

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BIB 637 Current Issues in Biblical Interpretation:
Dealing With Hermeneutical Challenges

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Summer I, 2010

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A careful analysis and critique of important issues and challenges that confront the biblical interpreter today. Emphasis will be given to establishing the criteria and presuppositions that define a responsible hermeneutic from an Evangelical-Pentecostal perspective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help students to make informed judgments regarding numerous methods and approaches to biblical interpretation. To accomplish this, the student will be led to identify the components and presuppositions belong to a legitimate hermeneutic that is both coherent and cogent. A critical survey of selected issues and methodological approaches, both past and present, will allow the student to critically assess what is being advocated in terms of the goal, task and method of biblical interpretation. Finally, the student will have opportunity to discuss whether or not Pentecostals and Charismatics bring anything distinctive to the table of biblical interpretation.

Upon the successful completion of the course the student should be able to do the following:

Cognitive Domain Goals:

1. Discuss the nature, goal, and task of hermeneutics from one or more hermeneutical approaches presented in this class.
2. Identify several major issues in biblical interpretation today and discuss the nature of the challenge for Christians seeking to live in response to the authoritative teachings of Scripture.
3. List and define the major terms used in the debates on the above issues.
4. Explain what Walter Kaiser means by the “crisis in hermeneutics” and how it reflects the transition from modernity to post-modernity.
5. Identify and evaluate the unspoken presuppositions behind a hermeneutical approach or method.
6. Evaluate the internal consistency of a particular hermeneutical approach, and the consistency with which it applies its interpretive method to the text.
7. List and define the basic components of any hermeneutical approach. Identify and explain which ones have particular relevance for those in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition.

Affective Domain Goals

1. Appreciate the wide diversity of hermeneutical approaches operating within Christianity today.
2. Realize more fully that no hermeneutical stance is without hermeneutical and theological presuppositions which may be critiqued independently of its hermeneutical methodology.
3. Appreciate more deeply the need to approach the Scriptures with reverence and faith as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative standard for faith and practice.

TEXTBOOKS

Required Textbooks:

Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996. (**GOG**) ISBN: 10-0851112625 or 139780851112626

Hernando, James D. *Dictionary of Hermeneutics: Concise Guide to Hermeneutical Terms, Names, Methods and Expressions*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2005. (**DOH**) ISBN: 0882430866

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1993, Revised and Expanded ed. (**IBI**) ISBN: 9780785252258

Stein, Robert H. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994. (**BG**) ISBN: 9780801021015

Recommended Texts

Carson, D. A., and Woodbridge, John D., eds. *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books (Zondervan), 1986. ISBN: 1597521183

_____. *Scripture and Truth*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books (Zondervan), 1983.

Kaiser, Walter C. and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. ISBN: 1597521183

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991. (**HS** - on reserve in Library) ISBN:0830828265

Stein, Robert H. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994. ISBN: 9780801021015

COURSE OUTLINE¹

Date	Topic
May 3	Course Introduction: Hermeneutics, Nature, Task, and Method; Defining the key terms/concepts within the discipline
4	
5	Defining the goal and task of hermeneutics
6	Understanding Hermeneutical Method: Presuppositions and Praxis
7	Foundational Issues and Challenges: Epistemological –The challenge of polyvalence or polysemy
10	Literary Challenges: Nuancing Interpretation Within Diverse Genres
11	Theological Challenges: God, Revelation and Scripture
12	The Nature of Truth Itself
13	The Authority of Scripture – Nature, Source and Effect
14	Mid-term Exam (Essay)
17	Hermeneutics and Modernity: Schliermacher to the New Hermeneutic - A brief history of hermeneutics in the modern and post-modern eras
18	Hermeneutics and History – The Challenge of the “Dehistoricists “
19	Barth’s Continuing Influence – “Christian Existentialists and Public Truth?”
20	Hermeneutics and Post-Modernity: The Bible and the Quest and Contemporary Relevance Contextualized Hermeneutics
21	Contextualized Hermeneutics – Variegated Approaches
24	The New Criticism and Read-oriented Approaches to Interpretation
25	The Slide to Hermeneutical Nihilism: Structuralism, Post-structuralism and Deconstructionism
26	Hermeneutics and Pentecostal/Charismatics Perspectives: Hermeneutics and the Holy Spirit
27	Is there anything Pentecostal about Pentecostal Hermeneutics?
28	Final Exam (Essay)

METHODOLOGY

This course will pursue its objectives via the following:

1. Individual reading, research and writing
2. Class lecture in order to:
 - a. provide a framework for integrating the readings
 - b. explore other relevant areas of study
3. Oral presentations by students over assigned readings.
4. Guided discussion of issues raised by the readings and lectures.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance at all class sessions is required. Excessive absences will adversely affect your course grade. Whenever possible students should seek to alert the professor of a planned absence.
2. All students will be expected to read all assigned readings: prescribed sections in the textbooks and those given in the *Supplemental Readings List*. Course reading constitute 10% of your course grade.

¹ Due to the reformatting of this class for the summer schedule, a detailed reading schedule will be given on the 1st day of class.

3. A 5-6 page Critical Book Review on Robert Stein's *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*. (See Handout). Students may substitute *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* by Walter Kaiser and Moisés Silva. See course bibliography
4. A Mid-term (essay) exam
5. Classroom Oral Report – The student will be assigned a reading assignment from the Supplemental Readings List and prepare a 15 minute oral presentation in class. He/she will:
 - a. Come with a 1-2 page outline of their oral report (full sentence outline)
 - b. At the top the header will have the complete bibliographic information.
 - c. Attach a photo copy of the article or reading assignment to the outline and give it to the professor before giving the oral report.
6. A Final (essay) exam
7. Class participation – Students in this class are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings and to be prepared to contribute to classroom discussion
8. Community Chapel Attendance – There will be one such chapel during Summer I session. The schedule is TBA.

GRADING PROCEDURE

1. Grade Weights:

Course Readings	100 points =	10%
Written Book Report	200 points =	20%
Oral Reading Report	150 Points =	15%
Mid-term Exam	200 points =	20%
Final Exam/Essay	250 points =	25%
Class Participation	100 points =	10%
2. The total number of possible points to be earned in the semester is 1000. The grading scale for this course is as follows:

1000-950 = A+	799-770 = C+
949-930 = A	769-730 = C
929-900 = A-	729-700 = C-
899-870 = B+	699-670 = D+
869-830 = B	669-630 = D
829-800 = B-	629-600 = D-

3. Written work turned in late (except for extraordinary emergencies) will be penalize ½ letter grade for each class period it is late.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by James D. Hernando, Ph.D., December 18, 2009