SYLLABUS FOR B.A.R. DEGREE

BI414--Introduction to Hermeneutics
B.M.A. Theological Seminary      Spring Semester 2007
Professor--Dr. Greg W. Parsons

I. Course Description
As a basic orientation to understanding the Bible according to its literary and historical-cultural contexts, the course will introduce the student to various literary genres (such as narrative, prophecy, law, poetry, wisdom literature, parables, epistles, and apocalyptic writings) and suggest guidelines for understanding and communicating the message of a passage according to its specific literary type. The question of how to discern timeless principles in contrast to culturally-bound teachings will be addressed as a part of the process of learning to apply the Bible in a valid way.

II. Objectives
1) To introduce the student to the concept of hermeneutics and the need for it.
2) To suggest a hermeneutical process (including specific steps) for doing valid Biblical interpretation and relevant application so as to communicate God's Word--not human opinion.
   a) To emphasize the importance of learning and utilizing a proper hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures--namely, understanding each specific passage or verse in light of both historical-cultural and Biblical contexts.
   b) To seek to formulate guidelines for determining timeless principles [those true to the original context and yet relevant to ourselves and our modern society] versus culturally bound teachings.
3) To orient the student to the various literary genres (literary forms or types) in the Bible including narrative, prophecy, law, poetry, wisdom literature, parables, epistles, and apocalyptic writings.
   a) To suggest specific hermeneutical guidelines for each literary genre to promote an accurate interpretation of each type of literature.
   b) To learn these suggested guidelines and to utilize them in Bible study.

III. Requirements (for BI 414)

A. Use of textbooks
Besides the biblical text, three primary textbooks are required: Roy B. Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation (Wheaton:

1 E-mail: gwpbmats@juno.com

Reports on required reading assignments (including the portions read from the Bible) must be recorded and turned in weekly on standardized reading slips obtainable from the seminary office. Students are theoretically responsible for a quiz at any time.

B. Term paper and report

Each B.A.R. student is responsible for a 10-to-16-page typewritten paper consisting of an exegetical summary of some passage in the Bible (preferably a passage in Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Daniel, Matthew, Acts, 1 Corinthians or Revelation) followed by an expository sermon or lesson. Utilizing the textbooks and two or three commentaries, the student must summarize the passage and trace the argument (i.e., the flow of thought) in light of the literary context and its historical/cultural context. This should include an exegetical outline (summarizing preferably in complete sentences the exact thought of the Bible text) with a brief commentary on each verse which expresses your research into the text. Then the sermonic portion of the paper should bring out the biblical teaching and timeless principles which find valid application for today. Notes: Be sure to observe the following rules: (a) To follow the suggested guidelines for interpreting the particular literary genre

2See Duvall and Hays, Grasping God’s Word, 421-423 (1st ed.397-99). For a convenient orientation to the steps of exegesis (especially for the student without Hebrew & Greek abilities) see Bruce Corley in Corley, Lemke, & Lovejoy, Biblical Hermeneutics, pp. ??8-19.


4Remember the basic guidelines in Duvall and Hays, Grasping God’s Word, chaps. 1 and 13. Also see Ross, Creation and Blessing especially pp. 46-48 for the concept of an expository outline and timeless principles. Furthermore consult Walter Kaiser's Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) especially chapter 7 for tips on seeking to glean timeless principles from the text.
involved; (b) To discuss (in the last part of the paper) how the doctrine (or theology) of the text impacts our modern society; (c) To document your research by author's last name and the page number placed within parentheses in the text (or by footnotes if you prefer) with a bibliography at the end.

The term paper will normally be due on the same day on which that section of the Bible dealt with in the paper is scheduled for class discussion (especially if that literary genre is scheduled for March 27 or later). An oral report of about 20 to 25 minutes must be presented at that time. [Be sure to turn in a finished copy of the term paper to the professor before the oral report.]

C. Exams

Two exams are scheduled (see class schedule below). The nature of these tests will be explained later.

D. Grading guidelines

Exams 25% each; term paper--25%; daily grade 25% (including 20% for weekly exercises and reading [as well as any quizzes?] documented on reading slips); 1% for the oral report on term paper, and 4% divided equally (2% each) between class participation and class attendance.

The student's grade will be penalized for failure to turn in a finished report or for going beyond the time framework without prior permission.

IV. Class Schedule (BI 414—2007)

Jan. 30 (1) Brief review of syllabus. (2) Concise introduction to the concept and need of hermeneutics. (3) Some basic definitions. (4) Prerequisites for the Bible interpreter. (5) Brief summary of various historical approaches to Bible interpretation. (6) Two important axioms of general hermeneutics: a) The Bible is like any other book. b) The Bible is unlike any other book.


Feb. 13 Bridging the language gap (i.e. grammatical/lexical analysis of biblical context).
Assignment: Read Zuck, 98-122; Fee/Stuart, pp.33-53 (2nd ed. 28-44); and Duvall/Hays, 28-39(both eds.) & do assignment #3 on p. 42; also 132-152 (=1st ed. 128-148) & do concordance assignment #1 on 153(=148); also read Duvall/Hays 166b-171 (159-164) and Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, pp. 510-519(1st. ed., 466-69). For extra credit, (B.A.R.) read Duvall/Hays, 157-166a(=150-158).

20 Bridging the literary gap. Introduction to various literary genres. Possibly brief introduction to relationship of Old Testament to New Testament??

27 Prose and Narrative.

March 6 Epistles and letters. Assignment: Read whole books of 1 Corinthians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon, 1 John, & 2 John. Read Zuck, pp. 221-26 plus review 134 & 141-42; Fee/Stuart, chaps. 3-4 [pp.55-87 (2nd ed. 45-77)]; Duvall and Hays,45-58, 227-242 (1st ed. 45-58; 217-233); do assignment #1 on Phil 2:1-4 (p. 59) & do word study procedure on Greek word translated “worry” in Matt. 6:25 (Duvall/Hays, rev. ed. 154-155 #8.2).

For extra credit, (B.A.R.) read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 427-440 (1st ed.352-68).


March 20 MID-TERM EXAM


April 10  Introduction to Prophetic and Apocalyptic literature. Prophecy & typology. Assignment: Read Isaiah 1-14, 24-53. Read Zuck, pp. 169-84, 227-49; Fee/Stuart, pp. 181-204(2nd ed.165-86); Duvall and Hays, 368-386(1st ed. 356-74) & do assignment on Isaiah 1:10-20 as substitute using instructions on p.386 (=374).

For extra credit, (B.A.R.) read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, pp. 359-84 (1st ed. 292-311).

17  No class. Spring Break. BMAA meeting.

April 24  Apocalyptic literature. *Latest due date for papers not covered in class. Assignment: Read whole books of

May 1 Gospels and use of parables. Assignment: Read all of Matthew & John. Read Zuck, pp. 194-221; Fee/Stuart, chaps. 7-8, pp. 127-62 [2nd ed., 113-34, 135-48]; Duvall and Hays, 65-78, 244-262(1st ed. 65-77; 235-253) & do assignment #1 on Matt. 24-25 (p.263[=253]). For extra credit, (B.A.R.) read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, pp. 399-418 (1st ed. 323-43) and/or Osborne, 245-49.

May 8 (1) Application of the biblical text. (2) Guidelines for determining transcultural applications. Review for exam. Fill out evaluation forms (if applicable).

May 15 FINAL EXAM
V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


