

ACTS

SEMINARIES

Associated Canadian Theological Schools of Trinity Western University

BIB 505A: Biblical Interpretation

Robert J. V. Hiebert, PhD
Professor of Old Testament
Spring - 2021
3 credit hours
Prerequisite: RES 502

E-mail: robh@twu.ca
Phone: 604-888-7511, ext. 3842
Course Dates: Jan. 12 – Apr. 19, 2021
Class Day: Tuesday
Class Time: 8:30 – 11:10 am

Note: this course will be delivered via live-streaming. Students will be able to participate through interactive online live-streaming of class sessions. Please see a more detailed description with guidelines and participation requirements in the Live-Streamed Courses appendix at the end of this syllabus.

I. Course Description

This course focuses on the development of a systematic approach to the interpretation of Scripture. Although reference is made to various interpretative systems and strategies, special attention is given to the historical-grammatical method. The predominant literary genres of the Bible are examined and relevant principles of interpretation highlighted. Emphasis is placed on understanding the original, intended meaning of Scripture in its canonical context as the basis upon which to prepare expositions and make appropriate contemporary applications.

II. Objectives

By the end of this course, each student should:

- 1) demonstrate knowledge of the basic history of biblical interpretation;
- 2) be able to articulate key theological presuppositions and to engage critically with significant issues involved in the field of biblical hermeneutics;
- 3) evince competence in determining the context and establishing the textual meaning of biblical passages on the basis of sound hermeneutical methodology;
- 4) be conversant with the various literary genres of the Bible and the hermeneutical procedures that are relevant for each genre;

- 5) give evidence of employing appropriate tools and resources for the study and practice of biblical interpretation;
- 6) demonstrate an ability to formulate applications that are consistent with the original intention of biblical passages and the trajectories that they sketch.

III. Course Textbooks

Enns, Peter. *Inspiration and Incarnation*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 198 pages. [= PE]

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. 609 pages. [= KBH]

McKnight, Scot. *The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 304 pages. [= SM]

IV. Course Assignments

Typically, a student is expected to spend approximately 40 hours to complete the work necessary to earn 1 semester hour of credit, hence 120 hours for a 3 credit course. This includes time spent in class, so unexcused absences will result in grade reductions. If a student is absent from more than two classes for any reason, s/he will either be required to do make-up work to avoid further grade reductions or will have to retake the course to receive credit for it, depending on the number of absences. For full credit, assignments must be completed on time. Grades for late written work will be reduced 5% per day (weekends = 1 day) to a maximum reduction of 35%. All assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for this course. Those that have not come in by April 19, 2021 will not be accepted.

Several kinds of assignments have been created to help students work through the required material and to acquire the skills that are necessary for the responsible interpretation of Scripture.

1) Readings and Review Paper:

Students will read the three course textbooks (PE, KBH, and SM) in their entirety.

Then in a 2000 word review paper students will discuss the effectiveness of the course textbooks in orienting them to the history and practice of biblical interpretation. The review will be submitted along with a signed Reading Statement (due April 6). This will count for 30% of the total course grade.

2) Participation and Class Presentation

Students will participate in classroom discussions and online forums (Jan. 12, 19, 26, Apr. 6) on subjects related to the assigned readings and other topics. Furthermore, each student will do a short class presentation on an assigned topic. More information will be provided via the Moodle site. This will count for 25% of the total grade.

3) Hermeneutics Paper

Students will select one of the following passages for analysis in accordance with appropriate interpretative methodology: Deuteronomy 20, Joshua 9, Psalm 74, Proverbs

6:1-19, Jeremiah 26:1-19, Mark 8:1-21, Acts 17:16-34, Colossians 2:8-23, Revelation 12. They will write a 4000 word paper in which they:

- a. identify the literary genre(s) of the passage;
- b. describe the hermeneutical process(es) involved in their analysis of it;
- c. discuss relevant biblical, historical, cultural or literary backgrounds which contribute to their understanding of the passage;
- d. outline the structure and describe the compositional flow of the passage;
- e. identify any key word(s), and explain why it/they are key and what it/they mean;
- f. explain any significant point(s)/idea(s)/theme(s) to which the preceding steps lead the person who studies this passage;
- g. suggest at least one specific, contemporary application/illustration that you would use to drive home this/these point(s) if you were expositing this passage in your home church congregation.

