

Western Seminary
Portland, Oregon

DBS-516a LEARNING TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE SURVEY

Mondays 6:00 – 10:00
Fall Semester, 2010

Todd L. Miles, Instructor
tmiles@westernseminary.edu
(503) 517-1866

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course you will study the foundational principles and interpretive procedures of the historical-grammatical method of biblical interpretation. You will also apply these principles and procedures in actual Bible study, using the English Bible.

COURSE GOALS

Understanding of the Word of God is fundamental to the life and ministry of both the individual Christian and the church. To achieve this understanding, you must know how to interpret and apply biblical texts accurately. To do this you must:

1. Know and be able to apply the fundamental principles of biblical hermeneutics;
2. Know and be able to apply basic methods of inductive/exegetical Bible study.

The purpose of this course is to provide the theoretical foundation and basic skills for accurate interpretation of the Bible.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After this unit, you should be able to:

- List and explain the five steps in the process of special revelation in Scripture.
- Define and identify examples in Scripture of the different kinds of literary genre as provided in class.
- List and practice the steps in the process of biblical interpretation as presented in class.

- Identify levels of context (immediate, chapter, book, and dispensation) in a passage of Scripture.
- Implement a strategy for moving from the meaning of a text to application in a biblical passage.
- Demonstrate understanding of English Bible hermeneutics by systematically studying a passage of Scripture utilizing the critical areas of hermeneutics identified in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance (41 hours):

You are responsible to attend regularly and to participate in class lectures and discussions.

Reading (10 hours):

You will read the following:

- Robert H. Stein. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997. ISBN: 0801021014 (\$18.99).

Reading assignments are listed on the course calendar. To aid in discussion and understanding of the material, each reading assignment shall be completed prior to the class session listed. A reading log (attached) will be turned in at the end of the term where you will record your progress through the reading assignments.

Assignments (25 hours):

The purpose of the homework assignments is to systematically lead you through the interpretive procedures discussed in class. Written work on these occasions will be submitted as stipulated when details of the assignments are given in class.

Examinations (14 hours):

Two examinations will be given. These will be based upon the reading and class presentations. A week prior to each exam, a study guide will be distributed to guide your preparation. The final exam will be comprehensive in scope.

COURSE POLICIES

Course Grade Structure:

Reading and Participation	15%
Assignments	45%
Exams (20% each)	40%

Grading and Late Assignments:

The basic grading scale adopted by the faculty of Western Seminary is:

99-100% = A+	95-98% = A	93-94% = A-
91-92% = B+	88-90% = B	86-87% = B-
84-85% = C+	81-83% = C	79-80% = C-
77-78% = D+	74-76% = D	70-73% = D-

Borderline grades will be determined on the basis of class participation and pattern of improvement. To receive audit credit, you must attend at least 80% of the class sessions and report that fact to the instructor by the day of the final.

Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class period on which they are due. Due dates may be varied to allow for your demanding schedule. If you need to make such arrangements, please do so well in advance and formalize them in writing. If prior arrangements have not been made, the penalty for a late assignment is a 10% reduction for each week that the assignment is late (5% if turned in within one week of the due date). The maximum deduction for a late assignment is 25%. Unless you qualify for an incomplete as defined in Western's catalog, all assignments must be turned in by 5:00 PM of the day of the final examination.

Assignment Format:

Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must meet the following criteria:

1. 1 " margins on the left, right, top, and bottom
2. Double-spaced
3. 12 point font (Times New Roman or Arial)
4. A cover page that contains the assignment title, class title and number, your name, mail box number, and date
5. One staple in the top left corner

Absence Policy:

In the event that you are unable to attend class, you should make arrangements to get notes from a colleague. You may make arrangements in advance with a colleague to tape a session you know you will miss, but that tape is for private use only.

Students with Disabilities

Western Seminary is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as outlined in both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Western students are assisted individually as their needs dictate. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities to identify themselves and the nature of the disability. Any student who has a disability should contact the seminary's Disability (Section 504) Coordinator, Ken Epp, at 503-517-1815/1-877-517-1800, ext. 1815. His office is at the Portland campus. Students at the northern California campuses may contact Carrie Priest (Student Services Coordinator – San José) or PJ Oswald (Director of Student Development – Sacramento), or they may contact Dr. Epp directly. Appropriate forms will be provided and must be submitted to the Disability Coordinator's office.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

1. Historical Background Study of Colossians
2. Observations on Col 2:6-15
3. Interpretive Questions on Col 2:6-15
4. Theological Analysis of "atonement" in Col 2:6-15
5. Application Project

COURSE CALENDAR

<i>Date</i>	<i>Course Topic</i>	<i>Preparation for Class</i>
8/30	Introduction The Process of Special Revelation Bible Study: Historical Background Study	
9/13	Where Does Meaning Lie? History of the English Bible	Stein 17-36
9/20	History of the English Bible, cont. The Question of the Canon Bible Study: Observations	<u>Background Study Due</u>
9/27	Interpretation: A Survey of the Historical Schools The Goal of Interpretation Bible Study: Interpretive Questions	
10/4	The Goal of Interpretation, cont. Bible Study: Word Study	<u>Observations Due</u>
10/11	Hermeneutics Short Course Historical-Grammatical Interpretation	Stein 37-60 <u>Interpretive Questions Due</u>
10/18	Historical-Grammatical Interpretation, cont. Word Meanings and Word Studies	
10/25	<u>Exam Number One</u> Implications of Genre Biblical Narrative	Stein 73-79; 151-167
11/1	Law Prophecy Bible Study: Theological Analysis of the Atonement	Stein 89-99; 187-202
11/8	Typology Poetry Bible Study: Applications	Stein 101-121
11/15	Figures of Speech Parables	Stein 123-150 <u>Atonement Analysis Due</u>
11/22	Proverbs and the Wisdom Literature Epistles	Stein 83-87; 169-186 <u>Application Due</u>
11/29	Apocalyptic The Role of the Holy Spirit and Application Perspicuity The “New Hermeneutic”	Stein 61-71

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boice, James Montgomery, ed. *The Foundation of Biblical Authority*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
- Cotterell, Peter and Max Turner. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989.
- 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.
- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
- Frame, John M. *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987.
- Geisler, Norman L., ed. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme. *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- _____. *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Hirsch, E. D., Jr. *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Horton, Michael S. *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching & Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993.
- Lints, Richard. *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Lubeck, Ray. *Read the Bible for a Change: Understanding and Responding to God's Word*. Federal Way: Authentic Media, 1995.
- Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991.
- Plummer, Robert L. *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010.
- Ramm, Bernard. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. 3rd Rev. Ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970.
- Ryken, Leland. *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Stein, Robert H. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.
- _____. *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.

Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.