



**Biblical Hermeneutics (BIHM9401,
NTGK9421), Contemporary Philosophical
Hermeneutics (PHIL9402/THEO9417)**
PhD Seminar
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Spring 2023, Wednesdays 8:30-11:30

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Office Hours

To schedule an appointment please contact us by email or in person. We want to be available, so please do not hesitate to schedule a meeting with either of us.

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 Seminar combines what was two separate seminars on Hermeneutics—Biblical Hermeneutics and Contemporary Philosophical Hermeneutics. The reason is because 1) Hermeneutical Theory is common to both disciplines so there is no substantial difference between them, 2) the Hermeneutical theories discussed apply equally to biblical interpretation and theological method.*

Biblical Hermeneutics

This course explores the history of biblical interpretation, genres, hermeneutical principles, and major contributors in the discipline. The course includes an overview of the history of interpretation and traditional methodologies with a focus on current applications of critical, biblical interpretation. The course addresses the hermeneutical concerns deriving from text-centered, author-centered, and reader-centered approaches, especially noting how each may apply to current settings in biblical interpretation. This course prepares the student with an overarching understanding of the field of biblical interpretation and provides an awareness of methodological approaches for biblical research and investigation.

Course Description: Contemporary Philosophical Hermeneutics

An intensive study of contemporary hermeneutical methods focusing particularly on those drawing from philosophy and literary criticism such as deconstruction,

structuralism, poststructuralism, reader-response theories, and canon criticism, as well as those derived from or indebted to sociological, psychological, and/or political theory, such as the hermeneutics of suspicion, Marxist, Freudian, and various liberation theologies. Attention will be given to explicating the presuppositions and methodologies of leading representatives of each school. Additionally, critiques will highlight areas of promise and/or peril for biblical interpretation and theological construction. Also can be taken as THEO9417.

Student Learning Outcomes

The student should be able:

Assumptions:

- This will be a study of Hermeneutics both in terms of theory and practices. As such it will be a combination of both Philosophy and Biblical Studies.
- As a seminar all students will be expected to talk and contribute to the conversation, so it is important to complete the readings prior to the seminar meeting.

Broad Objectives:

- Acquire a working knowledge of the literature on Hermeneutics.
- Develop knowledge of the scholarly discussions on Hermeneutical Theory.
- Gain an advanced awareness of key issues pertaining to the author-text-reader theories of determining meaning.

Specific Objectives:

- Develop an advanced awareness of one's own hermeneutical theory and method.
- Have an in-depth knowledge of hermeneutical issues related to determining textual meaning, philosophical underpinnings, and specialized methodologies.
- Be conversant with significant scholarship on hermeneutics.

Course Grading

- As a PhD seminar, students must earn an A or B for this course to pass, a C constitutes failing grade. Failure of any PhD course will result in a reevaluation of the student's status in the program, and it may result in termination from the program.
- Grading Scale

A = 93–100 B = 92–86 C = 85–79 D= 72–84 F= 72 or less

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Barton, John. *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study*. Rev. & Enlarged. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.

- Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Moore, Stephen D. *Post-Structuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Stewart, Robert B. *The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on the Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Is There a Meaning in this Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Zondervan, 2009.
- Wright, N. T. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.

Additional Books per Major for Presentation

Biblical Studies

- A.K.M. Adam. *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.
- Barr, James. *Semantics of Biblical Language*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Bartholomew, Craig G., Scott Han, Robin Parry, Christopher Seitz, and Al Wolters, eds. *Canon and Biblical Interpretation*. Vol. 7. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Collins, John J. *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Cotterell, Peter and Max Turner. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989.
- Frei, Hans W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.
- Jamieson, R. B. and Tyler R. Wittman. *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022.
- Kümmel, Werner Georg. *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems*. Translated by S. MacLean Gilmour and Howard Clark Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.

Neill, Stephen and Tom Wright. *The Interpretation of the New Testament: 1861-1986*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Moises Silva. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Philosophical Hermeneutics

Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*. Translation by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Richard S. Briggs. *Words in Action: Speech-Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation*. New York & London: T. & T. Clark, 2004.

Jacques Derrida. *Of Grammatology*. Corrected Edition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

———. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.

———. *Truth and Method*. Second Revised Edition. London & New York: Continuum, 2005.

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

Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987.

Ferdinand de Saussure. *Course in General Linguistics*. Peru, IL: Open Court, 2009.

Dan R. Stiver, *Theology After Ricoeur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

———. *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol and Story*. Oxford & Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996.

John Sturrock, ed. *Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Anthony C. Thiselton. *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

———. *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading

Students will read all the required pages in the six required textbooks. The reading will be assigned weekly as outlined in the course schedule. Students should have read critically, processed the ideas and concepts, taken notes, and come prepared to add to the discussion.

Students will also be required to choose at least one of the additional books as indicated either for Biblical Studies students or Philosophy/Theology students. They will be responsible to present the book's content and their assessment of it to the class on an assigned date. The presentation should focus on the main ideas presented in the book and an assessment to hermeneutical theory or method. In addition. They must also submit a written copy of their presentation to canvas.

Written Assignments

Book Presentation (25%)

Students will choose at least one (depending on the size of the seminar students may end up covering two books) of the books listed in the above list to read and present to the class. Students should write a 2500-3500 word review to submit to Canvas prior to the scheduled presentation. The presentation should focus on the main argument and contribution of the book – what is the thesis or specific aspect they are arguing? How does it contribute to hermeneutics? What was helpful and/or convincing and why? What was problematic or weak? The in-class presentation should be about 15 minutes in length with some additional time allowed for time for discussion and questions.

