

**BSHM5310 INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**  
**Division of Biblical Studies**  
**Spring Semester 2016**

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**NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

**COURSE PURPOSE, CORE VALUE FOCUS, AND CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “academic excellence” especially highlighted in this course. The seminary is emphasizing the core value of “missions focus” this year and encourages all to focus especially on that facet.

NOBTS also has seven basic competencies that guide our Masters degree programs: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual & Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. This course addresses the “Biblical Exposition” competency especially by helping the student learn to interpret the Bible accurately.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is a study of the principles of biblical interpretation, an introduction to the major resources available for biblical interpretation, and an exegetical study of selected passages from the various types of biblical literature. The major focus of the course is practical—the course goal is that the students develop sound methods of exegesis and application of biblical texts.

**OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of this course include the following:

1. Students should understand the guidelines for interpreting the various genres of the Bible.
2. Students should gain an increased appreciation for how solid exegesis is essential for accurate proclamation and teaching of the message of the Bible
3. Students should acquire the ability to apply a sound exegetical method for interpreting the text

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. The student will be able to understand the principles guiding the exegetical process for biblical interpretation.
2. The student will be able to use appropriate tools, resources, and methods to apply sound exegetical principles toward biblical interpretation.

3. The student will be able to communicate clearly the meaning of the biblical text to a contemporary audience.

### **COURSE TEACHING METHODS:**

The goals of this course dictate in large part the teaching methods. Readings and lectures are central to covering the knowledge base needed for the course. Handing numerous texts from the Bible in class discussions and student groups helps build an appreciation for sound exegesis of the Bible. Elaborating word studies, background studies, and an exegetical project/paper aids in the use and development of the student's skills as an exegete.

### **TEXTBOOKS:**

The basic texts include the following:

- Bible in modern translation: RSV, NRSV, NASV, NIV, GNB, NLT
- Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (= FS)
- Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (= KBH)

Each student should acquire a Bible Software program, with one required for those in a specific Biblical Studies degree (like the MA in Biblical Studies, or the MDiv in Biblical Studies or Biblical Languages). The following are recommended by the Biblical Studies Division: Logos, BibleWorks, and Accordance. For those not majoring in biblical studies or in a Biblical Studies degree program, a free program from online can be used such as <http://mywsb.com> , <http://crosswire.org> and <http://www.e-sword.net> . Please consult with the professor if you have questions on this, and know that special discounts on the three major programs are available for NOBTS students.

### **Course Requirements**

The student will:

1. Read the textbooks in preparation for each class period (see schedule below). The student will turn in a reading report with the Stage Two paper.
2. Complete a background study of an assigned topic. The study should include primary and secondary sources and the student's evaluation of the subject in light of the sources. The study is to be 2-3 pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times, one-inch margins. Stapled, left corner—NO COVER PAGE. **(Hard Copies Due in Professor's Office by 5:00 PM on March 24)**
3. Complete a word study of an assigned word using the tools discussed in the course. The study should be 2-3 pages, as above. Stapled, left corner—NO COVER PAGE. **(Hard Copies Due in Professor's Office by 5:00 PM on March 31)**
4. Complete an exegesis paper on an assigned passage, which is to be produced in two stages. Specific instructions are found at the end of the syllabus. **Stage One** is a thorough exegetical study that is to follow the attached guidelines, approximately 11 pages in length. At the end of this stage, the student should have gathered all the essential knowledge from the text and be ready to begin the task of constructing a sermon or a teaching lesson. **(Hard Copies Due in Professor's Office by 5:00 PM on April 21)**

**Stage Two:** Please note that the Second Stage paper will serve as the embedded assignment and be assessed using the attached assessment rubric:

**Stage Two** is a polished, written paper, 7-8 pages in length, presenting the information gathered in the first stage in ready-to-deliver form. The purpose of this stage is to synthesize the data gathered in the first stage into a well-written presentation. The paper may take one of two forms: (1) a sermon manuscript, i.e., written out word-for-word, ready to deliver orally, or (2) a teaching article, e.g., an article for the *Biblical Illustrator*. In either case, this stage should have an interesting introduction, developed body, and a conclusion that ties the paper together. This stage contrasts with the first stage, in that the first stage is a step-by-step distillation of the findings of the research, whereas the second stage is a finished and polished work. Be sure to consider the audience in choosing the format of the paper and in shaping the material for presentation. **(Hard Copies Due in Professor's Office by the time of the final exam, 9:00 AM on May 12)**

