



Course Syllabus

Course Title:	Biblical Interpretation
Semester:	Spring 2022
Instructor:	Rev. Kelly Legg
Instructor contact:	pastorkdl@gmail.com / 610-755-8203 (cell)

Course Description

This course is designed to provide skills in interpreting the Bible and applying it to our world today through a systematic review of the interpretive process applied to the various forms of biblical literature.

Course Objectives

The student will understand the principles of biblical interpretation and finding the original meaning of the text by learning the proper exegetical steps for each biblical literary genre. They will become familiar with the interpretive process and learn when and how to apply texts of Scripture to appropriate and equivalent modern situations, so that they may counsel, teach and preach biblically.

A Pep Talk

This course is intended to empower you to interpret all of Scripture by introducing the full set of skills required to do so. As such, this course is necessarily intensive. Students typically find it to be both challenging and also one of the most valuable courses they engage. You will use these skills for your ministry and personal walk regularly. Trust the process. It's worth it.

Online Classroom Format

All class sessions will be held online using Google Meet. All course materials, including the submission & grading of assignments, will take place on Google Classroom. Please watch the [tutorial](#) on navigating Google Classroom, if you are unfamiliar with the platform.

Required Texts

Duvall, J. Scott and Hays, J. Daniel. *Grasping God's Word*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

3rd edition, 2012 (GGW).

The Bible, in one of these translations: *ASV, ESV, Holman CSB, NAB, NASB, NET, NIV, NIV (1984), NRSV, RSV*. **Do not use** a study Bible, devotional Bible or a paraphrase (*Living Bible, New Living, The Message, etc.*). **Do not use** the KJV or NKJV.

While not a “text,” you will utilize BlueLetterBible.org very heavily in this class.

Recommended Texts

The following texts are recommended resources for the final exegesis paper and are likely already on your pastor’s shelf. It is highly recommended that you ask or he she for access. Remember, you will be required to interact with at least four critical texts for your paper. The four do *not* have to come from this list but **must** be pre-approved by the instructor, if not listed here.

Old & New Testament Introductions

- Carson, D. A., Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.
- Dillard, Raymond B., and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Fee, Gordon, and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
- Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- House, Paul R., and Eric Mitchell. *Old Testament Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2007.

Commentary Series

- Baker Exegetical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- IVP New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman and Holman.
- New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Pillar New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville: Nelson.

Background Commentaries

- Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Old & New Testament Histories

- Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Kaiser, Walter. *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998.
- Long, V. Philips, David Baker, and Gordon Wenham, eds. *Windows into Old Testament History*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Witherington, Ben, III. *New Testament History: A Narrative Account*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Course Requirements

- 1) Participate actively in at least 10 of 12 class sessions. You may miss one class unexcused, but a second absence must be *pre-approved* by the instructor. Note: an outline of the lecture will be posted on Google Classroom prior to each session.
- 2) Read the chapters as assigned *before* the class for which it is due and submit your reading assessment on Google Classroom, indicating the percentage of reading completed, by 10 AM on class day.
- 3) Do the assignments *before* the class to which they relate. Assignments must be posted to Google Classroom by 9 AM on the Friday before class.
 - a) The instructor may choose one or more students' homework assignments to "workshop" together in class. The student selected will explain or present his/her homework to the class for further learning and discussion. Each student will be chosen at least once throughout the term.
- 4) Complete an exegesis paper on an assigned pericope as your final project. The paper must be a minimum of 9 pages and not more than 13 pages (excluding the title page and bibliography). Use the outline found on pages 455-457 in GGW to structure your paper.
 - a) Students should see the folder labeled "exegesis paper resources" on Google Classroom for sample papers, etc.
 - b) You must interact with and cite *at least* four critical sources for your paper. Two must be commentaries. The use of websites is discouraged; remember, *anyone* can create one. If you find a reputable site (such as The Gospel Coalition, Logos, BlueLetterBible, etc) with pertinent information, you may incorporate it and must cite it properly. See the list of recommended texts (below) for pre-approved resources. It is the student's responsibility to obtain instructor approval for sources not on the list.
 - c) You are highly encouraged to consult the grading rubric found in the Class 12 folder on Google Classroom for explicit details on how your paper will be graded.
 - d) The passages of Scripture you may choose to exegete will be provided in class #4.
- 5) Use a "normal," size 12 font (such as Times Roman, Calibri, Cambria, Helvetica, etc.), 1.5-point spacing, and 1-inch margin format for all assignments. Pay close attention to your spelling and grammar; consider having someone proofread your assignments or subscribing to Grammarly, if needed. You will lose points for these errors.

- 6) Students will submit all assignments through Google Classroom. Supplemental materials, grades, and returned work may also be found there.

Grading

Your overall grade will be calculated based on the following:

Class participation – 10%
Reading assessments – 10%
Weekly homework – 30%
Exegesis paper – 50%

Grades to be assigned at the end of class shall be:

A+ = 97-100	A = 93-96
B+ = 89-92	B = 85-88
C+ = 81-84	C = 77-80
D+ = 73-76	D = 69-72
Not Passing = 68 and below	

Academic Policies

Plagiarism policy:

A.C.T.S. defines Plagiarism as “using someone’s ideas, words, or data, without proper acknowledgement, as one’s own original work.” To avoid plagiarism, you must 1) cite the original author every time you use his or her exact written or spoken word (by enclosing them with quotation marks if fewer than four lines or indenting as a block quote if four or more lines) or 2) paraphrase someone’s written or spoken words and recognize the author/source in the body of the text or as a footnote. Plagiarism is an act of dishonesty and violation of academic integrity.

