

ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS OF TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Graduate Course Syllabus

Course Number: BIB 505 OL

Course Name: Biblical Interpretation

Semester and Year: Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Don Chang

Contact Information: don.chang@twu.ca

Office Hours: Thursday 10 am-noon & 2-4 pm

Co-requisites or Pre-requisites: None

Semester Hours: 3 Credit Hour

Course Description

This course will focus on the development of a systematic approach to the interpretation of Scripture. While various critical-interpretative systems and strategies will be considered, special attention will be given to the historical-grammatical method. The predominant literary genres of the Bible will be examined and relevant principles of interpretation highlighted. Emphasis will be 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.

Course Learning Outcomes

You are required to watch, listen to, and/or read the course instructional content and interact about the content in the online forums.

This course will help students:

- a. understand the historical developments that have shaped biblical interpretation; (1)
- b. become familiar with the theological presuppositions and key issues involved in biblical interpretation; (1)
- c. constructively explore, review, and evaluate the hermeneutical presuppositions and distinctives of various believers' church traditions; (1, 2)

- d. become familiar with the various literary genres of the Bible and the hermeneutical procedures that are relevant for each genre; (1)
- e. establish the context and determine the meaning of biblical passages through the use of sound methodology in the practice of biblical interpretation; (1, 2, 6)
- f. discover and be able to use the available tools and resources for biblical interpretation; (1, 2)
- g. discern principles in formulating applications that are consistent with the original intention of biblical passages; (1, 2, 6)

Required Texts and Materials

You will be expected to have to hand a reliable English translation of the Bible (not a paraphrase) such as *ESV*, *NRSV*, *NIV*, or *NASV*. Beyond this, the required textbooks for the course are:

- 1. William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. 2017; 3rd edition, Nashville: Nelson, 2004. [543 pages; hereafter KBH]
- 2. G. Camery-Hoggatt. *Reading the Good Book Well: A Guide to Biblical Interpretation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007. [233 pages]
- 3. R. N. Soulen and R.K. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 4th ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011. [258 pages]

Course Activities/Requirements

Assignments are due by midnight (your time) on the day they are due. I would ask that you submit your assignments in the online Moodle classroom accessible through MyCourses. When you go to the Moodle classroom, you will see assignment folders where you can submit assignments. Once I have marked your assignment, I will put it in your grade book in the Moodle classroom where you can check your grade and review the comments I made on the assignment (you will receive an automatic notification whenever I put a graded assignment in your grade book). Please note that I will typically deduct 5% of an assignment's total possible value for each day that it is late. I will consider extensions in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency (when a doctor's note accompanies the request). For the times when I allow a student to rewrite an assignment, I will generally take off 20% of the assignment's value before assigning a grade to the rewritten assignment.

Here is an overview of all the assignments followed by a detailed description of them:

Week	Due Date	Assignments	% Final Grade	Cumulative %
1	Oct 26	Pre-reading due		
	Oct 26–31			
2	Nov 2	Book Review Due	15%	15%
	Nov 2–7	Forum Week #1	5%	20%
3	Nov 9–14	Forum Week #2	5%	25%
	Nov 13	History of Interpretation Paper	15%	40%
4	Nov 16–21	Forum Week #3	5%	45%
5	Nov 23–28			
6	Nov 30–Dec 5	Forum Week #4	5%	50%
	Dec 4	Exegetical Note and Discussion	25%	75%
7	Dec 7–12			
8	Dec 14–19			
	Dec 19	Reading Log Hermeneutical Research Paper	5% 20%	80% 100%

Course Pre-Reading Requirement

Due to the condensed nature of this course, please have the following read before the course begins on October 26, 2020:

- G. Camery-Hoggatt. *Reading the Good Book Well: A Guide to Biblical Interpretation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007

You will be expected to integrate ideas from this textbook into the forum discussions and other assignments

Book Review (15% Due on Nov 2)

Review and critique G. Camery-Hoggatt's, *Reading the Good Book Well*.

- The book review and critique should not exceed typewritten 1800 words total (cover page and table of contents are not counted in the word limit)

- A good book-review paper will have the following components:

Introduction (1 page)

- Give full bibliographical data at the top of the page
- Author's educational (or scholarly) and ministry background, theological stance, which are relevant to the topic of the book in the first paragraph
- Identify and describe the purpose of the book and the layout of the book

Body (3 - 4 pages)

- Summarize the content of the book with reader's own words
- Identify and describe the points of argument that the author uses to persuade his readers
- Discuss the persuasiveness of the author and whether the stated argument of the author has been achieved and how and if not state why not.
- How would you describe the author's style?
- Identify strengths or weaknesses of the book. Support your evaluation with clear explanations.
- State how helpful this book is to your understanding on the process of Biblical Interpretation and your personal development in your ministry.