Research Paper (45%)

Students will write a research paper 10,000-15,000 words in length, not including bibliography. It must engage a topic or a passage in light of hermeneutical theory or methodology. It must be thesis driven and represent a contribution to the discipline (in other words not just a rehashing of what has already been said, it needs to demonstrate some measure of originality). Think of this as writing an article for top tiered journal. It will be peer reviewed, in that each student will have their paper reviewed (with feedback) by one other student. It should demonstrate a grasp of hermeneutical theory and significant scholarly contributions.

Peer-Review (10%)

Students will read one of the research papers submitted by one other student. They must read it critically and provide substantive feedback through written comments.

Personal Hermeneutical Theory Paper (20%)

Students will write a summative paper expressing their own hermeneutical theory. It should address such question as what is “meaning” and how, or if, one can arrive at meaning with any degree of certainty. Where is meaning located – author, text, reader, or some interplay of all three. What is involved with interpreting any passage of Scripture? What are the steps or methodology one should use when interpreting a passage of Scripture? The student, of course, include other important aspects or questions related to his or her own hermeneutic. There is no word requirement for length, however, avoid being to surface and try not to write a major treatise (in general, somewhere between 10 to 25 pages double-spaced).

SPECIAL NEEDS

Individuals with documented impairments who may need special circumstances for exams, classroom participation, or assignments should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester in order for special arrangements to be considered.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Dates	Class Topic
<p>Wednesday 1/18 1/25</p>	<p>General Introduction to Hermeneutics Read: Brown, Jeannine K. <i>Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics</i>. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. Pp. 11-136</p> <p>Thiselton, Anthony C. <i>New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading</i>. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. Pp. 1-54.</p> <p>Stewart, Robert B. <i>The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on the Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright</i>. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008. All of it.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <p>Moises Silva. <i>Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation</i>. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.</p>

	<p>Hans-Georg Gadamer, <i>Philosophical Hermeneutics</i>. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.</p>
<p>Wednesday 2/1 2/8</p>	<p>Where is Meaning Located: Author, Text, Reader Read: Thiselton, Anthony C. <i>New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading</i>. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. Pp. 55-79 (chp. 2), 272-307 (chp. 14).</p> <p>Vanhoozer, Kevin J. <i>Is There a Meaning in this Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge</i>. Zondervan, 2009. All of it.</p> <p>*Presentations: Stanley Fish, <i>Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities</i>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.</p> <p>E. D. Hirsch, <i>Validity in Interpretation</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.</p> <p>Wolfgang Iser, <i>The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response</i>. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.</p> <p>Richard S. Briggs. <i>Words in Action: Speech-Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation</i>. New York & London: T. & T. Clark, 2004.</p>
<p>Wednesday 2/15 2/22</p>	<p>Is Meaning Possible? Deconstructionism and Post-Structuralism Read: Thiselton, Anthony C. <i>New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading</i>. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. Pp. 80-132 (chp. 3), 334-373(chp. 10).</p> <p>Moore, Stephen D. <i>Post-Structuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross</i>. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.</p> <p>Presentations:</p>

	<p>Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, <i>Jacques Derrida</i>. Translation by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.</p> <p>John Sturrock, ed. <i>Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida</i>. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.</p> <p>Jacques Derrida. <i>Of Grammatology</i>. Corrected Edition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.</p> <p>———. <i>Writing and Difference</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.</p> <p>Allan Megill, <i>Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida</i>. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987.</p>
<p>Wednesday 3/1 3/8</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Interpreting Scripture: Hermeneutics & the Testaments</p> <p>Read: Brown, Jeannine K. <i>Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics</i>. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. Pp. 139-273.</p> <p>Wright, N. T. <i>The New Testament and the People of God</i>. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996. Parts I & II.</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <p>A.K.M. Adam. <i>What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?</i> Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.</p> <p>Kümmel, Werner Georg. <i>The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems</i>. Translated by S. MacLean Gilmour and Howard Clark Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.</p> <p>Neill, Stephen and Tom Wright. <i>The Interpretation of the New Testament: 1861-1986</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.</p> <p>Bartholomew, Craig G., Scott Han, Robin Parry, Christopher Seitz, and Al Wolters, eds. <i>Canon and</i></p>

	<p><i>Biblical Interpretation</i>. Vol. 7. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.</p> <p>Jamieson, R. B. and Tyler R. Wittman. <i>Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis</i>. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022.</p>
<p>Spring Break 3/13-17</p>	
<p>Wednesday 3/22 3/29</p>	<p>Read: Thiselton, Anthony C. <i>New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading</i>. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. Pp. 237-267 (chp. 7), 411-463 (chp. 12), 471-508 (chp. 13).</p> <p>Barton, John. <i>Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study</i>. Rev. & Enlarged. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996. All.</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <p>Barr, James. <i>Semantics of Biblical Language</i>. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.</p> <p>Collins, John J. <i>The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age</i>. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.</p> <p>Cotterell, Peter and Max Turner. <i>Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation</i>. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989.</p> <p>Frei, Hans W. <i>The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.</p> <p>Ferdinand de Saussure. <i>Course in General Linguistics</i>. Peru, IL: Open Court, 2009.</p> <p>Dan R. Stiver, <i>Theology After Ricoeur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology</i>. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.</p>

	———. <i>The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol and Story</i> . Oxford & Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996.
Wednesday 4/5	Research Paper Presentations
Wednesday 4/12	Research Paper Presentations
Wednesday 4/19	Research Paper Presentations
Wednesday 4/26	Research Paper Presentations
Wednesday 5/3	Research Paper Presentations