be able to understand the principles guiding the exegetical process for biblical interpretation.
2. The student will be able to use appropriate tools, resources, and methods to apply sound exegetical principles toward biblical interpretation.
3. The student will be able to communicate clearly the meaning of the biblical text to a contemporary audience.

Assignment Description:

1. The exegetical paper will serve as the embedded assignment instrument to assess competency.
2. The student should indicate an understanding of the principles guiding the exegetical process for biblical interpretation.
3. The student should indicate the use of appropriate tools, methods, and resources in the application of sound exegetical principles.
4. The student should communicate clearly the meaning of the biblical text, keeping in mind the contemporary audience

DOMAIN	LEVEL	EVALUATION				
		0	1	2	3	4
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					