

Hermeneutics – BL111

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Boyce College

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3 credit hours
Grader: Kyle Barrett
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NOTE: When emailing your grader (or professor), make sure to put the class name and section number in the ‘SUBJECT’ line of the email.

I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the principles and methods of biblical interpretation. (3 hours)

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A study of the transmission and the translation of the Scriptures and of the principles and procedures of their interpretation and application. A major goal of this course will be to master the technical hermeneutical vocabulary found in Robert H. Stein's *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*.

III. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course the student should be able to:

- A. Write a brief history of the formation of the English Bible, giving strengths and weaknesses of major modern translations in English.
- B. Use with ease (write out & answer questions) a technical vocabulary that explains the role of the author, text, and reader in the interpretive process (vocabulary from Robert H. Stein's *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*).
- C. Distinguish between different genres of biblical literature and display competence in applying basic rules that govern the interpretation of these genres.
- D. Write out various interpretive principles for the various literary genres found in the Bible.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Stein, Robert H. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. **ISBN:** 0801021014.
2. Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007 **ISBN:** 9780801031380.
3. Goldsworthy, Graeme. *According to Plan*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1991, 2002. **ISBN:** 0830826963.
4. Ryken, Leland. *Choosing a Bible* (also known as *Bible Translation Differences*). Crossway 2004. **ISBN:** 1581346433.
5. Grudem, Wayne et al. *Translating Truth*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2005. **ISBN:** 1581347553.

6. Carson, D. A. *New Testament Commentary Survey*. 6th edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
ISBN: 0801022878. NOTE: Students **must** have the 6th edition.

7. Longman, Tremper. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. 4th edition. Grand Rapids: Baker,
2007. ISBN: 0801031230. NOTE: Students **must** have the 4th edition.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

(Note: Those asterisked* are highly recommended, but not required.)

*Alexander, Desmond T, Brian S. Rosner, D. A. Carson, Graeme Goldsworthy eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity and Diversity of Scripture*. Downers Grove, IVP, 2000.

Bruce, F. F. *History of the Bible in English*, third edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Caird, G. B. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

*Kaiser, Walter C. and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Revised and Expanded ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

*McCartney, Dan, and Charles Clayton. *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. 2nd ed. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2002.

Roberts, Vaughn. *Life's Big Questions: Six Major Themes Traced Through the Bible*. London: Intervarsity, 2004.

Stein, Robert H. "Playing the Christmas Game with a Marked Deck." *Christian Research Journal* 20 (1998): 52-53.

_____. "Is Our Reading the Bible the Same as the Original Audience's Hearing It? A Case Study in the Gospel of Mark." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46 (2002): 64-78.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. "The Reader in New Testament Interpretation." In *Hearing the New Testament*, edited by Joel B. Green, pp. 301-328. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995.

Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translations*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

VI. GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Reading Report	10%
Written Assignments (4)	35%
Book Summary	10%
Terminology Worksheets (4)	10%
Mid Term Exam	15%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>20%</u>
	100%

VII. GRADING SCALE:

A(+)	99-100	B+	92-93	C+	82-85	D+	73-75	F 65↓
A	97-98	B	89-91	C	79-81	D	69-72	
A-	94-96	B-	86-88	C-	76-78	D-	66-68	

VIII. ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Short Assignment Papers (4):

- All assignments must be completed for the student to pass the course.
- Do not go over prescribed length more than 1/3 page.
- The written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date due, and they *must* be typed and stapled. Any assignment turned in after class has begun will be considered late and will be assessed a 20% penalty per day including weekends.
- You may, and are encouraged to, work on these papers in groups of up to four; groups may be no larger than four. If you choose to work in a group, you must still write and submit your own paper individually. In short, if there are four in a group, each will write his or her own paper and submit it for grading. The chief purpose of the group is to think and discuss together.
- Make plans for your printer to jam and your computer to crash. Such are not valid reasons for late submission of assignments.
- Ask when you have questions!
- **Everything that is turned in must have the honor code attached**, signed and dated. **Without the honor code, the assignment will not be graded.** Completing the honor code is part of every assignment.

Written Assignments:

1. *Proverbs 11:11 Assignment*: In **2-3 typewritten pages** give the **meaning** and at least 3 **implications** that have significance for us today from this proverb. Use what you learned about the genre of the proverb from your reading and from the class. Finally, state the **significance** (using our definition of significance from Stein's book, ch. 2) of this proverb in your own life. You must use at least 2 evangelical commentaries that have been written and published within the past 50 years. For which commentaries are best for you to use, make use the book *Old Testament Commentary Survey*.