**Due dates for the assignments are indicated above. Late penalty is five points per day after the due date.**

| DOMAIN                        | LEVEL  | INADEQUATE<br>(0 POINTS) | BASIC<br>(1<br>POINT) | COMPETENT<br>(2 POINTS) | GOOD<br>(3<br>POINTS) | EXCELLENT<br>(4 POINTS) |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| UNDERSTANDING<br>The Student: | Understood the principles guiding the exegetical process for biblical interpretation       |                          |                       |                         |                       |                         |
| APPLICATION<br>The Student:   | Used appropriate tools to apply sound exegetical principles toward biblical interpretation |                          |                       |                         |                       |                         |
| COMMUNICATION<br>The Student: | Communicated clearly the meaning of the biblical text to a contemporary audience           |                          |                       |                         |                       |                         |

## Course Evaluation

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Reading Report .....             | 10% |
| Background study .....           | 25% |
| Word study .....                 | 25% |
| Stage One Exegetical paper ..... | 30% |
| Stage Two paper .....            | 10% |

## Course Schedule

*Note: the assigned readings for each day are indicated in parentheses.*

|       |       |   |
|-------|-------|---|
| Jan   | 19    | Introduction to the Course<br>Components of a Hermeneutical Model           |
|       | 21    | Jewish Models and Early Christian Models (KBH, 22-45)                       |
|       | 26    | Reformation and Modern Models (KBH, 45-101)                                 |
|       | 28    | Interpreter, Goal, Application (KBH, 135-209)                               |
| Feb   | 2     | Methods and Principles of Interpretation (FS, 17-31)                        |
|       | 4     | Background Studies (KBH, 229-240)   |
|       | 9     | <b>Mardi Gras</b>   |
|       | 11    | Word Studies (KBH, 240-259)   |
|       | 16    | Class will meet in Library Reference Room: Basic Tools for Interpretation   |
|       | 18    | Translations (FS, 33-53; 265-275)   |
|       | 23    | General Rules - Prose (KBH 213-229)   |
|       | 25    | General Rules - Poetry (KBH, 273-319)                                       |
| March | 1     | World View  |
|       | 3     | Commentaries  |
|       | 8     | Interpreting Epistles (FS, 55-70)   |
|       | 10    | Interpreting Epistles (KBH, 426-440)  |
| March | 14-18 | <b>Spring Break</b>   |
|       | 22    | Interpreting Old Testament Narrative (FS, 89-106)                           |
|       | 24    | Interpreting Old Testament Narrative (KBH, 325-340)<br>Background Study Due |
|       | 29    | Interpreting Prophets (FS, 181-204)   |
|       | 31    | Interpreting Prophets (KBH, 359-387)<br>Word Study Due                      |

- April 5 Interpreting Law (FS, 163-180)  
 7 Interpreting Law (KBH, 341-351)
- 12 Interpreting Gospels (FS, 127-148)  
 14 Interpreting Gospels (KBH, 399-418)
- 19 Interpreting Psalms (FS, 205-223)  
 21 Interpreting Psalms (KBH, 351-358)  
 Exegetical Paper: Stage One Due in Professor's Office by 5:00 PM
- 26 Interpreting Parables (FS, 149-162)  
 28 Interpreting New Testament Narrative: Acts (FS, 107-125; KBH, 418-425)
- May 3 Interpreting Wisdom (FS, 225-248; KBH, 387-397)  
 5 Interpreting Apocalyptic (FS, 249-264; KHB, 440-448)

Exegetical Paper: Stage Two Due in Professor's Office by time of final exam,  
 9:00 AM on May 12

## **GUIDELINES FOR EXEGETICAL PAPER**

### **STAGE ONE**

This paper contains the primary steps to be taken in a full-blown exegesis of a biblical passage. When it is completed, the student should be ready to add the homiletical components of sermon preparation and preach the sermon.

The paper *must* follow the following steps, *in order*. Give each heading, then do the required work. This paper is *not* a typical term paper in the sense of having an ordered introduction, purpose statement, thought development, and conclusion. Begin on the first page with the "Text" section and proceed through the paper according to the outline below. The final product will be a collection of the separate sections, but they are all ordered in a logical sequence that should help in sermon preparation. Note that the work going into this paper will be more than will be available week-by-week for sermon preparation. However, in doing this exercise, the essential steps for a proper exegesis are learned.

