Course Syllabus

FALL 2019
BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION
BIBL 0501
SECTION 02

SEPTEMBER 12 – DECEMBER 5
THURSDAYS, 11:15 AM – 2:05 PM

INSTRUCTOR: DR. PETER CHU
Email: pchu@tyndale.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays 9:30 – 10:30 am

I will be available during the above office hours and other appointment times during the week are also possible. HOWEVER, please email me beforehand to book an appointment. I am unable to accommodate drop in appointments.

Access course material at http://classes.tyndale.ca/
Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.

The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a foundational course on biblical interpretation which will provide students with the basic exegetical tools required to interpret and appropriate the biblical text. The student will learn to recognize and work with the different literary genres of the Bible and will gain an overview of various hermeneutical approaches to Scripture. In the process, the student will be introduced to various research tools, methods, resources and practical skills for interpretation in order to appropriate the Bible well in our contemporary context.

The discipline of hermeneutics is concerned with understanding the meaning of a Biblical text and its relevance to contemporary life. The strengths and weaknesses of different interpretive
models will be explored. The determinative influence of the relationship between the author, the text, and the reader on the meaning of a text will be examined.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

A. Practice careful and prayerful exegesis.
B. Apply the methodical, step by step exegetical process culminating in the interpretation and appropriation of a Biblical text.
C. Construct a history of Biblical interpretation, including historical and contemporary approaches and methods.
D. Develop the observational skills required to do a close reading of the Biblical text.
E. Recognize the importance of context (literary, historical, cultural, theological) in determining word meanings and the structure and literary features of a Biblical text.
F. Evaluate the validity of an interpretive position or a contemporary application of a Biblical text.
G. Describe the literary genres of the Bible, their respective features, and the rules for their exegesis and interpretation.
H. Critically engage and evaluate commentaries and journal articles.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED RESOURCES


www.stepbible.com  We will use this free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge University) for our English-Hebrew and English-Greek word searches of the original-language Hebrew and Greek texts and for a variety of other features (topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc.). If you have Bibleworks, Accordance, or Logos, then you are welcome to do similar search work with these tools. Please do NOT rely on these software resources for the best secondary sources – commentaries, monographs, journal articles. Refer to the library for other online resources for Biblical Studies.

***A schedule of readings and assignments due for each class will be posted on the class Moodle page.***
B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND TOOLS


Hebrew-English and Greek-English Concordance (either computer version or hardcopy [e.g. Kohlenberger]).

Interlinear Hebrew-English OT or Interlinear Greek-English NT (either computer version or hardcopy)

C. SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION (10%)

1. Choose a passage of Scripture that is at least 15 verses long, which you have not previously memorized, and memorize it.
2. You will recite the passage to someone. Your recitation must be word perfect with the allowance of 1 prompt or 1 error.
3. You may use any language and any Bible translation.
4. This assignment will be due at the beginning of class on Thursday, October 17, 2019. On that day, please submit on a 3x5 index card the passage of Scripture memorized, the date you recited it, and the name and signature of the individual to whom it was recited.
5. Between October 17 and December 5, 2019, members of the class may be called upon to
recite the passage of Scripture they have memorized.

D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The process of examining a Biblical text and moving from exegesis to exposition has many components. The course assignments provide the opportunity to practice the completion of each component. Each assignment builds on the preceding ones and adds to the growing body of understanding of the Biblical text. The results of all the assignments will be brought together to complete the final assignment which is the writing of an exegetical paper. Please note the following guidelines for the course assignments (see also section IV.B.):

• Adhere to the limits set out in the syllabus for the length of each assignment. An exception may be made for papers with extensive content footnotes.
• Typed, doubled spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins
• All assignments must be written according to SBL format for the text, footnotes, and bibliography. Please see The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014).
• All assignments are to be submitted as hardcopy and soft copy prior to or at the beginning of class on the respective due dates. The penalty for a late assignment will be 5% (half a letter grade) for any part of each week it is late.
• Title page --- please include a title page for all written work which includes the title of the paper, the name of the course, the name of the professor, and your name.
• Study Groups: students are REQUIRED to form study groups to complete assignments #2-7. The structure and function of a study group is to be decided by the group members. However, each member of the group must submit his/her individually completed assignments.

