

BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS (BSHM 5310)

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division—Spring 2015

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NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

COURSE PURPOSE, CORE VALUE FOCUS, AND CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “academic excellence” especially highlighted in this course. The seminary is emphasizing the core value of “spiritual vitality” this year and encourages all to focus especially on that facet.

NOBTS also has seven basic competencies that guide our Masters degree programs: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual & Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. This course addresses the “Biblical Exposition” competency especially by helping the student learn to interpret the Bible accurately.

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 LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The objectives of 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:

The goals of this course dictate in large part the teaching methods. Readings and lectures are central to covering the knowledge base needed for the course. Handing numerous texts from the Bible in class discussions and student groups helps build an appreciation for sound exegesis of the Bible. Elaborating word studies, background studies, and an exegetical project/paper aids in the use and development of the student’s skills as an exegete.

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 tools are helpful as supplementary aids, such as concordances, Bible dictionaries, background studies of the Biblical world, introductory books on the OT and NT, exegetically based commentaries, and

computer software for Bible study.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

(NOTE: THE LATE PENALTY ON ALL ASSIGNMENTS IS FIVE POINTS PER DAY)

1. **Reading Quizzes (10%).** Students are to read the portions of the required texts prior to coming to class on the day for which the readings are noted in the class schedule below. A quiz will be given at the start of the class period on the assigned readings.

2. **Book and Genre Background Study (10%).** Compile a background study about the genre-specific characteristics for the book for an assigned passage as well as the historical setting of the book (author, recipients, etc.). 2-4 pages. Due at the *beginning of class* February 25.

3. **Specific Passage Background Study (10%).** Compile a historical and literary background study for the assigned passage. This includes the context of the passage within the larger argument of the book and within the scope of the surrounding passages immediately before and after the assigned passage in the book. 2-4 pages. Due at the *beginning of class* March 5.

4. **Words and Phrases Background Study (10%).** Complete a background study on some of the specific words and phrases within the assigned passage. For example, this could be on Pharisees if they are mentioned in the passage. 2-4 pages. Due at the *beginning of class* March 19.

5. **Project (30%).** 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).

(1) First stage (15%). The *first stage* is a thorough exegetical study that is to follow the attached guidelines, 10-12 pages in length. At the end of this stage, the student should have gathered all the essential knowledge about the text and be ready to begin constructing a sermon or a teaching lesson. Due April 23.

(2) Second stage (15%). The *stage two paper* is a polished paper, 5-6 text pages in length, presenting the information gathered in the first stage in ready-to-deliver form. The purpose of this stage is to synthesize the data you have gathered in the first two stages into a well-written presentation. The paper 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 and plan, fully developed. In either case, this stage should have an interesting introduction, developed body, and a conclusion that ties the paper together. Thus, this stage contrasts in presentation with the first stage, in that the first stage is merely a step-by-step distillation of your findings, whereas the second stage is a finished and polished work. More detailed instructions for this stage are attached. Due May 7.

6. **Sectional Exam (10%)** This test covers the material covered up to the point of the exam in a variety of question formats such as objective, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and discussion questions.

7. **Final Exam (20%)** (Skill based, take-home format)

8. **Extra Credit.** (up to +3 points on final average) Review one or more of the following books (2 to 3 pages, credit = up to 1 point per 150 pages read and reviewed, and cannot be a book read for another course, **DUE ON OR BEFORE May 7**)

- Corley, Lemke, and Lovejoy. *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed.
- Dyrness, William. *How Does America Hear the Gospel?*
- Felder, Cain Hope, ed. *Stony the Road We Trod*
- Kaiser, 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*

Please note that the Second Stage paper will include the following embedded assignment and grading rubric:

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. Using the research developed in the Stage One portion of the exegesis paper, write a polished, 7-8 page paper demonstrating the understanding of appropriate principles guiding the exegetical process for the particular genre assigned.
2. Indicate the use of appropriate tools, methods, and resources in the application of sound exegetical principles.
3. Communicate the meaning of the text, keeping in mind the contemporary audience.
4. The paper may take two forms: 1) a ready to deliver, word-for-word, sermon manuscript; 2) a teaching article, such as an article for *Biblical Illustrator*.

