

Biblical Interpretation (BI500 [BT501]; 3 credit hours)
Trinity School for Ministry / Ridley Institute
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Course Description

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to biblical interpretation organized around four areas of focus: Biblical theology, hermeneutics, the history of biblical interpretation, and exegesis. The course will begin with an overview of various models for discerning the unity of Scripture, including a discussion of premodern, modern, and postmodern approaches to interpreting Scripture. Special emphasis will be placed on the nature of the relationship between authorial intention, providence, and figural readings of Scripture. The middle and final sections of the course will discuss the study of biblical words and texts, the place of literary genre, and the use of the Old Testament in the New. Case studies of various biblical texts will provide opportunities to illuminate these issues in the concrete context of exegesis and interpretation.

The general set of outcomes Trinity desires for each of our graduates includes the following:

1. The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
2. The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology.
3. M.Div.: The student will be able to effectively communicate the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.
M.A.R.: The student will be able to effectively teach the Christian faith.
S.T.M.: The student will demonstrate the ability to carry out research from original sources.
4. M.Div.: The student will be prepared to effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities.
M.A.R.: The student will be equipped to apply scholarship to the life of the church in his or her chosen theological discipline.
S.T.M.: The student will be equipped to successfully pursue further independent research and post-graduate study in his or her chosen theological discipline.

This course is one of the core courses in the curriculum that provide an understanding of Scripture and biblical theology, thereby grounding this curriculum as a whole (outcome 1). Such attention to biblical theology is at the heart of a classic Anglican approach to Scripture (outcome 2; see Article XX of *The XXXIX Articles of Religion*), and an understanding of the Bible is a pre-requisite for both effectively

communicating the Christian message and offering effective leadership (Outcomes 3 and 4). So this course contributes to each of these general outcomes, doing so through the following specific objectives:

1. To introduce students to a two-testament approach to biblical theology and the distinctive contribution each testament makes to our understanding of the Bible as Christian scripture.
2. To facilitate the development of interpretive skills for reading Scripture.

For discussion of how I will assess whether these outcomes have been met, see the discussion below of the course requirements.

Required Texts

The textbooks are available at bookstore.tsm.edu at a 30% discount.

1. A “standard,” “literal” Bible translation (e.g., RSV, NRSV, NASB, ESV, etc.). Recommended: The HarperCollins Study Bible, student edition (San Francisco: HaperOne, 2006). (ISBN: 978-0060786847)
2. Michael Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*, revised and expanded edition (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2010). (ISBN: 978-0801046407)
3. Richard S. Briggs, *Reading the Bible Wisely: An Introduction to Taking Scripture Seriously*, revised edition (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011). (ISBN: 978-1610972888)
4. Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, *Holy People, Holy Land: A Theological Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005). (ISBN: 978-1587431234)

Course Requirements

Listening to lectures and contributing to the weekly video meetings. This is the basic minimum requirement.

Hermeneutical/exegetical assignments. There will be six assignments that will cover the basic skills (e.g., word study, literary analysis, etc.) taught in this course. More information about these assignments will provided at the beginning of the course.

Review/reflection paper. Toward the end of the course, students will be expected to write a 2000-word paper reviewing the main theses and contents of *Holy People, Holy Land* as well as providing a critical evaluation of it, drawing on your own developing sense of the character of the Christian Bible. More information will be provided at the beginning of the semester on this assignment.

Final exam. There will be a final exam given at the end of the semester consisting of “short answer,” multiple choice, “true or false,” and “matching”-type questions, covering key terms and concepts from the Bartholomew textbook as well as the course lectures.

Course Evaluation

Final grades for the course will be calculated as follows: Six homework assignments = 50% of final grade; review/reflection paper = 25% of final grade; and the final exam = 25% of final grade.

Your written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria: clarity and charity of thought and expression, accuracy of information, and breadth and depth of discussion. I will use letter grades or their equivalent to mean the following:

B (80-89): The thought and expression are clear and the information is accurate. The discussion is broad and deep enough to indicate a solid understanding of the issue. By “broad” I mean that sufficient aspects of the topic are covered, and by “depth” I mean that enough supporting and illustrating material is offered to flesh out the basic thought.

C (70-79): The material shows an adequate grasp of the topic, but at points the discussion is unclear, inaccurate, narrow or shallow.

D (60-69): The material shows something close to an adequate grasp of the topic but is notably defective according to one or more of the criteria.

F (below 60): The material does not indicate that the student has an adequate grasp of the topic, or it is severely defective according to the criteria.

A (90-100): The material is exceptional. Usually this means that it is not only clear and accurate but also develops the topic in breadth and depth beyond what is necessary for a good understanding of it. Such material is often, though not always, marked also by creativity, exceptional insight, and/or relatively extensive research.

The school’s grade scale is as follows: A = 100-95; A- = 94-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = below 70; F = below 60.

Course Schedule

DATES	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
February 9, morning	What is Biblical Theology?	Read Gorman pp. 9-62 and Briggs chapters 1-8 before the class begins
February 9, afternoon	A canonical approach to BT and alternative models	
February 10, morning	Theological interpretation	FIRST HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT DUE
February 10, afternoon	The locus of meaning: text, author, reader (I): Premodern approaches (Early church)	
TBD	The locus of meaning: text,	

	author, reader (II): Premodern approaches (Reformation)	
TBD	The locus of meaning: text, author, reader (III): Modern and postmodern approaches	THIRD HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT DUE
TBD	How to study words: fallacies and tools	Read Gorman pp. 63-126
TBD	How to study texts: case study of Genesis 22	Read Briggs chapters 4-5; FOURTH HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT DUE
TBD	Literary analysis of OT genres	Read Gorman pp. 127-174
TBD	Literary analysis of NT genres	Read Gorman pp. 175-180; FIFTH HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT DUE
TBD	The NT use of the OT (I): Case study of Matthew 2	Read Briggs chapters 9-10
TBD	The NT use of the OT (II): Case study of Galatians 4	Paper due
TBD	The NT use of the OT (III): Case study of 2 Corinthians 3	Read Briggs chapters 11- 12; SIXTH HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT DUE
TBD		Final exam