If an Instructor determines that an act of plagiarism has occurred, after talking with the student, the Academic Dean will be notified. Possible consequences will be considered, including: a failing grade for the work, a failing grade for the entire course, asking the student to redo the assignment, etc.

Overdue work policy:

All work must be posted on Google Classroom by 9 AM on the Friday before class. Any assignment that is late will receive a penalty of 5% of the grade for that assignment. If an assignment is more than 48 hours late, the penalty is 10%. Any assignment more than 1 week late will not be accepted.

Revision policy:

Students may always revise graded work for further instructor feedback. However, grades will only be revised under special, case-by-case circumstances, at the instructor’s discretion.

Course schedule

Part One: The Foundational Principles of Biblical Interpretation

- 2/5 Class #1 *The Why & What of Hermeneutics*
Read: Chapters 1 & 2 (pages 23-49)
Homework: Assignment 2-1 (page 49), 100 to 150 words. Remember, homework is always due the Friday before class at 9 AM (2/4 this week).
- 2/12 Class #2 *Learning to Look Closely*
Read: Chapters 3, 4 & 5
Homework: Print out Jonah 4 double-spaced. Mark it up with all of your observations, using the skills covered in chapters 3-5. Make no fewer than 20 observations. (You may upload a photo or scanned copy of the page with your neatly written observations or type the passage into a Word document and make notes using “comments” or other formatting options.)
- 2/19 Class #3 *Context is King*
Read: Chapters 6, 7 & 8
Homework:
1) Answer the 12 questions related to historical-cultural context found on pages 124-125 about the book of Jonah. Consult an Old Testament survey or introduction (see recommended texts for samples) for assistance. Ask your pastor for one, if you don't have one in your library.
2) Complete assignment 8-2
- 2/26 Class #4 *Word Studies*
Read: Chapters 11 & 12
Homework: Assignment 12-2
- 3/5 Class #5 *Honoring Application*
Read: Chapters 9, 10 & 13
Homework:
1) Read John 3:1-15 in at least 3 Bible translations.
2) Using the outline offered in class #4 and supplemented by ch. 9, do a complete word study on the word *anōthen* (translated as “again”) in John 3:3, 7. Incorporating your findings, write a 100-150 word explanation of what you think Jesus meant by using that word.
3) Generate 3 theological principles from John 3:1-15 that fit the criteria listed on p. 200-201 of GGW. Which *one* do you think best conveys the author's original meaning? Provide one real-life application of that theological principle.
4) Submit your exegesis paper passage.

Part Two: Applying the Principles to Biblical Genres

- 3/12 Class #6 *Gospels & Acts*
Read: Chapters 15 & 16
Homework: Begin the historical-cultural portion of your paper by:
1) Reading the entire book (John or Ruth) in *one* sitting.
2) Skimming through the book a second time, this time writing out your answers to the questions on pages 124-125. As needed, consult the introductory materials of a commentary or the relevant sections of a NT or OT overview to find the answers, being sure to cite them in your homework.
- 3/19 Class #7 *Old Testament Narrative*
Read: Chapter 18
Homework: Begin the literary context portion of your exegesis paper by:
1) Identifying the literary genre of your book (Gospel or Old Testament narrative) & consulting the appropriate chapter in GGW
2) Sketching an outline of your book (see p. 159 for help) and summarizing the main idea of each section in 1 sentence.
3) Explaining how your passage relates to the surrounding context in 1 paragraph.
- 3/26 Class #8 *Epistles*
Read: Chapter 14
Homework: Do a close reading of your passage by:
1) Outlining your passage (using the format in chs. 3-5 as examples)
2) Using the points in chs. 3-5 as a guide, make no less than 30 close observations of your passage.
3) Writing a 1-2 page paper outlining your findings. What is significant and intriguing? What do you need to follow-up on with word studies and further research?
4) Uploading a clear photo or copy of your marked-up passage, as well.
- 4/2 Class #9 **NOTE: Students will have two sessions of class today, beginning at 8 AM**
Revelation & Old Testament Law
Read: Chapters 17 & 19
Homework: Dig deep into word studies for your exegesis paper by:
1) Compiling 4 translations of your passage into a Word document using BlueLetterBible.org. Compare the translations and highlight any exegetically significant differences between them.
2) Next, highlight any additional words or phrases you think are significant (see ch. 9 for ideas).
3) Perform a thorough word study, using the guide given to you by the instructor in class #4, on no fewer than 3 words.
4) Present your findings in a 1-2 page paper.

- 4/9 Class #10 *Poetry & Wisdom*
Read: Chapters 20 & 22
Homework: Begin to delve into the meat of your exegesis paper by:
1) Refining the outline of your passage you prepared for class #9.
2) Following the outline, explain what you believe your passage meant in its original context in 2-2 ½ pages. You may read relevant commentaries and other sources for this step. (Ask your pastor for access to his or her library, if you do not own commentaries on this book. Be certain they are on the approved list of recommended resources or obtain instructor permission to utilize them, if not.) Be sure to properly cite any sources you use in your homework.
3) Begin seeking to pinpoint theological principles (see ch. 12) for your passage. List 3 in a ½-page. Which 1 do you think best conveys the author's meaning?
- 4/16 NO CLASS Easter Weekend
Homework: Use this time to begin revising your exegesis paper homework assignments and compiling them into one, coherent paper following the detailed directions on pages 455-457.
- 4/23 Class #11 *Prophets*
Read: Chapter 21
Homework:
1) Submit assignment 20-3, parts 1 & 2.
2) Continue working on the final draft of your exegesis paper (not to be submitted yet).
- 4/30 Class #12
NOTE: Students will have two sessions of New Testament class today, beginning at 8 AM and will *not* have biblical interpretation, as the instructor will be on a mission trip.
Homework: Final draft of your completed exegesis paper.