



NEW ORLEANS
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

**Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics
(BSHM5310)**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division

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I. SEMINARY MISSION

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

II. SEMINARY CORE VALUES:

The seminary has five core values:

1. *Doctrinal Integrity:* Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity specifically by preparing students to grow in understanding and interpreting the Bible. Doctrinal integrity is the core value focus for this academic year.
2. *Spiritual Vitality:* We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word. Spiritual Vitality is addressed by reminding students that a dynamic relationship with God is vital for effective ministry.
3. *Mission Focus:* We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries. This course addresses Mission Focus by helping students understand the biblical foundations for fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments.
4. *Characteristic Excellence:* What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Characteristic Excellence is addressed by preparing students to excel in their ability to interpret Scripture, which is foundational to effective ministry.
5. *Servant Leadership:* We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us. Servant Leadership is modeled by classroom deportment.

III. COURSE PURPOSE

This purpose for this course is to discover the principles and methods of

sound interpretation of the biblical text and make application in written assignments.

IV. CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:

The Seminary has seven curriculum competencies: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Discipleship Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. This course addresses six competencies directly:

1. *Biblical Exposition*: by preparing students to understand, interpret, and communicate the Bible accurately.
2. *Christian and Theological Heritage*: by reminding students of the heritage of interpretation of the Old and New Testament
3. *Discipleship Making*: by modeling the principles of discipleship through classroom department.
Interpersonal Skills: through interaction among students in the class and in small group activities.
4. *Servant Leadership*: by modeling and reflecting the attitude of Christ in the life of a disciple.
5. *Spiritual and Character Formation*: through discussion and modeling of spiritual disciplines as a normal part of class discussion and activity.

V. 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 student would develop sound methods of exegesis and application of biblical texts. For the sake of illustration, we direct you to the website of Dr. Gerald Stevens, which can be accessed at www.drkoine.com. His website provides illustrations. Don't follow any due dates, as they do not apply to this workshop.

VI. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Knowledge (Cognitive)

Students who complete this course successfully should:

- Understand the significance of hermeneutics for biblical exposition
- Know the basic methods of biblical interpretation that have been practiced throughout history
- Know basic principles of grammatical-historical interpretation that lead interpreters to discover the meaning intended by the biblical author
- Know the major genres of scripture and the hermeneutical principles that should be applied to each genre
- Know the important tools that may be useful in the study of the biblical text
- Know principles that guide modern preachers and teachers in applying biblical truths to our contemporary context

Attitudes & Values (Affective)

Students who complete this course successfully should:

- Appreciate the complexities of the exegetical task
- Recognize the importance of sound exegesis
- Be more confident in interpreting biblical texts

Skills (Psychomotor)

Students who complete this course successfully should be able to:

- Contextualize New Testament texts within their ancient historical, cultural, social, and literary settings for the purpose of interpretation
- Prepare word studies that lead the interpreter to understand better the biblical author's usage of special vocabulary significant to the exegetical task
- Write a formal paper using required form and style guidelines that integrates learning activities of the course into the sound exegesis of an assigned passage
- Derive timeless truths from the biblical text and show how these should affect the beliefs and behavior of contemporary Christians

VII. TEACHING METHODOLOGY:

Class sessions will consist of presentations overviewing units of study followed by general discussion. Readings and lectures are central to covering the knowledge base needed for the course. Small group discussions allow for student interaction with the material presented. Multimedia technology, including video, audio, graphics, and presentation media, are incorporated into classroom activity to enhance the learning process. Biblical texts are used as examples to illustrate hermeneutical principles discussed in class. The combination of reading, lectures, multimedia, class discussions, and small groups should help build appreciation for sound exegesis of the Bible.

Class preparation will consist of textbook readings according to the syllabus schedule, book reports, and execution of written assignments. That is, the student's skills as an exegete are developed further through written assignments related to word studies, background studies, and an exegetical paper.

VIII. REQUIRED TEXTS:

- The Bible: any modern committee translation, such as RSV, NRSV, NIV, NASB
- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014 (= FS)
- Klein, William, Blomberg, Craig, and Robert Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Third edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017 (= KBH).

IX. OTHER RESOURCES

- Please refer to the Blackboard site for all lecture material.
- For NOBTS assistance with technology issues, call ITC (504-816-8180) or consult the following websites:
 - For online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.
 - selfserve.nobts.edu

- selfserve@nobts.edu
 - For Blackboard Learning Management system:
 - nobts.blackboard.com
 - blackboardhelpdesk@nobts.edu
 - For general technical questions and support requests:
 - www.nobts.edu/itc
 - itcsupport@nobts.edu
- NOBTS maintains “The Write Stuff” Center (HSC 290B, x8193) to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information towards becoming a better writer. Email writingcenter@nobts.edu

X. REQUIREMENTS IN THE COURSE:

A. *Pre-Workshop Assignments (Due Beginning of Workshop)*

1. **Textbook Reading.** *Students are required to read both textbooks prior to the beginning of the workshop (FS and KBH).* This requirement is crucial to the student’s ability to absorb lecture material presented during the workshop.