2. *Isaiah 13:1-22 Assignment*: In **2-3 typewritten pages** give the **meaning** and at least 3 **implications** which may have significance for us today from Isaiah 13:1-22. Support your views with biblical references from Isaiah. You must use at least 2 evangelical commentaries that have been written and published within the past 50 years. **DO NOT MERELY WRITE A COMMENTARY ON EACH VERSE.** For which commentaries are best for you to use, make use the book *Old Testament Commentary Survey*.

3. *Psalm 3 Assignment*: In **2-3 typewritten pages** give the **meaning** and at least 3 **implications** which have significance for us today from Psalm 3. Support your conclusions with biblical references from *this psalm*. Obtain the meaning of this psalm *from this psalm*. You must use at least 2 commentaries that have been written and published within the past 50 years, and 1 additional commentary/manuscript written and published since the time of the Reformation (i.e. Spurgeon, Calvin, Luther, Edwards etc.), for a total of at least three sources other than your Bible. Finally, state the **significance** (using our definition from Stein’s book, ch. 2) of this Psalm in your own life. **DO NOT MERELY WRITE A COMMENTARY ON EACH VERSE**. For which commentaries are best for you to use, make use of the book *Old Testament Commentary Survey*.

4. *Mark 1:21-28 Assignment*: In **2-3 typewritten pages** give the **meaning** of Mark 1:21-28 and give support for your conclusion from the larger context of Mark’s gospel and Markan theology. Keep in mind such issues as the distinction between meaning, significance, subject matter, etc. (Hint: What is the key verse of this section?) Support your views with biblical references from Mark. You must use at least 3 commentaries that have been written and published within the past 50 years. **DO NOT MERELY WRITE A COMMENTARY ON EACH VERSE**. For which commentaries are best for you to use, make use of the book *New Testament Commentary Survey*.

THEN, in **1 typewritten page**, describe how you would teach this section of Mark to a typical Wednesday evening High School youth group Bible study. **THEREFORE, this paper will be 3-4 pages when complete.**

B. Book Summary: Each student is required to write a 4 page book summary of Goldsworthy’s *According to Plan*. This is not a book *review*, but is simpler—a book *summary*. To receive a passing grade the summary must both accurately summarize the contents of the book, but also identify and explain the main thesis (the main point) and flow of the book (how this main point is “unpacked” throughout the book). A title page is required, but no bibliography, obviously.

NOTICE:

All written assignments must be written according to the formatting rules found below. Form error will negatively affect the assignment grade.

Here are a few basic formatting issues to which your papers must conform.

1. If you have questions on how to do any of this, then consult the Boyce College Writing Center.
2. Margins are 1 inch all around. You will likely need to reset your word processor program to this format. Word, for example, comes pre-programmed at 1.25 all around. This must be changed or the paper will be penalized.
3. The page number is centered at the bottom of the first page, and should be at the top right-hand corner for all subsequent pages for the body of the paper. For Word, this means that you will have to go under “Page Setup” and then check “Different First Page.” If you’ve never done this, then the easiest thing to do is to go to the Writing Center and let them walk you through it once. After that, you’ve got it.

4. Your first body page will have the title of the paper in all caps, 2 inches from the top of the page, and centered.
5. Font size is 12pt Times New Roman *only*. Footnotes (when used) may either be 10 or 12pt font.
6. Each paper must have a title page. For the correct form, download the example title page from ECampus. Your title page does not contribute to the overall page requirement of the paper.
7. Each paper must have a bibliography, which lists all sources used in the completion of the assignment (see the example on ECampus for proper format). Though you may obviously use your Bible and the class notes for the papers, they do not count in the number of sources required for the papers. Your bibliography page does not contribute to the overall page requirement of the paper.
8. Each paper must be stapled. Do not staple multiple assignments together. Papers that are not stapled will not be accepted and are subject to the 20% per day late penalty.
9. The good news is that if you pay close attention to the form one time, then you can copy and paste that paper's form into new documents for future papers.
10. When you are required to use secondary sources (such as a commentary), then you *must* have a bibliography, and the bibliography must be in SBTS style—please see the example on ECampus.
11. Everything that is turned in must have the honor code attached, signed and dated.
12. **No emailed assignments will be accepted. Hard copies only.**

C. “Using Terminology” worksheets (4):

1. These are due according to the schedule outlined in the course outline below.
2. These assignments may be done in groups. The groups can be no larger than FOUR. Though you may work in groups, each student must complete the assignment and turn in his or her own assignment.
3. **NOTE:** Since these assignments are not written papers, no title page, bibliography etc. are needed.

D. Exam Schedule:

Exam 1: The exam will be taken **online** and will open in ECampus Monday March 9th at 12pm (NOON) and will close Friday March 13th at 12pm (NOON).

Exam 2: (Final Exam) Taken **in class** (not online). Date and time TBA.