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					

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS: (FS = Fee & Stuart; KBH = Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard)

Jan. 20	Introduction and Components of a Model
Jan. 22	Developing a Philosophy of Interpretation, the History of Biblical Interpretation (FS: 17-32; KBH: chap. 1)
Jan. 27	The History of Biblical Interpretation (KBH: chap. 2 & 3)
Jan. 29	Crossing Cultures and Worldviews to Interpret the Bible
Feb. 3	Principles and Process of Interpretation (KBH: chap. 5 & 6)
Feb. 5	Interpreter, Goal, and Application (KBH: chap. 11 & 12)
Feb. 10	Translations, Basic Tools (FS: 33–54; 265–275)
Feb. 12	Background Studies: A Review of Various Types and Levels (KBH: chap. 4, 7, & review the annotated bibliography at the end of the book)
Feb. 17	Mardi Gras
Feb. 19	Library Practicum; Basic Tools for Interpretation
Feb. 24	General Rules for Interp., Practicum on Bible Software, BACKGROUND STUDY #1 DUE!
Feb. 26	MID-TERM EXAM
Mar. 3	Interpreting the Epistles (FS: 55–88)
Mar. 5	Interpreting the Epistles (KBH: ch. 10 Epistles); BACKGROUND STUDY #2 DUE!
Mar. 10	Interpreting OT Narrative (FS: 89–106);
Mar. 12	Interpreting OT Narrative (KBH: chap. 9 Narratives)
Mar. 17	Interpreting Law (FS: 163–180, KBH: chap. 9, Section=Law)
Mar. 19	Interpreting Law (KBH: chap. 9 Law; BACKGROUND STUDY #3 DUE!)
Mar. 23-27	SPRING BREAK
Mar. 31	Interpreting the Gospels (FS: 149–162)
Apr. 2	Interpreting the Gospels (FS: 149–162)
Apr. 7	Interpreting the Parables (FS: 149–162)
Apr. 9	Interpreting NT Narrative: Acts (FS:107–26; KBH: chap. 10 Acts)
Apr. 14	Interpreting Prophets (FS: 181–204)
Apr. 16	Interpreting Prophets (KBH: chap. 9 Prophecy)
Apr. 21	Interpreting Psalms (FS: 205–224)
Apr. 23	Interpreting Psalms (KBH: chap. 9 Poetry); STAGE ONE OF PAPER DUE
Apr. 28	Interpreting Wisdom (FS: 225–248)
Apr. 30	Interpreting Wisdom (KBH: chap. 9 Wisdom)
May 5	Interpreting Apocalyptic – Revelation (FS: 249–264)
May 7	Interpreting Apocalyptic – Revelation (KBH: chap. 10 Revelation); STAGE TWO PAPER DUE
May 12-14	TAKE HOME FINAL DUE AT EXAM TIME

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 preparation and then to preach the sermon. 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 sermon preparation. (For more instructions on the mechanics of producing the paper, see the last page.) Note that the work going into this paper will undoubtedly be more than you will have available to you week-by-week for sermon preparation. However, in doing this in-depth exercise, you should learn the essential steps for a proper exegesis. The more you do this, the easier it will become and the more it will be second nature to you. Enjoy!

