

# BRIERCREST

## BLST 701 Advanced Hermeneutics

Fall 2019

Professor: Erich Engler

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Course Dates: September 9, 2019 – December 13, 2019

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

An examination of current issues in hermeneutics, including the problem of meaning, presuppositions behind pre-modern, modern, and postmodern methodologies, and an introduction to major critical methodologies in biblical studies. Students will gain wide exposure to how the Bible has been studied in the last two centuries and gain practice in applying these methods to select texts.

### COURSE INTEGRATION

The course aims to hone and refine the skills necessary for thoughtful sermon and bible study preparation and for the “academic” study of the Bible. This involves an in-depth consideration of approaches to hermeneutics, as well as the provision of a series of practical exercises that hone specific interpretive skills.

### COURSE TEXTS

Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991.

Stanley Porter and Jason C. Robinson, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction to Interpretive Theory* (Eerdmans, 2011).

Kurt Mueller-Vollmer. *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*. New York: Continuum, 1989.

**Optional:** Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Westminster John Knox, 2009.

**Optional:** Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Westminster John Knox, 2002.

*Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.*

*These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.*

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

My passion and my heart for this course is that, more than anything, the student is better prepared to study the Bible and to interact knowledgeably with all those with whom they meet. Two threads will be interwoven throughout this course: (1) a study of the theory and history of hermeneutics, with a special (although not exclusive) focus on the past two hundred years, and (2) the careful, term-long study of a select few Biblical passages – both Old Testament and New Testament. This course is specially designed to allow two types of students to benefit from this course. Students with a passion and calling to a ministry of preaching and lay-teaching will be able to focus on honing their interpretive skills in an interactive online classroom setting while also gaining practical insight into the theory and history of hermeneutics. Students with a passion and calling for a more in-depth, academic study of the Bible will be able to focus upon the theory and history of hermeneutics while also practicing the interpretation of actual texts of Scripture.

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	Introduction and Review	Porter/Robinson, 1-22	Forum Participation
2	Second Temple period and Tannaitic Jewish Hermeneutics	Cohen, 184-204 <sup>1</sup> Instone-Brewer <sup>2</sup> Recommended: Nickelsburg, <sup>3</sup> Recommended: Kugel, 244-274 <sup>4</sup>	Forum Participation
3	Early Christian Hermeneutics	Osborne, 323-344 Kannengeiser, 206-258 <sup>5</sup>	Forum Participation
4	The Problem of Meaning: Issues and Solutions	Osborne, 465-516	Forum Participation
5	Romantic Hermeneutics	Porter/Robinson, 23-47 Mueller-Vollmer, 72-97	Forum Participation Short Paper # 1
6	Phenomenology and Existential Hermeneutics	Porter/Robinson, 48-73 Mueller-Vollmer, 214-240	Forum Participation
7	Philosophical Hermeneutics and Hermeneutic Phenomenology	Porter/Robinson, 74-130 Mueller-Vollmer, 256-292	Forum Participation Exegetical Paper
8	Critical Hermeneutics and Structuralism	Porter/Robinson, 131-189 Mueller-Vollmer, 293-319	Forum Participation
9	Post-structuralism	Porter/Robinson, 190-213	Forum Participation
10	Dialectical Theology	Porter/Robinson, 214-244 Mueller-Vollmer, 241-255	Forum Participation Short Paper # 2

<sup>1</sup> Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Implications of Canonization," pp. 184-204 in *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (2nd Ed.) Westminster John Knox 2006.

<sup>2</sup> David Instone-Brewer, "Theology of Hermeneutics", in *Encyclopedia of Midrash: biblical interpretation in formative Judaism* eds. Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery Peck (Brill, 2004)

<sup>3</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins* (Fortress, 2003), pp. 9-20, 44-50

<sup>4</sup> James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 244-274.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Kannengiesser, "Spiritual Exegesis" pp. 206-258 in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

11	Theological and Literary Hermeneutics	Porter/Robinson, 245-296	Forum Participation
12	Hermeneutics in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	Treier, 127-156 <sup>6</sup> Treier, 157-186 <sup>7</sup>	Forum Participation Application Project

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Online Forum** (25%): Each week each student will carefully and critically read the assigned readings. After having done this, each student will make at least two posts to the online forum. One post will be an online entry of 200-300 words in which he/she interacts with the reading(s) in an insightful, thoughtful manner. The student is free to focus their interactive online reading journal forum entry topics including (but not limited to) application to ministry, implications for the study of Scripture, and critical appraisal/analysis of the readings. Each week each student will write a post of about 75-100 words that responds in a meaningful, thoughtful, and respectful manner to at least one post written by another student in the course. Grade will be based on the quality of writing along with depth and quality of insight and interaction.

**Short Papers and Discussion** (15% each; 30% total): Each student will write two short papers (ca. 1500-1700 words), each of which will critically interact with a major theme/topic/thinker from one of the 12 weekly topics. At least one paper must be a critical examination of the hermeneutical theory of a key thinker featured in Porter/Robinson (e.g. Gadamer, Derrida, Habermas) and its significance for Biblical interpretation. Please conclude with a paragraph or two in which you briefly evaluate Porter/Robinson's presentation of this key thinker. Please be sure to cite at least 5-6 excellent scholarly sources, including at least 2-3 recent peer reviewed journal articles.

One paper will be submitted directly to the professor for grading and the other paper will be posted on the forums for peer-to-peer feedback and will be used to lead an online discussion in the class forums prior to being submitted to the professor for grading. Please choose your presentation week and topic by the end of the first week of classes through the online signup sheet on the course website. If at all possible, please avoid choosing a topic already covered by another student. All topics must be approved by the professor. The number of papers to be presented each week will be finalized when course enrolment is established. You may use the feedback you receive from the online forum discussion to revise your paper. One paper (the one that is not for online discussion) is due by the end of week 5 and the final version of second paper (the one that is for online discussion) is due by the end of week 11.

**Exegetical Paper** (25%): Each student will write a 12-15-page exegetical paper on a biblical passage of their choice. You must follow the exegetical procedure that is posted on the course website. The paper must also include a section of at least 1-2 pages which considers how published scholars using one of the major critical methodologies studied in class have read the passage under consideration. *If you choose an Old Testament passage for your exegetical paper, you must choose a New Testament passage for your Application Project (see below). If you choose a New Testament passage for*

<sup>6</sup> Daniel J. Treier, “,” pp. 127-156 in *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Baker, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Daniel J. Treier, “From ‘Western’ Academy to the Global Church: Engaging Social Locations,” pp. 157- 186 in *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Baker, 2008).

*your exegetical paper, you just choose an Old Testament passage for your Application Project. Due week 7.*

**Application Project** (20%): Each student will write, video record, and post online (e.g. YouTube, Google Drive, One Drive) at least one 20-minute sermon/talk (more/longer is permissible!) on a passage of their choice. Please submit the link for your sermon/talk through the course website. It is also highly recommended that you post links to your sermon on the Application Project Forum for voluntary peer-to-peer project feedback. You must follow the exegetical procedure that is posted on the course website. *If you choose an Old Testament passage for your exegetical paper, you must choose a New Testament passage for your Application Project. If you choose a New Testament passage for your exegetical paper, you must choose an Old Testament passage for your Application Project. Due week 12.*

## SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

### ***Attendance Policy***

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

### ***Course Schedules***

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

### ***Assignment Submission***

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

### ***Return of Graded Assignments***

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email ([academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca](mailto:academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

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