Bring your Bibles and something to write with. No study Bibles are permitted.

NOTE: Technical Difficulties

Enough time has been built into the ECampus exams so as to account for possible technical difficulties (such as having to log on again if you get booted off for some reason). If you have significant technical difficulties, then you will need to contact the MIS office at Southern Seminary (MIS@sbts.edu). Most of you will likely have no trouble at all, but you do need to spend a bit of time familiarizing yourself with the new ECampus. Also, please be considerate of

the MIS office; they are there to help with genuine technical difficulties but not to be your ECampus tutor. “How-to” questions can be answered simply by spending some time online and by reading the User Guide on the ECampus homepage after you login.

If you have trouble, email or call the MIS office, **and send an email to your grader as well. DO NOT SIMPLY EMAIL THE PROFESSOR AS THIS WILL DRASTICALLY SLOW DOWN THE CORRECTION OF YOUR PROBLEM.**

A word of advice in this matter: Do not wait until the last minute to do the online exams. Ample time has been allotted for everything to be completed on ECampus, and when an exam closes, it is closed. Only in an emergency situation will an exam be re-opened. This is left to the sole discretion of the Garrett Fellow and Professor.

IX. READING

A. Reading. Reading is due before class begins. Therefore, any reading not completed by the beginning of class is considered late. The student must keep track of his or her own reading by making use of the Reading Report. You will use your reading report to keep track and to mark the percentage of the assignment read. Completed Reading Reports are due by the beginning of the final exam. After this they are late.

B. Reading Report. The student must keep track of his or her reading progress via the Reading Report, which is to be turned in at the final exam. It must be completed or the student will receive a 0% for their reading. “Completed” means that the final percentage has been calculated.

X. BOYCE COLLEGE CLASSROOM POLICIES AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

A. Male students are not allowed to wear facial jewelry, hats, or caps while in the classroom.

B. No food or drinks are allowed in class, except water.

C. In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course.

D. You must **TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES** and any other means of communicating with people outside of the classroom. Do not turn cell phones to VIBRATE, but turn them OFF. If a cell phone rings during class, the PROFESSOR will answer the call for you.

E. If the student brings a laptop computer to class, he/she may not play games, write email, instant message, or do anything else with the computer other than take notes for that class period. **The student may NOT be online during class for any reason. Absolutely No being online.** Students who are found to be online during class will be given an absence for the entire period, and will be asked to leave.

F. **Academic Honesty:** Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work students submit must be their own and any ideas received from somewhere else must be carefully documented.

- G. You are expected to be able to navigate and download/print documents from ECampus.
- H. YOU MUST HAVE A WORKING EMAIL ON THE ECAMPUS WEBSITE. I will email you periodically and you will be responsible for the material in the email.

BLOCK CLASS: A NOTE ABOUT WEEKLY READING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Since this section only meets once a week, there are pros and cons. On the positive side, we get it all done in one shot. On the negative side, you can't wait till the night before to begin doing your readings and assignments for the class meeting. This will be a great class if you stay up on the reading, since much of the class time will be over what you have read. Remember, you must participate in class, and to participate, you must do the reading. A good hermeneutic is imperative to a healthy Christian life (we will see this point over and over throughout the semester), so put this class at the top of your list!

XI. DISCLAIMER

1. This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the items mentioned above. During the course of the semester, however, the teacher reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary because of events and circumstances that change during the semester.
2. For instructional purposes the professor may employ the use of film, readings, and outside guests, however, this use does not constitute an endorsement by Boyce College of these sources.

XII. HONOR CODE

Every item turned in must include the honor code, signed and dated by the student. If the honor code is not turned in along with the assignment, it will not be graded and will not be considered for grading until the honor code is included. A late penalty of 20% per day for the assignment will accrue until the honor code is brought to the professor or grader and stapled to the assignment. Here is the honor code:

On my honor, I have neither given nor taken improper assistance in completing this assignment.

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

XIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	To Be Covered In Class	Assignments Due For Next Class
1	Monday 1-19	**Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – NO CLASS**	N/A
2	Monday 1-26	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions and syllabus 2. Intro Matters: Hermeneutics and Translation Issue (English Bible) 3. Daniel B. Wallace article, “Why I Do Not Believe the KJV is the Best Translation Available Today.” 4. History of the English Bible 	DUE FOR 2-2: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>According to Plan</i>, Introduction and chapters 1, 2, 3. 2. Read the Wallace article posted on ECampus. 3. Read the class syllabus in its entirety.
3	Monday 2-2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History of the English Bible (continued if necessary) 2. The Basics and Necessity of Textual Criticism 	DUE FOR 2-9: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>According to Plan</i>, chapters 4, 5, 6, 7. 2. Read Chapter 1 in Stein (Intro to Hermeneutics). 3. Log on to www.bible.org and surf there for 15 minutes. Look around at this valuable site.
4	Monday 2-9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Hermeneutics 2. A Vocabulary for Interpretation Part 1 	DUE FOR 2-16: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>According to Plan</i>, chapters 8, 9, 10, 11. 2. Read Chapter 1 in Virkler. 3. Read Chapter 2 of Stein (Vocabulary). Learn the 11 vocabulary terms <i>well</i>. 4. <i>Skim</i> C. S. Lewis, “Fernseeds and Elephants” (located on ECampus). 5. Read Stein, “The Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics” (located on ECampus). <p>NOTE: This is a lot of reading, but each is very important!</p>