1. **Text.** Write out the text of the passage chosen, *single-spaced*, including verse numbers *and* indications of your own paragraph divisions, from one of the following translations: KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, NIV, NJPSV, REB, RAB, NLT. (1/2–1 page). **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED.**
2. **Historical Background.** Focus here is on information not directly gathered from the text itself or its literary contexts (i.e., things such as dates, international situation, etc.). Include here the major results of your sample historical background study. Also remember that you will need to do more general background study for the larger project, as well as other specific historical, cultural topical studies. Outside sources (such as Bible commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, or histories) *should* be used here. **(3–5 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). **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (2-3 page)**
4. **Paragraph Analysis.** Identify the theme of each paragraph in one sentence per paragraph. 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).* **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1 page)**
5. **Verse Analysis.** Comment here 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 story-line from verse to verse (or paragraph to paragraph), including addressing why certain things may be stated in a particular way, why certain statements are included where they are, why omissions of expected materials occur, 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. You may use concordances or theological wordbooks here, including any cross-referencing guide you like (such as that found within most Bibles themselves), *but*, you may *not* use a commentary here. Do your own work here. **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (4–6 pages)**
6. **Theme.** Based upon the various stages of your detailed analysis above, and especially building upon your statements of theme for each paragraph, provide a one-sentence statement of the theme of the entire text (i.e., what is the author's main point in this section?). Explain the basis for your decision. **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1/2 page)**
7. **Key Words and Phrases Study.** Include here the major results of your background study (not the raw data you presented earlier) on these matters. Also remember that you probably will need to do other word studies for this larger project. **(1-3 pages)**

8. **Outline.** Present an “exegetical” (“historical”) outline of the text, reflecting the theme. NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1/3–1/2 page)
9. **Homiletical (Sermon or Teaching) Outline.** This outline should derive from the exegetical outline. Also include a one-sentence re-statement of the theme (point "6." above), a desired audience response, and a concluding challenge. NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1/2 page)
10. **Commentary Comparison.** Include here any additional essential insights gleaned from three exegetical commentaries. *These must be insights that you did not already uncover in your own work.* You may include these insights into the body of your work in Stage Two of your paper, but here, be sure to do the work asked for *in the order requested.* (1 page)

Note 1: The use of commentaries is to be limited to the specific instructions for the Project; the only points at which you are to use them are in the Historical Background step and in Step 10 of Stage One. The reason for this restriction is to help you to see how commentaries can be most helpful to you in your work, rather than becoming an unhealthy crutch and a hindrance to developing your own spiritual insight.

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 twelve (12) pages, double-spaced.

Plagiarism

Any student who uses the ideas or words of another person as his/her own without proper citation of the source is guilty of literary theft, or plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students should consult the current seminary bulletin for the policy regarding plagiarism.

Stage Two

The last stage is a polished paper presenting the information gathered in the first stage in ready-to-deliver form. The purpose of this stage is to synthesize the data you have gathered in the first stage into a well-written presentation. The paper may take one of two forms: 1. A 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. (5-6 pages, double-spaced)

Style and Formatting Guidelines for Papers

The 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 (if a computer printer is used); dot-matrix printers are acceptable, provided a dark ribbon and “letter-quality” print mode are used. Please number the pages, use a “ragged right” margin (i.e., not justified right), and *staple* the pages together (upper left corner; *no covers*). Any standard scheme of footnotes, end notes, or text notes found in Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers* is acceptable; but it must be used consistently, and 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), including a separate bibliography appended to the paper.

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.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON BACKGROUND SOURCES

Primary Sources:

Archaeological Finds	Pseudepigrapha	Josephus
Dead Sea Scrolls	Apocrypha	Philo
Nag Hammadi	Targums	Suetonius
LXX	Rabbinic Lit.	Church Fathers

Secondary Sources:

Bible Dictionaries:

Anchor Bible Dict. of the Bible, IDB, ISBE (rev.), ZPEB, Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (including the 20th Century E. of R. K. supplements), Hasting's Dict. of the Bible, etc.

New Testament Introduction Books:

Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*
Carson, Moo and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*
Drane, *Introducing the New Testament*
Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*
Hunter, *Introducing the New Testament*
Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*
Connick, *The New Testament: An Introduction to Its History, Lit. & Thought*

Biblical Backgrounds Books:

Lohse, *The New Testament Environment*
Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (in 1 vol., formerly 2 vol.)
Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*
Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible*
Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*
Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*
Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*
Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*
Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*
Wilkins, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*