SYLLABUS FOR MASTER’S DEGREE

BI514--Biblical Hermeneutics

B.M.A. Theological Seminary      Spring Semester 2011

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 be able to discuss the concept of hermeneutics and the need for it.

2) To demonstrate a hermeneutical process (including specific steps) for doing valid Biblical interpretation and relevant application so as to communicate God's Word-not human opinion. Each BI514 student must be able:
   a) To learn and utilize 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 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.
   c) To apply these guidelines in preaching/teaching of the New Testament with emphasis on proper analysis of cultural or moral issues in passages pertaining to homosexuality and to the role of women.
   d) To apply these guidelines in preaching/teaching of the Old Testament.

3) To familiarize the student with various literary genres (literary forms or types) in the Bible including narrative, prophecy, law, poetry, wisdom literature, parables, epistles, and apocalyptic writings. Each BI514 student must be able:
   a) To identify and explain specific hermeneutical guidelines for each literary genre to promote an accurate interpretation of each type of literature.
   b) To utilize these guidelines in Bible study.
   c) To apply these guidelines in preaching/teaching of both Old Testament and New Testament passages.

4) To develop skill in selection of key words and how to study them in context.
   a) To learn how to select and study key Greek words in NT passages to determine their meaning.
   b) To learn how to select and study key Hebrew words in OT passages to determine
III. Requirements (for BI514)

A. Use of textbooks


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 papers and reports

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. The OT paper 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

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5 Remember 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.
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 NT paper should be deal with a passage relating to some moral/ethical issue (such as homosexuality) or other controversial issues such as the role of women (e.g., Eph. 5:22-32 and 1 Cor. 11:3-16; cf. 1 Cor. 14:34-35; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Pet 3:1; Gal. 3:28+). A) This may involve 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 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 (due May 3). B) Or this may be similar to the OT format above but with emphasis on key words and research to analyze two or three key verses without having to explain the whole passage in as much detail. Either option must be aware of the input from Webb, Grudem and others.

Here is the basic process for studying your passage and doing the paper.6

I. Study
   A. Read the passage (normally about 10 to 15 verses) carefully, if possible in several different English versions (note esp. the NASB (esp. NASU1995); NIV; and HCSB as well as the TNIV, ESV (or NRSV). Less helpful are the NKJV or KJV.
   B. Look at the context: what is going on before and after the passage?
   C. Look at the structure of the passage to find the development of its argument.
   D. Look at words and phrases which may be hard to understand.
   E. Do the different English translations suggest any places where there might be difficulty about the meaning?
   F. Use an English (or Greek or Hebrew) concordance and the online interlinear (see bibliography below) to look up any especially interesting or difficult words.

II. Learn from Others
   A. Use a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia to look up any especially interesting or difficult concepts (see recommendations in Glynn chap. 13+ ).7

   B. Read at least four commentaries on the passage (see bibliography below) to see what other scholars think about it (see recommendations in Glynn, chap. 4—see note 7). For the specialized NT paper, be sure to consult Webb, Grudem and other additional resources.

III. Decide
   Make up your own mind about what the passage is saying. Seek to combine respect for others who have studied the passage with your own independent judgment.

IV. Write
   A. On the basis of the notes you have taken, write an initial draft. Write as well as you can, paying attention to spelling, grammar, and style. Be sure to include reference to any source you have used. You may cite the source in the text simply with a reference to author's last name and page number in parenthesis in the text.

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B. Include an introduction of a paragraph or so in which you situate the passage in its context and deal with any necessary preliminary matters.

C. The body of the paper should contain a verse-by-verse explanation of what you think the passage means. Include comments on specific words and phrases; but don't get lost in the “forest” by spending all your time on the “trees”; make sure you help the reader see how the text is moving along, commenting on the transitions between verses and so on. In this part, do not merely summarize each verse (or paragraph) or re-state the obvious. Do comment on the flow of the argument or story-line from verse to verse (or paragraph to paragraph), including addressing why certain things may be stated in a particular way, why certain statements are included where they are, or why omissions of expected materials occur. Comment as needed on important theological words or ideas. Notice where else in the book or in other biblical books certain words or ideas are found. Concordances or theological wordbooks may be helpful here (see bibliography below).