1. Assignment One:

1.1. Make twenty five (25) observations on John 3:16.
1.2. Review your autobiographical details captured in your completed “Our Learning Community” questionnaire. Consider how the experiences of your life may influence or bias your reading of Scripture. List your biases in point form on one page.
1.3. Make a photocopy or computer printout of 2 Sam 11-12. Make the print LARGE with lots of space between words, lines, and in the margins. Suggest printing it in landscape" format. You will be extensively marking up this copy as we will be using this passage in class to practice each step in the exegetical process. Bring it with you to each class.
1.4. Choose one of the following two texts which you will study and use to complete the remaining assignments (#2-8) for this course: Gen 22:1-19 OR John 11:1-44.
1.5. Indicate on your assignment the % of pre-class textbook reading completed.
1.6. Indicate the the name and members of your study group.
1.7. StepBible Online Resource
   1.7.1. Download this free Bible Study resource from www.stepbible.com
   1.7.2. Watch all 7 instructional videos
1.7.2.1. Go to www.stepbible.com, click on the HELP tab, select “video demonstrations”.

1.7.3. Indicate on your assignment that you have watched the 7 instructional videos

DUE DATE: September 19, 2019 (10%)

2. Assignment Two:


2.1. Read your chosen text over several times. Ignore the paragraph and chapter divisions in your Bible. Note the appearance and use of “literary unit dividers” which were presented in class. Give an overall title to your chosen text.

2.2. Divide your chosen text into several large sections (eg. 3-5 sections). Each of these large sections can be an entire chapter or several chapters in length. Assign a title to each section along with the chapter and verse references contained by the section.

2.3. Indicate in a footnote attached to your titles why you have divided where you have. You must provide reasons to support your choice of the large section divisions. Refer to the “literary unit dividers” presented in class.

2.4. Repeat this process for each of your large sections. Divide each large section into smaller sub-sections. Assign a title to each sub-section along with the chapter and verse references contained in the sub-section. Indicate in a footnote attached to your titles why you have divided where you have.

2.5. Repeat the above process until you have broken down your sub-sections into paragraph sections consisting of 10-15 verses in length. To keep this assignment manageable, DO NOT FURTHER SUB-DIVIDE YOUR PARAGRAPH SECTIONS into even smaller literary units with the exception of 2.6 below.

2.6. For the specific passage you have chosen to study (either Gen 22:1-19 or John 11:1-44), continue your outlining process until you have broken down the passage into literary units of 2-5 verses in length. Assign a title to each unit and indicate in a footnote your reasons for dividing the literary unit where you have.

2.7. Lecture notes for this assignment and an example of a synthetic outline are posted on the class Moodle page for the week of September 19, 2019.

2.8. (OPTIONAL) You may but you are not required to consult and interact with different Bible translations and commentaries. You may interact with these sources in your footnotes.

If you revise your outline as a result of the commentaries, be sure to indicate that and the reason in your footnote. Remember to cite the Bible translations and commentaries in a bibliography.

2.9. Maximum length of completed assignment (outline + footnotes) = five (5) pages.

2.10. Synthetic outlines are discussed on pages 351-360 and 505-509 of your textbook.

2.11. Indicate on your assignment the % of pre-class reading completed.

DUE DATE: September 26, 2019 (10%)
3. Assignment Three:

Rhetorical Analysis or Structural Overview of either Gen 22:1-19 or John 11:1-44.

3.1. The purpose of this assignment is to obtain an overview of the actors and action, the setting (time, space, location), temporal dynamics (speed at which events unfold), and the basic structure and flow of the passage.

3.2. Make a photocopy or computer printout of the passage you are studying. Ideally, make the print LARGE with lots of space between words, between lines, and in the margins. You may wish to print it out in “landscape” orientation. You will be extensively marking up this copy of the passage (underlining, circling, highlighting, annotating, etc).