5	Monday 2-16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Vocabulary for Interpretation Parts 2 and 3 2. Practice using the terms (practice term sheets) 	<p>DUE FOR 2-23:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>According to Plan</i>, chapters 12, 13, 14, 15 2. Read Stein, chapter 3 (Spirit and Biblical Interpretation). 3. Read Erickson, “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical Interpretation,” [called “Erickson - Evangelical Interpretation,” located on ECampus]. 4. Using Terminology sheets #1-2. DUE by 2:30pm (2-23). You may work in groups and are encouraged to do so!
6	Monday 2-23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Spirit and Biblical Interpretation 2. Go over Terminology sheets 1-2. 	<p>DUE FOR 3-2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>According to Plan</i>, chapters 16, 17, 18, 19 2. Read Stein chapters 4 (Genre), and 5 (Proverbs). 3. Read Virkler chapter 3. 4. Using Terminology sheets #3-4. Due by 2:30pm (3-2). You may work in groups and are encouraged to do so!
7	Monday 3-2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Implications of Genre 2. Proverbs 1 3. Proverbs 2 4. Go over Terminology sheets 3-4 	<p>DUE FOR 3-9:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>According to Plan</i>, chapters 20, 21, 22, 23 2. Read Stein chapter 6 (Prophecy), chapter 7 (Poetry). 3. ASSIGNMENT #1 (Proverbs 11:11) due by 2:30pm (3-9).
8	Monday 3-9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prophecy 2. Poetry (not included on 1st exam) 3. Review for EXAM #1. 4. Review PDF is on ECampus 	<p>DUE FOR 3-16:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Stein chapter 8 (Idioms), chapter 9 (Hyperbole), and chapter 10 (Parables). 2. TAKE EXAM 1 ONLINE (according to schedule listed in syllabus). Due this Friday March 13th at 12 NOON.

9	Monday 3-16	1. Figures of Speech: a. Idioms b. Hyperbole 2. Parables	DUE FOR 3-23: 1. Read <i>According to Plan</i> , chapters 24, 25, 26, 27 2. Read Stein chapter 11 (Biblical Narrative) 3. ASSIGNMENT #2 (Isaiah 13) due by 2:30pm (3-23).
10	Monday 3-23	1. Parables (continued if needed) 2. Biblical Narrative	DUE FOR 4-6: 1. Read Virkler chapter 6. 2. Read <i>Translating Truth</i> : Foreword, chapters 1-2. 3. Read the Leland Ryken booklet, <i>Bible Translation Differences</i> . Come prepared to discuss. 4. ASSIGNMENT #3 (Psalm 3) due by 2:30pm (4-6).
11	Monday 3-30	**Spring Reading Days NO CLASS**	Do not get behind in your assignments. Be wise and work during fall reading days.
12	Monday 4-6	1. Biblical Narrative continued (if needed) 2. Discussion of Ryken's booklet and Translation Theory 3. Review for Exam #2 4. Review PDF is on ECampus	DUE FOR 4-13: 1. Read Stein chapter 12 (Epistles). 2. Read Virkler chapter 7. 3. Book Summary (<i>According to Plan</i>) due by 2:30pm (4-13).
13	Monday 4-13	1. Word Studies (they are especially important in the genre of the epistle) 2. Epistles	DUE FOR 4-20: 1. Read Stein chapter 13 (Treaties, Laws, and Songs). 2. Read Virkler chapter 8. 3. ASSIGNMENT #4 (Mark 1:21-28) due by 2:30pm (4-20).

14	Monday 4-20	1. Treaties and Laws and Songs 2. Miscellaneous catch up if needed and Review for <u>FINAL EXAM</u>	DUE FOR 4-27: 1. Study for the FINAL EXAM. 2. Turn in COMPLETED Reading Report at the final exam.
15	Monday 4-27	FINAL EXAM 2 hours Time TBA	Don't forget to bring your COMPLETED Reading Report to the final. You must turn it in at the beginning of the final exam or it will be considered late.