Conclusion (1 page)

- Conclude with an appraisal of your reading experience. What of personal value did you learn from it? What significant insights did you gain with reference to the subject?

Readings and Online Forum Participation (25 % of the final grade)

By the end of the course you should have read the required textbooks—KBH and Camery-Hoggatt in their entirety, and selections from Soulen and Soulen. Together, KBH and Camery-Hoggatt amount to 776 pages. And additional 200 pages must be read for this course. These 200 pages should reflect the objectives of having consulted the Soulen and Soulen text and to have read commentary and other resources with a view to the fulfillment of the course assignments—esp. *Forum #4* and *Hermeneutical Research Paper*. In the provided Reading Log, **indicate your reading list and what percentage of the assigned reading you have done**. Calculate thus: (Total pages read of KBH + Total pages read of Camery-Hoggatt + 200 additional pages, including Soulen and Soulen and to complete assignments) ÷ 9.76 = _____%. At the end of your reading log, you indicate, “I have completed _____% of the assigned reading.”

As you read and watch, please take notes in preparation for participation in the online forum. At any time in the course, you may initiate or join in discussions on the online forum. For grading purposes, interaction on the online forum though, your knowledgeable and thoughtful interaction on the online forum will be divided into four segments. You should plan to invest approximately four hours into crafting forum posts and responding to forum discussions during each two-week forum segment, for a total of approximately 16 hours during the course. Each two-week forum segment is worth 5% of your final grade. Although it is impossible to interact knowledgeably in the forums if you have not completed the readings and watched the videos, I will also grant an additional 5% will be given for completion of the online reading log that records your readings.

Students are expected to contribute to the forum discussions by posting a minimum of four conversational (worth up to 10 points each) and three substantive contributions (worth up to 20 points each) per forum

week. Please make sure that you spread out your contributions over at least three days during the designated forum weeks so that you engage in the forum conversations at different points.

By conversational contributions, I mean simply joining the flow of discussion with shorter responses (e.g. questions, affirmations, quick thoughts about what someone has said).

By substantive responses, I mean responses that show a deep processing of relevant ideas (this usually takes 200-300 words). We have a tremendous opportunity to build upon one another's knowledge, insights, and experience. Our goal is to collaborate in the forum. At times, we will respectfully challenge each other. We anticipate that this will be a rich time of dialogue. To create a safe environment for this to take place, we must build a supportive subculture that encourages one another. Disagreeing and challenging can be stimulating if done in an edifying manner.

Substantive participation may include (among other things):

- Providing and developing a new thought, idea, or perspective.
- Citing an experience or example of what we are learning and showing how it applies.
- Adding a new twist on a perspective.
- Critically reflecting on an idea/concept.
- Questioning or challenging a principle/perspective and giving reasons for your questioning.
- Integrating Scripture and other sources in a meaningful way

What Substantive Participation is NOT:

- Very basic comments such as "I agree" or "I disagree."
- Restating what someone has said (*unless there is a direct purpose in doing so*).
- Disrespectfully disagreeing.
- Pat answers that are not thought-provoking.

Below are examples of how to stimulate your own and others' thinking:

- What would happen if...
- Other times it may be helpful to...
- It is my understanding...what is your experience with this?
- You might approach this from...
- Is it possible that...
- Would you consider...
- Maybe...
- Possibly...
- Sometimes...
- I'm wondering if...
- Do you think...

Have fun!

Note: You can use any of your forum posts in other papers for this course. I would also encourage you to view the posts of others as resources that you can cite in your papers. Everyone brings a wealth of insights into the class!

History of Interpretation Paper (15% of the final grade; Due on Nov 13)