3.3. Characters

3.3.1. Put a rectangular box around all the characters that appear in the passage. They may be indicated by their names, personal pronouns, or by a special term of designation (eg. the righteous, the wicked, the Light of the world, the prophets)

3.3.2. On a separate page, list all the characters, the terms by which they are referred by, and the verse references identifying where they appear in the passage.

3.4. Repeated words, phrases, or constructions (condition/promise, command/reason or result)

3.4.1. Circle any repeated words, phrases or constructions. Track each occurrence by adding the same superscript numeral to the top right corner of the circle.

3.4.2. Repetition reveals the theme/topic of the passage.

3.4.3. On a separate page, list all the repeated words, phrases or constructions and the verse references identifying where they appear in the passage.

3.5. Identify transitions within the passage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Primary Actors</th>
<th>Primary Activity</th>
<th>Real Time</th>
<th>Narrative Speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3.5.1. Create a chart with the above headings.

3.5.2. Start a new row each time change or transition (location, activity, actors, narrative speed) occurs in the passage.

3.5.3. Label the primary activity that occurs. If action, label the type of action (eg. battle, journey, worship, etc.). If speech, indicate the type of speech (dialogue, prayer, sermon, debate, teaching, instruction, etc).

3.5.4. Use the following three categories for narrative speed:

3.5.4.1. Slow = short period of real time narrated at length

3.5.4.2. Neutral = real time and narrative speed appear to correspond
3.5.4.3. Fast = long period of real time narrated briefly

3.5.5. Real time is real time = day, week, month, years. First, look to see if there are any indicators of time (temporal markers). It may be obvious such as a date (20th day of the 2nd month in the 2nd year after they left Egypt), a temporal phrase ("on the third day...") or a measure of time (it rained 40 days and 40 nights). It may be implied from the events - for example, in 2 Sam 11:2-4, the events occur during the course of an evening. 2 Sam 11:5 likely spans 1-2 months.

3.5.6. Narrative SPEED = speed at which the story unfolds. You have three options = normal, slow, or fast. Think of the story as a video you produced. Playing it at normal speed = normal narrative speed. Playing it in slo-mo = slow narrative speed = author takes a LONG time (lots of words, many verses) to describe an event (eg. 2 Sam 11:6-15). Playing your video in fast forward = fast narrative speed = author covers big chunks of time and events quickly (eg. 2 Sam 11:5 or 11:27).

3.6. Identify key statements in the passage

3.6.1. Put a wavy line under all the verbs you think may be significant.
3.6.2. Put a double wavy line under all imperatives (command, counsel, exhortation).
3.6.3. Single underline all questions.
3.6.4. Place a dotted line under all exclamations and rhetorical questions or statements.

3.7. Identify the key logical relationships in the passage

3.7.1. Using the same colour, highlight all significant conjunctions, particles, and prepositions.
3.7.2. Identify the logical relationship between what is on either side of the conjunction, particle, or preposition. Use a line with arrows to connect the two sections on either side. Common logical relationships are purpose, result, cause/effect, reason, condition/consequence, contrast.
3.7.3. Using a different highlighter colour, identify significant modifiers (adjectives and adverbs as single words, phrases or clauses) and draw an arrow connecting the modifier to the word it describes.

3.8. Students are encouraged to utilize StepBible to facilitate identification of recurrences of key terms, characters, etc.

3.9. Use your margins to annotate observations, relationships, questions, explanations, cross references. This assignment will prepare you for the Terms Chart and exegetical paper.

3.10. Indicate on your assignment the % completion of the pre-class textbook reading.

DUE DATE: October 3, 2019 (10%)

4. Assignment Four:

Word study of ‘ahab (to love) for Gen 22:1-19 or phileo (to love) for John 11:1-44.

4.1. We will work through an example of a word study in class. See also pages 332-344 of your textbook.
4.2. Look up the word in lexicons, a concordance, and in theological dictionaries. **Use the StepBible resource.** Compare different Bible translations to see how various translation committees decided on the nuance of meaning of the word.

4.3. Note the definition, range of meanings, different uses of the word, and the associated Scriptural references provided by the lexicons, concordances, and theological dictionaries.

