

BRIERCREST

BLST 602 Introduction to Biblical Interpretation Fall 2020

Professor: David M. Miller, PhD
Email: dmiller@briercrest.ca
Phone: 306-756-3438
Course Dates: August 24-28, 2020

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the principles and practices of biblical interpretation, including a discussion of basic hermeneutical theory, the interpretation of different genres, and the application of practical Bible study skills.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course offers an apprenticeship in the craft of reading Scripture. Students will reflect self-consciously on the task of careful textual analysis, develop sensitivity to specific challenges involved in interpreting the ancient collection of texts that Christians receive as the word of God, and cultivate reading practices that foster effective Bible study and sermon preparation.

COURSE TEXTS

Required Textbooks

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

Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Other Readings (on Canvas)

Alter, Robert. "Biblical Type-Scenes and the Uses of Convention." Pages 47-62 in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic, 1981.

Augustine, Saint. *Excerpts from On Christian Doctrine*. Translated by J. F. Shaw. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Vol. II*. Edited by Philip Schaff.

Bauckham, Richard. "Reading the Book of Revelation." Pages 1-22 in *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Block, Daniel I. "Preaching Old Testament Law to New Testament Christians." *HIPHIL Novum* 3.1 (2009): 1-24.

Dobbs-Allsopp, Fred W. "Poetry, Hebrew." In *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, 4.550-8. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2009.



- Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. "Application." Pages 235-246 in *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. "The Epistles: Learning to Think Contextually." Pages 55-70 in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Franke, John R. "Scripture, Tradition and Authority: Reconstructing the Conception of Sola Scriptura." Pages 192-210 in *Evangelicals and Scripture: Tradition, Authority and Hermeneutics*. Edited by Vincent Bacote, Laura C. Miguélez, and Dennis L. Okholm. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Hays, Richard B. "Can the Gospels Teach Us How to Read the Old Testament?" *Pro Ecclesia* 11.4 (2002): 402-18.
- _____. "How Shall We Use the Texts?" Pages 291-312 in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.
- Jenson, Robert W. "Scripture's Authority in the Church." Pages 27-37 in *The Art of Reading Scripture*. Edited by Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Kugel, James L. "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation." Pages 151-78 in *Early Judaism: A Comprehensive Overview*. Edited by John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- _____. Pages 12-25 in *The Great Poems of the Bible: A Reader's Companion with New Translations*. New York: The Free Press, 1999.
- McConville, J. Gordon. "Prophetic Writings." Pages 628-32 in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Craig G. Bartholomew, Daniel J. Treier, and N. T. Wright. Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2005.
- Provan, Iain W. "Literary Competence and Biblical Authority." *Word & World* 26.4 (2006): 375-82.
- Ryken, Leland. "Proverb." Pages 313-328 in *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
- Snodgrass, Klyne R. "Introduction to the Parables of Jesus." Pages 1-35 in *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Wright, Nicholas Thomas. "How Can the Bible Be Authoritative?" *Vox Evangelica* 21 (1991): 7-32.

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

Date	Class Topic	Readings & Assignments
Mon Aug 24	Introducing Hermeneutics & Exegesis Close Reading: Literary & Historical Contexts, Analysing Sentences, Paragraphs & Discourses Genre: Epistles	1 Thessalonians 1-5; Fee & Stuart 2003

Date	Class Topic	Readings & Assignments
Tues Aug 25	Genre: Narrative Close Reading: Analyzing Words Genre: Law The New Testament Use of the Old Testament	Genesis 12-22; Alter 1981; Provan 2006; Block 2009; Hays 2002; Kugel 2012
Wed Aug 26	Which Texts? The Christian Canon Genre: Poetry Where is Meaning Found? Authors, Texts, Readers The Authority of Scripture & the Holy Spirit Genre: Wisdom	Dobbs-Allsopp 2009; Kugel 1999; Augustine; Franke 2004; Jensen 2003; Wright 1991; Ryken 1987
Thurs Aug 27	Application: How do we live these texts? Genre: Prophecy & Parables	Hays 1996; Duvall & Hays 2012; McConville 2005; Snodgrass 2008:1-31; Amos 1-9
Fri Aug 28	Genre: Apocalypse Reflections on Reading Scripture	Bauckham 1993

ASSIGNMENTS

PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT

Reading Response (20%) - Due Friday, August 21

(1) Initial Reflection (1-2 pages; 300-600 words): Before reading Michael Gorman's and Jerry Camery-Hoggatt's textbooks, answer the following questions: Why do you read the Bible? What are you looking for when you read the Bible? How do you read the Bible? Why do you read the Bible in the way you do?

(2) Reading Evaluation (3-5 pages; 900-1500 words): In 3-5 typed double-spaced pages, (1) Compare and contrast Michael Gorman's *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* and Jerry Camery-Hoggatt's *Reading the Good Book Well*: To what extent are the content, goals and emphases similar? How do they differ? Which do you prefer, and why? (2) Explain how your approach to reading the Bible has changed as a result of what you have learned in these two books. (3) List any lingering questions.

MID-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Authority of Scripture Précis (10%): Summarize the argument of the essays by Franke, Jensen and Wright in no more than 400 words per essay, drawing attention to similarities and differences between their respective arguments. **Due Wednesday, August 26 at the beginning of class**

Other Readings (10%): Read the "Other Readings" on pages 1-2 of the syllabus before the day of class on which they are assigned. Submit a "Reading Log" by email stating when each reading was completed. **Due Friday, August 28 at the beginning of class**

POST-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Close Reading & Application (60%): Choose two passages in two different genres from the following options: Genesis 12-22, Amos 1-9, 1 Thessalonians 1-5. For each passage, (1) Perform a genre-specific close reading without the aid of secondary sources, focusing on *what* is said, *how* it is said,

and *how* the passage contributes to its wider context; (2) Reflect on how the passage should be heard by a specific part of the church today. Each "Close Reading & Application" essay should be between 5-7 pages (1500-2100 words) in length. More detailed instructions will be provided in class. ***Due Friday, October 23, 2020.***

Note: All written assignments must be typed and double-spaced, and formatted according to the Briercrest College and Seminary MLA Format Guide. Please submit assignments to Canvas.

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

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent 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 (1) 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.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. 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.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

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). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartholomew, Craig G. *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Camery-Hoggatt, Jerry. *Reading the Good Book Well: A Guide to Biblical Interpretation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.
- Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 3d ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2002.
- Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Goldingay, John. *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Hayes, John H., and Carl R. Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. Rev ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1987.
- Haynes, Stephen R., and Steven L. McKenzie. *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*. Rev. ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.
- Stuart, Douglas. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 4th ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2009.
- Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*. 3d ed. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2008.