- (1) Research on the history of biblical interpretation and write a paper on it. The purpose of this assignment is to expand your understanding on various biblical interpretations in history by making an analytical reading on the history of interpretation on the Bible.
- (2) Read chapters 2–3 of KBH (pp. 66–164), relevant portions of Soulen and Soulen, and some other related scholarly resources.¹ Choose two methodologies from the following list (select two from the titles in bold font)
 - Early Church and the 2nd Temple Judaism:
 - **“Allegorical Interpretation”** (Alexandria-North African school),
 - **“Literal Interpretation”** (Syria-Antioch school),
 - **“Typology,”** and **“Eschatological Interpretation.”**
 - The church in the middle age:
 - **“Traditional Interpretation”**
 - The reformation:
 - **Luther and Calvin**
 - Modern Period:
 - **“Historical Criticism: Old-Literary criticism: Documentary Hypothesis, Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Tradition History”**
 - **“Canonical criticism,”**
 - **“New-Literary Criticism: Narrative Criticism, Rhetorical Criticism,”**
 - **“Social-Scientific approaches”**
 -
- (3) Summarize and evaluate some of the representative biblical interpretational methods from your readings: (a) explain the distinctive interpretational elements of individual interpretational approaches; (b) expound the historical, social, or philosophical-theological circumstances that might be influential to the emergence of a particular way of interpretation; (c) evaluate the individual methods; comment merits and demerits of them.

¹ Some of the titles that deal with related issues are as follows:

Childs, B. S., *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970.

Dockery, David S. *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.

Goppelt, L., *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

Kaiser, W. C. & M. Silva, *An Introduction Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

McKim Donald K. ed. *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Porter, Stanley E. and Beth M. Stovell eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.

Powell, M. A., *What Is Narrative Criticism?: A New Approach to the Bible*. London: SPCK, 1993.

Ryken, L. *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

Yarchin, William. *History of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

(4) Paper format

- The paper should demonstrate decent performance of research and be formatted properly with title page, table of contents, and bibliography.
- Use at least four resources which include KBH and Soulen and Soulen. (avoid internet blog, study bible, or unnamed commentaries)

The paper should not exceed 2000 words (title page, table of contents, and bibliography are not included in this 2000 words)

Exegetical Notes and Discussion Paper (25 % of the final grade; Due on Dec 4)

Students write an *Exegetical Note and Discussion* paper according to the following instruction.

(1) Passage: choose **one passage** from the OT **or** NT of which you will make an analysis in accordance with the historical-grammatical method. Select **ONLY ONE** of the following passages:

- * **OT:** Genesis 23; Exodus 24:1-11; Numbers 25; Deuteronomy 20; Psalm 19; Ecclesiastes 4:1-12; Isaiah 6.
- * **NT:** Matt 1:1–17; Mark 6:30-44; John 2; Acts 2:1–13; Hebrews 7; Revelation 5.
- * **If you choose a chapter from the above list, set the extent of your passage first. i.e. if you choose Number 25 or Hebrew 7, it does not necessarily mean that the whole chapter of Numbers 25, John 2, or Hebrews 7 is your passage. You have to set the extent of your passage for the first step of the exegetical process.**

(2) Make exegetical notes which contains the following components:

- A selected passage and the historical-cultural context of the given passage
- Literary/Biblical Context: Genre, Outline, Purpose, Focus, particular grammatical or syntactical structure or rhetorical markers, etc.
- Lexical Analysis (word study),
- Analysis on grammar (word and phrase level), syntax (sentence level), and discourse (a cluster of sentence level: relationship between the sentences) if necessary.
- Exegetical and interpretational issues in dispute
- Theological Analysis and Application: authorial/textual intent, possible implication to the contemporary
- A template type of guidance will be provided.

(3) The ultimate purpose of this assignment is to figure out how these diverse elements illuminate the author's (or the passage's) overall message. **So, discuss about how individual exegetical components are coherently work together to reveal the author's message of the given passage.**

(4) This Exegetical Note will be the core research work for your **Hermeneutical Research Paper**.

(5) Paper Format:

- This paper is a relatively loose in format: no footnote and bibliography is required for this assignment.
- The paper should not exceed 2000 words (title page, table of contents are not included in this 2000 words).

Hermeneutical Research Paper (20% of the final grade; Due on Dec 18)

Based on the research for the *Exegetical Notes and Discussion* assignment, write a hermeneutical research paper (2200-2500 words) which has a thesis statement and argumentations to demonstrate it.

(1) Make a thesis (statement) concerning the interpretation of the given passage, the passage that you worked with for the **Exegetical Note and Discussion** paper.