**Text.** Write out the text of the passage, *single-spaced*, including verse numbers and indications of your own paragraph divisions, from one of the following translations: NASB, RSV, NRSV, NIV. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 page) **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED.**

**Historical Background.** Focus here is on information not directly gathered from the text itself or its literary contexts (i.e., things such as dates, international situation, etc.). Outside sources (such as Bible commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, or histories) should be used here. (1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$  pages)

**Literary Context.** (1) Discuss the placement of the passage in its immediate and larger contexts within the book, and (2) justify the paragraph divisions used above in the “Text” section. Look for clues in the immediately preceding and following contexts (the surrounding paragraphs and chapters) that show how the passage fits into its context (i.e., why it is where it is). **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1 page)**

**Paragraph Analysis.** Identify the theme of each paragraph in one sentence per paragraph. This may be a key sentence taken directly from the text *or* a statement of the paragraph’s theme. *Justify the judgment in each case (i.e., give reasons for it).* **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1 page)**

**Verse Analysis.** Comment on important features of individual verses. (In a longer passage, focus on each paragraph instead of each verse.) *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 comments upon why certain things are stated in the particular way they are, why certain statements are included where they are, why there may be omissions of expected materials, etc. 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, theological wordbooks, and cross-referencing guides may be used, but commentaries may *not* be used here. **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (2–3 pages)**

**Theme.** Provide a one-sentence statement of the theme of the entire text (i.e., what is the author's main point in this section?). This should be based upon the various stages of the detailed analysis above, especially building upon the statements of theme for each paragraph. Please explain the basis for decisions made. **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1/2 page)**

**Word Study.** Include here the major results of the previous word study. Do not include all of the raw data presented earlier. However, *attach the earlier word study to the end of this paper, as supporting data.* **(1 page)**

**Outline.** This is an "exegetical" ("historical") outline of the text, reflecting the theme. **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1/3–1/2 page)**

**Homiletical (sermon) outline.** This should derive from the exegetical outline. Include a one-sentence re-statement of the theme, a desired audience response, and a concluding challenge. **NO COMMENTARY PERMITTED. (1/2 page)**

**Commentary Comparison.** Include here any additional essential insights gleaned from three exegetical commentaries. *These must be insights not already uncovered in the exegetical work. Only consult commentaries at this stage in your work.* **(1 page)**

**Note:** Page numbers here are suggested guides only. They may be adjusted as needed, provided the asked-for material is covered adequately within the confines of 10-11 pages. **Papers must be no longer than 11 pages.**

## **Style and Formatting Guidelines for Papers**

The papers are to be neatly typed, ***doubled-spaced*** (except for the “Text” section, which is to be single-spaced), using no larger than a 12-point font (if a computer printer is used). Number the pages, use a “ragged right” margin (i.e., not justified right), and ***staple*** the pages together (upper left corner; ***no cover page***). Footnotes are preferred (format found in Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. A separate bibliography should be appended to the paper.

***Use commentaries and outside sources judiciously, and only where stated. You will be penalized if you refer to a commentary where not asked for, or merely to state the obvious.***

Standard academic writing procedures must be followed, including writing in your own words, giving proper credit when quoting or referring to material from another work, and writing in good English. Students who may have trouble with writing of English are expected to have their papers proofread by someone conversant in English writing skills *prior to* production of the papers. Failure to pay attention to matters in this section will adversely affect the paper’s grade.

## **Extra Credit**

The student can earn up to three additional points on the final course average by reading and reviewing one of the following books. The review should be 3-5 pages single spaced and should include a summary of the contents of the book and the student’s evaluation of the book. Reviews must be posted on BlackBoard no later than 5:00 PM on Thursday May 5.

- Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*.
- Corley, Bruce and Grant Lovejoy, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics*.
- Dyrness, William A. *How Does America Hear the Gospel?*
- Felder, Cain Hope. *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. and Moises Silva. *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*.
- Silva, Moisés. Has the Church Misread the Bible?
- Sire, James W. *Scripture Twisting: 20 Ways the Cults Misread the Bible*.
- Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*.

## **Plagiarism**

Any student who uses the ideas or words of another person as his/her own without proper citation of the source is guilty of literary theft, or plagiarism. Anyone caught plagiarizing another’s work will be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. (See current Graduate Catalog for definition and penalties of plagiarism). Any plagiarized work will be graded as a zero for that assignment.

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