As you comment on the text, be sure to indicate other views of significant points that you have uncovered in your study. Also try to explain why you have chosen the view you have and have rejected other views.

D. Include a conclusion of a page to a page and a half. The conclusion should briefly summarize what you think the key idea of the passage is and spell out its significance for 1) your thinking about the issue or about the faith in general; and 2) what action you may need to take as a result of your study.

E. A bibliography of all the books and articles consulted should conclude the paper.

F. Rewrite the initial draft to correct errors in grammar or style, improve the flow of the argument, and correct the substance.

Each term paper will normally be due 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. 29 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.]

C. Exams

The nature of the two exams (see class schedule below) 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—2011)


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8 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.

Feb. 1 (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 22 Prose and Narrative. Deadline for Masters: choice of 1st passage. 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).

March 1 Epistles and letters. Deadline for Masters: choice of 2nd passage? Assignment: Read whole books of 1 Corinthians, Philippians, Galatians, Philémon, 1 John; 2 John. Read Zuck, 221-26 plus review 134 & 141-142; Fee/Stuart, chaps. 3-4 [55-87 (2nd
March 8

Legal genre (laws). **Deadline to choose probable word(s) to study in passage.** Relationship of O.T. law to the New Testament (+brief look at theological analysis?). Brief review for exam. **Assignment:** Read all of Deuteronomy. Read Fee/Stuart, chap. 9 [163-180 (2nd ed. 149-164)]; Duvall and Hays, 328-343 (1st ed. 316-31) & do assignment #4 on Deut. 22:8—see (345[333]); review Zuck, 127.

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

March 15

**MID-TERM EXAM**

March 22

*Preliminary work due for (2nd?) Biblical passage: one mini-word study; exegetical outline of passage; basic observation and initial commentary with bibliography.*

March 29:


April 5

Introduction to Prophetic & Apocalyptic literature. Prophecy & typology. **Assignment:** Read Isaiah 1-14, 24-53. Read Zuck, 169-84, 227-49; Fee/Stuart, 181-204 (2nd ed. 165-86); Duvall/Hays, 368-386 (1st ed. 356-74) & do assignment on Isaiah 1:10-20 as substitute using instructions on 386 (=374). For extra credit: read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 359-84 (1st ed. 292-311).
April 12  No class. Spring Break. BMAA meeting.


May 3  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).

May 10 FINAL EXAM

V. Selected Bibliography: Hermeneutics and Word Study Tools


**Word Study Tools**

**Basic Word Study Tools: Selected Wordbooks and Concordances**


**Lexicons and additional Wordbooks**


*http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas* BDB correlated to NASB (keyed to Strong’s #) +keyed to Harris- Archer-Waltke, TWOT

*http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek* NT Grk lexicon based Thayer+ & keyed to Strong’s

Interlinear


*http://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible* outstanding interlinears search English words and find verses in NASB or KJV and then words are clickable to open up lexicons + keyed to large Kittel and TDNT

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://biblos.com interlinear & lexicons + other bible study tools
**http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas**  BDB correlated to NASB (keyed to Strong’s #) +keyed to Harris- Archer-Waltke, TWOT

*http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek*  NT Grk lexicon based Thayer+ & keyed to Strong’s

**http://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible**  outstanding interlinear search English words and find verses in NASB or KJV and then words are clickable to open up lexicons + keyed to large Kittel and TDNT

*http://interlinearbible.org/genesis/1-1.htm*  based on KJV (with parallel trans NASB) from biblos.com site  Strong’s # clickable to NASB exhaustive concordance

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