- Sample thesis statement:
 - on Psalm 19
 - “This essay will argue that the main point the psalmist was trying to make to his original audience was that God’s revelation in the law is greater than his revelation in nature”
 - on Isaiah 6
 - “the overall message of the book of Isaiah (and Isaiah’s calling narrative in Isa. 6) is not about urging the repentance of Israelites for the deliverance from upcoming judgement but about proclaiming an inevitable judgement and the new beginning”
 - on Matthew 1:1-17
 - “Using a narrative critical lens this paper will argue first that Matthew chose the women to reveal how oppression is used for God’s redemptive purpose and to confirm that Jesus redeems the most contemptible and shameful members of society”
 - on Hebrew 7
 - “Along with a survey of relevant background information that aids the understanding of Hebrews 7, this paper will conclude that the question of Melchizedek’s eternal state is irrelevant to the message of Hebrews and that its core message is that God extravagantly provided a perfect priest for his people with the chief goal of drawing them near to himself.”
- Please note that these sample thesis statements are not from the instructor, and instructor does not necessarily agree to or support these thesis statements. However, the key of this assignment is not to find the instructor’s idea on the given passage but to make a student’s own case and to provide a reasonable and persuasive (logical and coherent) arguments of one’s claim.

(2) use your exegetical notes **selectively** (from the *Exegetical Notes and Discussion* paper) in order to **make coherent arguments** to demonstrate that your claim is reasonable and plausible.

(3) Consult the class texts, reference works (concordance, Bible dictionary/encyclopedia, theological dictionary, etc.) and other reputable and recent books and journals/periodicals (but not Bible Study notes,

internet blogs, or Wikipedia). **At least ten such sources (including at least 3 journal articles) 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.

(4) Format. 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 your paper) and a bibliography of works consulted and cited. Title page, Table of Contents, and Bibliography are **not** counted in 2200-2500 words

Reading Log (5% of the final grade; Due on Dec 18)

	Author	Book title	pages
1	Klein, Blomberg, Hubbard jr	Introduction to Biblical Interpretation	
2	Kamery-Hoggatt	Reading the Good Book Well	
3	Soulen & Soulen	Handbook of Biblical Criticism	
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Calculate thus: (Total pages read of KBH + Total pages read of Camery-Hoggatt + 200 additional pages, including Soulen and Soulen and to complete assignments) ÷ 9.76 = _____ %.

“I have completed _____% of the assigned reading.”

Name:

Student Number:

Signature:

Course Evaluation

Course Requirement	Grade Value	TWU Student Learning Outcome(s)	BIB 505 Learning Outcome(s)
<i>Readings and Online Forum Participation</i>	25%	Knowledge and its Application Cognitive Complexity Inter and Intra- personal wellness Spiritual Formation	a, b, d, f, g
<i>Book Review</i>	15%	Knowledge and its Application Cognitive Complexity	b, d, f, g
<i>History of Interpretation Paper</i>	15%	Knowledge and its Application Cognitive Complexity	a, b, c, e, f
<i>Exegetical Note and Discussion</i>	25%	Knowledge and its Application Cognitive Complexity Spiritual Formation	c, d, e, f, g
<i>Hermeneutical Research Paper</i>	20%	Knowledge and its Application Cognitive Complexity	c, d, e, f, g
Total	100%		

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is very important, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be integrated into the Moodle classroom in Week 8.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	97-100	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	93-96.99	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	90-92.99	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skilful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.

B+	87-89.99	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	83-86.99	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	80-82.99	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	77-79.99	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	73-76.99	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	70-72.99	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision <i>or</i> references and resources not taken fully into account <i>or</i> examples are basic or not completely convincing <i>or</i> barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below 70	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

Course Outline

Consult Course Activities/Requirements on pages 2–3 of this syllabus

Course Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM AT TWU

One of the core values of Trinity Western University is the integration of academic excellence with high standards of personal, moral, and spiritual integrity. The University considers it a serious offence when an individual attempts to gain unearned academic credit. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about what constitutes academic misconduct. For details on this, and on identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to the [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar](#) (p. 47).

<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)

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Students with a disability 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 include 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 on their website at:

<http://www.twu.ca/student-life/student-success/disabilities-and-equity-access>.

HOSPITALITY IN THE CLASSROOM

TWU is committed to an ethic of inclusion centred on the principles of Christian hospitality, reciprocity and reconciliation. We seek to cultivate generous learning spaces that are based on respect for differences and are open to diverse views, opinions, and identities that are thoughtfully expressed in a collegial manner. We welcome and value all voices, including those from under-represented groups or those who have been marginalized.

The following policies are optional but recommended, to allow you to efficiently respond to student challenges to the syllabus. *Click on these fields and press delete if you do not wish to use them:*

CAMPUS CLOSURE AND CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations go to the <https://www.twu.ca/campus-notification>.

COURSE GRADE APPEALS

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made with the ACTS Office.

PAPER FORMATTING

The preferred manner for citations is the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format. For information and accuracy you may wish to reference the following style guide: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Students may find the following website helpful: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html