This paper is to be well researched, properly footnoted, and is to include an outline/table of contents (the headings of which appear in the body of the paper as well) and a bibliography. You may consult the class texts, reference works (e.g., a concordance, Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias, atlases, theological dictionaries, commentaries, etc.), and other reputable and recent books and journals/periodicals (but do not rely on Study Bible notes). At least ten such sources should be used. However, be sure to employ these sources for background and contextual information. Do not simply survey the interpretations of commentators for the passage that you investigate, but give evidence of having worked through interpretative issues for yourself. Citation or other use of sources must be scrupulously documented. This assignment will be worth 45% of the total grade. This paper is due on March 30 and is worth 45% of the total course grade.

Notes:

1. The grades for written assignments will be based on both their content and the quality of the student's writing.
2. Plagiarism in submitted assignments will not be tolerated. Penalties may range from receiving an F on the paper to failing the entire course.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Assessment	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

Grade Allocations

1. Readings, Reading Statement, Review Paper (April 6)30%
2. Online Forums (Jan. 12, 19, 26, Apr. 6), Class Discussions, Class Presentation25%
3. Hermeneutics Paper (March 30)45%

V. Submission of Assignments

Written assignments should be submitted as Word documents.

VI. Course Outline

- Jan. 12 The Need for Hermeneutics. Read KBH, pp. 27-65; SM, pp. 9-38; PE, pp. ix-xiv, 1-11. Forum 1.
- 19 The Interpreter and the Goal. Read KBH, pp. 201-290; SM, pp. 39-87; PE, pp. 13-60. Forum 2.
- 26 The Canon, Translations, and the History of Interpretation. Read KBH, pp. 66-197; SM, pp. 89-122; PE, pp. 61-101. Forum 3.
- Feb. 2 General Hermeneutics: Prose. Read KBH, pp. 293-360; SM, pp. 123-154; PE, pp. 103-155.
- 9 General Hermeneutics: Poetry. Read KBH, pp. 361-413.
- 16 NO CLASS (Reading Week & Modular Courses)
- 23 Application. Read KBH, pp. 571-636; PE, pp. 157-193.
- March 2 Special Hermeneutics: Narratives, Law. Read KBH, pp. 417-450; SM, pp. 155-194.
- 9 Special Hermeneutics: Psalms, Wisdom. Read KBH, pp. 451-461, 493-505.
- 16 Special Hermeneutics: Prophecy, Apocalyptic. Read KBH, pp. 462-493, 505-509.
- 23 Special Hermeneutics: Gospels, Acts. Read KBH, pp. 510-541.
- 30 Special Hermeneutics: Epistles, Revelation. Read KBH, pp. 541-567; SM, pp. 195-261. Hermeneutics Paper.
- April 6 Now What?: SM, pp. 262-67, 273-318. Forum 4.
Review Paper & Reading Statement.

VII. Select Bibliography

See PE, pp. 9-11, 56-60, 99-101, 152-155; KBH, pp. 637-681; SM, Notes, pp. 319-333.

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used, and in CanIL courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to use EndNote Basic/Web (to create an account or log in, go to: <http://libguides.twu.ca/EndNote/>) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. It is free. The link to EndNote from the library home page provides detailed instructions. Students will need to be aware that it is necessary to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples:

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. In EndNote Basic/Web the available formatting styles are those of Turabian Bibliography, and APA 6th edition. For Turabian, there are two formats – Notes (Bibliography) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information may be found at the following website: <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

For free online programs that will enable students to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.eturabian.com/turabian/index.html> or <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> (“Chicago” stands for “Turabian”).

CANIL students should consult with their own faculty on specific requirements.

Please check with your professor to find out which style he/she recommends you use!!

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are important for improving teaching outcomes, faculty professional development, and the student learning context. Completion of course evaluations is, therefore, considered to be a course expectation. Professors will schedule time for students to fill out online course evaluations (20-30 minutes). Students who are absent that day or who are otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation during the last class will be expected to make every effort to do so by the last day of exams. Information about how to access online evaluation forms will be provided to the faculty and students prior to the last week of classes by the ACTS Administration.

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/research/research/research-ethics/default.html>. Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Director's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

Christian scholars at TWU regard academic integrity to be a core value. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and are required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar). Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it are the student's responsibility. Excellent resources describing plagiarism and how to avoid it have been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke:

<https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbmxh/plagiarism-how-to-get-it-out-of-your-life/> (Prezi presentation)
<http://bit.ly/1p00KX3> (Google Slide presentation offering more comprehensive information)

Equity of Access

Students with disabilities who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and such documentation should include a statement regarding the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office outlined on the TWU website at <http://twu.ca/life/wellness/learningresources/disabilities-and-equity-of-access/steps-to-attaining-disability-services.html>.

