SYLLABUS FOR MASTER’S DEGREE

BI514--Biblical Hermeneutics

B.M.A. Theological Seminary    Spring Semester 2015

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 their meaning.

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1 This syllabus (12-10-2014) is tentative and may be revised, if needed.
2 Contact information: greg.parsons@bmats.edu    Office phone: 903-586-2501, ext. 212; Home: 903-586-3504.
III. Requirements (for BI514)

A. Use of textbooks


Each student will read large portions of these books (see class schedule and book review below).


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

B. Term papers and reports  [also check rubrics--handout]

Each BI514 student is responsible for two 12-to-16-page double-spaced papers (one on OT and one on NT)—1) an exegetical summary3 of some passage in the OT (preferably a passage in Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Daniel, or Zechariah followed by an expository sermon or lesson. Utilizing the textbooks and at least four (4) or five (5) 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)4 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.5 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 Turabian style footnotes (not parenthetical) with a bibliography at the end.

2) The NT paper should deal with a passage relating to some moral/ethical issue (such as

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3See Duvall and Hays, Grasping God’s Word, 421-23 (1st ed. 397-99). For an orientation to the steps of exegesis (esp. for one without Hebrew and Greek abilities) see Corley, Lemke, & Lovejoy, Biblical Hermeneutics, 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.
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 should involve a book review and a related NT paper (approximately 14 to 18 pages in 2 parts). 1) A 7 to 9-page book review (summary and interaction) of Benjamin Reaoch, *Women, Slaves, and the Gender Debate* as he interacted with William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001-- ISBN: 0830815619) [You might also want to see other critiques of Webb by Wayne Grudem, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (June 2004):299-346; and T. Schreiner www.sbts.edu/documents/tschreiner/6.1_article.pdf]. 2) To apply the results of this to an 8 to 10-page analysis of some brief New Testament passage relating to women, slavery, or homosexuality (due in installments? with final date due May 7). 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 Reaoch, Webb, Grudem. etc.

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

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 interlinears (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+).  

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/or Reaoch 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 (not parenthetical)  

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

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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 is normally due the same day the Bible section dealt with is scheduled in class (especially if that literary genre is scheduled April 2 or later). An oral report of about 25 to 30 minutes must be presented at that time. Preliminary draft is due on March 26. [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—2015)


Jan. 29 (1) Brief reemphasis on importance of historical-cultural & Biblical contexts including orientation to basic hermeneutical steps. (2) Bridging the historical-cultural gap. (3) Possible preliminary guidelines for determining transcultural vs. culturally-bound teachings. Assignment: Read Zuck, 76-97; Fee/Stuart, 71-87 (4th ed. 74-91); Duvall-Hays, 137-146 (2nd ed. 98-116) & do assignment #5 Nehemiah, 136(=118).

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


March 5  Legal genre (laws). Deadline to choose probable words (at least 2) to study in 1st 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 (4th ed. 168-186)); Duvall and Hays, 355-371a (2nd ed. 328-343) & do assignment #4 on Deut. 22:8—see 372 (=345)); review Zuck, 127.  For extra credit: read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 341-351(1st ed. 275-84)

March 12  NO CLASS. 1st Spring Break

March 19  MID-TERM EXAM

March 26  *Preliminary work due for 1st and/or (2nd?) Biblical passage: start one mini-word study; exegetical outline of passage; basic observation and initial commentary with bibliography. ~4 to 7 pages. Perhaps practice on LOGOS in class.


April 23  NO CLASS.  BMAA meeting  2nd SPRING BREAK.


May 7  Final edition: Review of Reaoch/Webb and/or NT paper due for Master's students.
   For extra credit: read Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, 477-504 (1st ed. 401-26)

May 14  FINAL EXAM

6
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

Interlinears


*http://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible* outstanding interlinears; search English words and find verses in NASB or KJV with words 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 interlinears--search English words and find verses in NASB or KJV and then words clickable to open up lexicons. OT keyed loosely to BDB/Gesenius meanings+ NT keyed loosely 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/ Hebr 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)