4.4. Observe the meaning of the word in its various Biblical contexts. The context is the primary determinant of the particular nuance of meaning intended by the author.

4.5. Gather the results of your research from 5.2-5.4 and summarize in a Nuance Chart.
   4.5.1. List the various possible nuances of meaning of the word along with the Scriptural references associated with each nuance of meaning.
   4.5.2. You do not have to provide an exhaustive list of Scriptural references. A few representative verses may be cited for each nuance of meaning. If possible, select key representative verses.
   4.5.3. When describing a particular nuance of meaning, use a descriptive phrase or synonyms other than the traditional English translation. A thesaurus may be helpful here.

4.6. Write a summary (2 pages max) of the major nuances of meaning of the word. Now you are summarizing your research findings in written form. This will give you an overview of your interpretive options.

4.7. Select the particular nuance of meaning of the word in the passage you are studying. Provide evidence, reasons, and arguments to support your selection.

4.8. Interact with secondary sources: critical Biblical commentaries (these discuss various interpretive options and the strengths and weaknesses of each), journal articles (many word studies are published as a full length article in academic journals), theological dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc.

4.9. Submit your nuance chart along with the written report of your word study. Include the % completion of the pre-class textbook reading.

**DUE DATE: October 10, 2019 (10%)**

### 5. Assignment Five:

Terms Chart with Interpretive Questions for Gen 22:1-19 or John 11:1-44.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Interpretive Question</th>
<th>Interpretive Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1. Instructions for this assignment will be reviewed in class.
5.2. Assignments 6 & 7 are the HEART of the exegetical process which produces a paper, Bible study or sermon. There are TWO critical steps in exegesis: observation and asking the right questions of what is observed.

5.3. Create a chart with the same headings as above. Suggest “landscape” page orientation.

5.4. For the purposes of this assignment, the word “term” is the literary equivalent of “thing” or “whatchamacallit”. A “term” can refer to a word, a phrase, an entire clause, a logical connection (contrast, condition, purpose, etc), a literary technique (repetition, panelling, chiasm, inclusion, etc), a grammatical or syntactical feature, a name, a location, a measure of time, ..., basically any observation in the passage that you have questions about.

5.5. List all the terms in the passage that you would like to investigate.

5.6. Then, compile a list of as many questions as you can come up with for each term you wish to examine.

5.7. There is NO PAGE LIMIT for this assignment. You can list as many terms as you want and as many questions as you want.

5.8. With your term chart, indicate the % completion of the pre-class textbook reading.

DUE DATE: October 31, 2019 (15%)

6. Assignment Six:

Terms Chart with Interpretive Answers

6.1. Provide answers for at least 25 of the interpretive questions in your term chart.

6.2. You are not expected to answer all of your interpretive questions. Choose the ones that you think are critical to the understanding and interpretation of the passage. Please note: your determination of which are the critical interpretive questions is part of the grading of this assignment.

6.3. Guidelines to answering the interpretive questions:

6.3.1. Provide options, propose your answer, give reasons.

6.3.2. Point form or bullet type answers

6.3.3. No footnotes within your answer. Just (author last name, page reference)

6.3.4. Interact with multiple and a variety of secondary sources. I will be looking at the quality and quantity of the citations in your bibliography. Students are strongly encouraged to take utilize the many features of StepBible for this assignment.

6.3.5. For the interpretive questions that you choose not to answer, indicate the sources you would use to answer the question.

6.4. Include the % completion of your pre-class textbook reading with your assignment for November 7 and 14, 2019.

DUE DATE: November 14, 2019 (10%)
7. Assignment Seven:

Exegetical Paper

Detailed instructions have been posted on the BIBL class Moodle page.