2. **Textbook Reading Report (25%).** Students will compile a reading report *to be submitted at the beginning of the workshop.* The report will be single-spaced, 12 point Times or Times New Roman, with one-inch margins. Submit this via Blackboard. If submitted in person, do not use plastic or cardboard covers or binders of any kind. Simply staple the report in the top left corner. The report will have the following three parts:

2.1 *Reading Percentage:* The student will indicate in a statement the estimated percentage of required reading they completed prior to the beginning of the workshop. The student will provide a signature for this statement.

2.2 *History of Interpretation:*

2.2.1 Briefly evaluate how the major ideas in each era of interpretation presented in chapter 2 of KBH shaped or impacted the church’s interpretation:

- Jewish Interpretation
- The Apostolic Period
- The Patristic Period
- The Middle Ages
- The Reformation
- The Post-Reformation Period
- The Modern Period

2.2.2 Based on the reading for each period, identify questions for conversation in class that you believe impact the understanding and application of the biblical text.

2.2.3 ***Optional, extra credit:*** Create *either* a 5-minute video *or* a detailed Powerpoint-type slideshow, including narration, demonstrating an interpretation of a particular biblical passage using one specific historical approach to

interpretation.

2.3 Genre Guidelines: The student will identify the essence of each biblical genre from the combined reading of both textbooks. The summary for each genre should be no more than one page single-spaced. These nine major genres are:

- Narrative
- Prophecy
- Acts
- Law
- Wisdom
- Epistles
- Poetry
- Gospel
- Revelation

B. Workshop Assignments (Due During the Workshop)

- 1. Class Participation (10%).** The student will prepare for each class by reviewing the material in the two textbooks for the assigned topics for the day. The student may be asked to prepare some material in a class handout, or to participate in some activity outside of class. Class participation will be observed each session.
- 2. Historical Background Study (15%).** The student will address these components of a background study: (1) Authorship, audience, occasion, and date; (2) the socio-cultural themes, explicitly or implicitly addressed in the text for the assigned passage. Students will be given a guide for completing this assignment. The study will be five to eight pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times or Times New Roman, with one-inch margins. Submit the background study via Blackboard. An example of the background study format is given at the end of this syllabus. *The background study is due at the beginning of class on Friday.* Late penalty is five points after the beginning of the class hour of the due date, then five points per each subsequent day.

C. Post-Workshop Assignments (Due After the Workshop)

- 1. Word Study- due one week after the workshop (15%):**
The student will compile a word study for an assigned passage. Students will be given a guide for completing this assignment. The study will be two-three pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times or Times New Roman, with one-inch margins. *The word study is due the first Friday one week after the workshop.* Submit the word study via Blackboard. Late penalty is five points per day.
- 2. Stage I Exegetical Paper- due 3 weeks after the workshop (20%):**
This paper contains the primary steps to be taken in a full-blown exegesis of a biblical passage. Late penalty is five points per day.

The paper must follow the steps listed below, in the order given. This paper is not a typical term paper in the sense of having an ordered introduction, purpose statement,

thought development, and conclusion. 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. In doing this exercise, the essential steps for a proper exegesis are learned.

Historical Background Reshaped. Drawing the most pertinent information from your earlier background paper (don't just copy and paste), explain clearly how the historical background affects the interpretation of your text. (approximately 2 pages)

Word Study Reshaped. Include here the major results of the previous word study. Explain clearly how the word study affects the interpretation of your text. Do not include all of the raw data presented earlier. (1 page)

Literary Analysis. (1) Using commentaries and other sources, outline the thematic development of your book. (2) Based on that outline, give a detailed outline of the immediate context of your passage, explaining how your assigned passage fits into both the larger context and the immediate context. (approximately 1 page for part 1; 2-4 pages for part 2)

Thought Analysis. In one sentence statements, identify the themes (explicit and implicit) of each thought unit. This may be a key sentence taken directly from the text or a statement of the unit's theme. Justify the judgment in each case (i.e., give reasons for it). (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 word books, and cross-referencing guides may be used, but commentaries may not be used here. NO COMMENTARY USE PERMITTED. (3-5 pages)

Commentary Comparison. Include here any additional essential insights gleaned from three exegetical commentaries. These must be insights not already addressed in the exegetical work. Other than for your literary analysis, only consult commentaries at this stage in your work. (1-2 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 10-15 pages, single spaced.