Policy Information and Student Concerns

Information on academic and community life policies and procedures that affect students can be found in the ACTS *Academic Catalogue*, which is available on the ACTS website (www.actsseminaries.com) under the *Academics* tab. Students who wish to communicate concerns or to lodge academic appeals are welcome to contact the appropriate faculty or staff member directly, or to fill out and submit the relevant Concerns & Grievances or Appeals form found on the *Files & Forms* page of the *Current Students* section of the ACTS Website.

Appendix: Live-Streamed Courses

A live-streamed course makes it possible for students at a distance to observe and also to participate interactively in real time. Those who attend a class by live-streaming see and hear the instructor. They can watch class media presentations (e.g. PowerPoint) on their computer screens. They can follow class discussions, posing questions and making comments of their own. They can join in-group discussions with other learners when the class breaks into smaller groups. Through internet-based simulcast, they are able to share all the essential elements of the formal class experience.

Requirements for Participating in a Live-streamed Course

- ***Students must participate in classes in real-time***, as they would if they were attending class in person. For example, those who take a live-streamed course that meets on Thursday mornings will be expected to be in that class virtually, or physically, when that class meets.

ACTS has the capacity to record live-streamed courses for later viewing, but we do not record them as a matter of routine. If it is difficult for students to participate in a class session, they may ask the instructor for permission to watch recorded versions of the class. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

- Participation in a course through live-streaming ***requires a fast and consistent internet connection (ADSL or cable), a reasonably up-to-date computer system, a webcam, and a quality headset with a microphone***. Students must familiarize themselves with the live-streaming software platform and ensure that their link, webcam, and headset are working properly before the first class session.

Please arrange for a practice run on the system with the instructor prior to class, especially if this is your first live-stream course. This can be arranged by email.

- As much as possible, ***be sure you are fully ready for each class session before the class begins***. To the degree that logging in and connecting with the system can be done from your end, there is some flexibility for you to “arrive” as you are able. But testing the system and other logistics that require faculty assistance should be done before class starts. The instructor will do his/her best to ensure that everything is in place for the live-stream session; but he/she cannot allow live-stream setup to significantly delay or interfere with the smooth flow of the class session for other students once class begins.
- Arrange a backup plan with your instructor in case of system failure. ACTS uses high-caliber, current equipment and communication platforms for live-streaming, but hardware and internet connections are not infallible and do occasionally fail. Your instructor cannot stop class in order to troubleshoot and resolve technical problems in the unlikely event that these occur. To minimize possible disruption in the case of a loss of connection:

- Provide email, text, or phone contact information so that he/she can contact you at the next natural break in the class.
- Discuss the possibility of a back-up link to the class in case of system failure. (E.g.: a skype or phone link if the Zoom link fails.)
- Have a plan for follow-up contact with the instructor and/or with a fellow student to fill any gaps in your interaction with the class (as you would if you had to miss a class for other reasons).

Note that under the policy guidelines of our accrediting body, the Association of Theological Schools, live-stream courses are classified as “distance” education and are subject to the normal policies, limitations, and expectations that apply to distance courses. See the ACTS academic catalogue, or consult with the Academic Program Advisor or your Program Chair if you have any questions about the way that distance courses operate within your degree program.

**Reading Statement
Biblical Interpretation
BIB 505A**

Assigned Readings:

- Jan. 12 The Need for Hermeneutics. Read KBH, pp. 27-65; SM, pp. 9-38; PE, pp. ix-xiv, 1-11.
- 19 The Interpreter and the Goal. Read KBH, pp. 201-290; SM, pp. 39-87; PE, pp. 13-60.
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- 30 Special Hermeneutics: Epistles, Revelation. Read KBH, pp. 541-567; SM, pp. 195-261.
- April 6 Now What?: SM, pp. 262-67, 273-318.

Record the percentages for the appropriate options below. Then sign (legibly and in English) and date this statement. Due: April 6, 2021.

I completed _____% of the assigned readings.

I failed to complete _____% of the assigned readings.

NB: The total of the two preceding percentages cannot exceed 100%!!

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please print your name (in English!) _____