SYLLABUS FOR MASTER’S DEGREE
BI514--Biblical Hermeneutics
B.M.A. Theological Seminary  Spring Semester 2010
Professor--Dr. Greg W. Parsons

I. Course Description

This course focuses on the art and science of understanding the Scriptures in their literary and historical-cultural contexts. It stresses the acquisition and application of key guidelines for unlocking the meaning and message of any biblical passage according to its specific literary genre. The question of how to determine 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 discuss 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 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 BI514)

A. Use of textbooks

Besides the biblical text, three primary textbooks are required:
2) Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for all its Worth, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003: ISBN 0-310-2464-0);

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1 This syllabus (1-01-2010) is tentative and may be revised, if needed.

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 responsible for a quiz at any time.

B. Term paper and report

Each BI514 student is responsible for two 12-to-16-page double-spaced papers (one on OT and one on NT)--each 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 at least 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 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 each 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 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.

Each term paper will normally be due on the same day on which each section of the Bible dealt with in the papers is scheduled for class discussion (especially if that literary genre is scheduled for Mar. 25 or later). An oral report of about 25 to 30 minutes must be presented at that time. [Be sure to turn in a finished copy of each term paper to the professor before the oral report is given.]

With special permission, the master’s student may substitute (for the 2nd [NT] paper) a book review and shorter paper (approximately 12 to 17 pages in 2 parts). 1) A 6 to 8-page book review (summary and interaction) of William J. Webb, Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring

3See Duvall and Hays, Grasping God’s Word, 421-23 (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. ??revised??8-19.


5Remember the basic guidelines in Duvall and Hays, Grasping God’s Word, chaps. 1 and 13. Also see Ross, Creation and Blessing especially 46-48 for the concept of an expository outline and timeless principles. Also 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.

6The student's grade will be penalized for failure to turn in a finished report or for going beyond the time framework without prior permission.
the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001) and interaction with the critique by Wayne Grudem, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 47 (June 2004):299-346; and 2) To apply the results of this to a 7 to 9-page analysis of some brief New Testament passage relating to women, slavery, or homosexuality. This would be due May 6.

C. Exams

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

D. Grading guidelines

Mid-term exam--20%; Final exam--20%; term papers--20% each; daily grade 20% [including 14% for weekly exercises and reading (as well as any quizzes) documented on reading slips; 1% for each oral report on term papers, and 4% divided equally (2% each) between class participation and class attendance].

IV. Class Schedule (BI514—2010)


Feb. 4 (1) Brief reemphasis on the importance of historical-cultural and Biblical contexts including an orientation to basic hermeneutical steps. (2) Bridging the historical-cultural gap. (3) Possible preliminary guidelines for determining transcultural versus culturally-bound teachings. Assignment: Read Zuck, 76-97; Fee/Stuart, 71-86 (2nd ed., 61-76); Duvall and Hays, 98-116(1st ed. 95-112) and do assignment #5 on Nehemiah. 118(=114). For extra credit, Bruce Corley in Corley, Lemke, & Lovejoy, ed. Biblical Hermeneutics. 2nd ed., 1-20 and/or read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 229-240, 520-528 (1st ed. 172-83; 473-78).

Feb. 11 Bridging the language gap (i.e. grammatical/lexical analysis of biblical context). Emphasis on How to Do Basic Greek or Hebrew word studies.


25  Prose and Narrative.  Assignment:  Read whole books of Judges and Acts.  Read Fee/Stuart, 89-125 (2nd ed. 78-93, 94-112) & Duvall and Hays, 265-280, 305-325a (1st ed. 255-270; 293-313) & 1) fill in handout—basic outline on Judges?; and 2) do substitute assignment on Judg. 10:6-11:11 by answering questions on top of p. 327(315); also read 255-269 & 3) do assignment on 281(=270)--Acts 2:42-47 only; also review Zuck, 126-30.  For extra credit: read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 325-40; 419-26 (1st ed. 261-274; 344-51).


For extra credit: read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 341-51 (1st ed. 275-84).

March 18  MID-TERM EXAM


April 22  No class. Spring Break. BMAA meeting.


May 6  1) Application of the biblical text. (2) Guidelines for determining transcultural applications. Review for exam. Fill out evaluation forms (if applicable).

Assignment: Read Zuck, 260-72, 279-92 & review 90-97; Duvall and Hays, 213-223(203-13) & do assignment #3 on I Tim. 6:10a (224[214]). Also read and review Fee/Stuart, 71-85 (2nd ed.61-76).

For extra credit: read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 477-504(1st ed. 401-26); and Osborne, Hermeneutical Spiral: 321-338, 343-347, 354-61.

May 13  FINAL EXAM
V. Selected Bibliography: Hermeneutics and Word Study Tools


**Word Study Tools**

**Basic Word Study Tools**


Lexicons


Interlinears and Wordbooks


Websites for Word Study and Exegetical tools

http://www.biblegateway.com  Excellent source of keyword or verse searches for Bible in several versions in English or other languages.

http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/how-to-do-a-word-study  NT Greek word study procedure by Sam Storms

http://www.studylight.org/lex/  Heb and Greek lexicons keyed to Strong's # and other sources

http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk  Greek lexicon using an English word, Greek word or Strong's number

http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/view.cgi?number=3309  Interlinear study bible  Strong# merinao (verb)

http://www.preceptaustin.org/Greek_to_Me.htm  Word study tools for Grk. & Heb. plus several in-depth Greek word studies already done using Strong’s #, Vine’s, & Wuest’s (older method)

http://unbound.biola.edu/index.cfm?method=multilex.showSearchForm  Greek & Heb. lexical searches in English, Spanish & French (+Strong’s lexicon link)

http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/essential-tools-for-exegesis

http://www.lionelwindsor.net/language_tools_hebrew.html