- 3. Stage II: Application, Embedded Paper (15%):** Late penalty is five points per day. Stage 2 is all about application of the biblical passage. The following three areas must be addressed: (1) Connect the contemporary audience with the text--create the means by which your hearers hear and see what the original audience understood. Use insights

drawn from your stage I exegesis. (2) Establish the intended purpose of the text--help your audience see, based on clues embedded in the text, how the author accomplished this purpose. (3) In keeping with (1) and (2), provide appropriate points of application so that the contemporary audience can readily perceive how the text demands a response from them. The paper must meet the following criteria:

Using the research developed from the Stage I Exegetical Assignment, the student is to write a polished, 7-8 page paper demonstrating the understanding of appropriate principles guiding the exegetical process for the particular genre assigned.

They are to demonstrate the use of appropriate tools, methods, and resources in the application of sound exegetical principles.

They are to communicate the meaning of the text, keeping in mind the contemporary audience.

The paper may take two forms: (1) a ready to deliver, word-for-word sermon manuscript; (2) a teaching article, as could be found in a publication or small group literature.

D. Extra Credit

In addition to the extra credit available before the workshop through the optional assignment, extra credit may be earned after workshop by reviewing one of the following books in 2 to 3 pages (up to +3 points on final average), *due by the first Friday after workshop*:

- Corley, Lemke, and Lovejoy. *Biblical Hermeneutics*
- Crenshaw, James. *Trembling at the Threshold of a Biblical Text*
- Dyrness, William. *How Does America Hear the Gospel?*
- Felder, Cain Hope, ed. *Stony the Road We Trod*
- Kaiser, Jr., Walter C. and Moises Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*
- Silva, Moises. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*
- Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*
- Stein, Robert H. *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*
- Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*

E. Grading

- reading report (25%) - *due before the workshop*
- class participation (10%) - *due during workshop*
- background study (15%) - *due the Friday of the workshop*
- word study (15%) - *due Friday one week after the workshop*
- Step 1: Exegesis (20%) - *due Friday three weeks after the workshop*
- Step 2: Application (15%) - *due Friday five weeks after the workshop*

XI. Schedule:

Monday: Introduction, Models, Canon

Session 1—2:00–5:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Introduction and Components of a Model (FS: 17–31; KBH: 33–65) CR
2nd Hr: Ancient Jewish Models (KBH: 66–77) AE
3rd Hr: Ancient Christian Models (KBH: 77–91) CR

Session 2—6:30–9:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Reformation, Post-Reformation Models (KBH: 92–98) CR
2nd Hr: Modern, Post-Modern Models (KBH: 99–164) CR
3rd Hr: Canon, Trans., Tools (FS: 33–53; 265–75; KBH: 165–200; 637–81) AE

Tuesday: Interpreter, Prose and Poetry, OT Narrative

Session 1—8:30–11:30 AM

- 1st Hr: Museum of Bible and Archeology OR FLEX CLASS DJ
2nd Hr: Interpreter, Goal, and Application (KBH: 201-289; 571–636) CR
3rd Hr: General Rules—Prose (KBH: 293–360) AE

Session 2—1:00–4:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting OT Narrative (FS: 89–106; KBH: 438-50) AE
2nd Hr: General Rules—Poetry (KBH: 361–413) AE
3rd Hr: Library Practicum AE

Wednesday: Law, Prophets, Gospels, Parables

Session 1—8:30–11:30 AM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting OT Narrative (FS: 89–106; KBH: 510-31) AE
2nd Hr: Interpreting OT Narrative AE
3rd Hr: Interpreting OT Law (FS: 163–80; KBH: 438–50) AE

Session 2—1:00–4:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting NT Gospels 1: (FS: 127–48) CR
2nd Hr: Interpreting NT Gospels 2: (KBH: 510–32) CR
3rd Hr: Interpreting NT Parables (FS: 149–62) CR

Thursday: Wisdom, Narrative, Epistles

Session 1—8:30–11:30 AM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting OT Wisdom (FS: 225–48; KBH: 493–509) AE
2nd Hr: Interpreting NT Narrative: Acts (FS: 107–125; KBH: 532–41) CR
3rd Hr: Interpreting NT Epistles 1 (FS: 55–87) CR

Session 2—1:00–4:00 PM

- 1st Hr: Interpreting NT Epistles 2 (KBH: 541–58) CR
2nd Hr: Interpreting OT Prophecy (FS: 181–204; KBH: 462–93) AE
2rd Hr: Interpreting OT Prophecy (FS: 181–204; KBH: 462–93) AE

Friday: Epistles, Apocalyptic

Session 1—8:30–11:30 AM—Background Study due

- 1st Hr: Interpreting OT Psalms (FS: 205–23; KBH: 451–61) AE
2nd Hr: Interpreting NT Apocalyptic 1 (FS: 249–64) CR
3rd Hr: Interpreting NT Apocalyptic 2 (KBH: 558–67) CR

XII. Bibliography:

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- Beale, G. K. *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.
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- Berding, Kenneth, et al. *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Berkhof, Louis. *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
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