**DUE DATE: November 28, 2019 (25%)**

**E. EQUITY OF ACCESS**

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the Accessibility Services at the Centre for Academic Excellence to register and discuss their specific needs. New students must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. Current students must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

**F. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>25 Observations on John 3:16 Personal Biases in Reading Scripture Step Bible Videos</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Synthetic Outline</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>Rhetorical or Structural Analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>Word Study</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 5</td>
<td>Term Chart + Interpretive Questions</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 6</td>
<td>Term Chart + Interpretive Answers</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 7</td>
<td>Exegetical Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture Memorization</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**G. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

1. Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.
Plagiarism is using the work of others without acknowledging them by giving them proper credit and recognition. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, copying a phrase from a book or an article without citing the source, rephrasing the words or ideas of another person and passing them off as your own, and taking the work of another person and submitting it as your own. Plagiarism is both deception and theft. Plagiarism will result in a grade of “F” on an assignment.

Students are encouraged to consult writing resources.

Students should also consult the current Academic Calendar for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Everything we do as Christ followers is “as unto the Lord” and before the Lord. Tyndale is a community of learners and teachers united by a common desire to know God and to make Him known. Academic integrity is one component of the excellence by which we serve God and each other.

2. Guidelines for the Submission of Written Work

1) Written work must follow the SBL stylistic model described in The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014). Please familiarize yourself with this handbook as it provides instructions for not only footnotes and bibliographic formats but also stylistic elements such as acceptable abbreviations, etc.

2) Please proof-read your work for spelling, punctuation, grammar, organization, coherent thought, and logical flow of arguments. It is often helpful to ask someone else to review your writing and comment on the above criteria.

3) All assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the respective due dates. The penalty for a late assignment will be 5% (half a letter grade) for any part of each week it is late.

4) Title page --- please include a title page for all written work which includes the title of the paper, the name of the course, the name of the professor, and your name.

5) Checklist:
   a) did you answer the question that was asked?
   b) did you follow the instructions?
   c) clarity and organization
   d) critical analysis --- your paper should answer more “how?” and “why?” type questions than “what?” type questions?
   e) spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, inclusive language
   f) appropriate format for footnote citations and bibliography

6) Return of Assignments --- Graded assignments will be left with the receptionist at the Main Entrance where they can be picked up. If you wish to have your assignments mailed to
you, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your work when it is submitted to me. Unclaimed assignments will be destroyed after six months.

7) Practical Tips for Essay Writing
   a) Pray. Pray that your essay would transform your life and church community.
   b) Begin early and work on it each week. Capture ideas that come to mind.
   c) Start your research by reading an overview of your subject area in a major Bible dictionary or encyclopedia such as the Anchor Bible Dictionary, The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, the Eerdmans Bible Dictionary, the New International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Encyclopaedia Judaica, or the New Catholic Encyclopaedia.
   d) The reference (encyclopaedias, dictionaries, commentaries) and periodical collections in the library are invaluable. Become familiar with their contents.
   e) Take advantage of the library’s e-Resources (http://www.tyndale.ca/library/) which provide access to scholarly periodicals and journals via the EBSCOHost, ATLA, and JSTOR databases.
   f) Utilize the staff and expertise of the Tyndale Writing Services or visit the Centre for Academic Excellence’s website (www.tyndale.ca/academic-excellence). You will receive excellent help in documentation, style, grammar, punctuation, concise writing, focusing your research question, and much more.
   g) Make sure your essay is properly formatted including page numbers, title page, footnotes, and bibliography.
   h) Have someone proofread your essay prior to submission.

3. How will assignments be graded?

In general, assignments which meet the professor’s expectations will receive a grade of B or 75%. Grades above or below “B” will be related to the excellence or deficiencies of the submitted work relative to this satisfactory threshold. Excellence or deficiencies in the following areas will increase or decrease the grade that is assigned:

1. number and quality of primary and secondary sources cited in footnotes and bibliography
2. content
3. form and presentation --- correct SBL footnote and bibliographic format must be used
4. depth, thoughtfulness and thoroughness of analysis and discussion
   a. asking and answering “how” and “why” questions versus “what” questions
   b. breadth and depth of historical, grammatical, syntactical, exegetical, and theological research
   c. exegetical interaction with the Biblical text, relevant scholarly articles, major commentaries
5. clarity, consistency and direction of logic, argument, and reasoning
6. quality and clarity of writing --- spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure

H. COURSE EVALUATION
Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

A course schedule will be provided and posted on the class Moodle page describing the following:

- Overview of content for each class session
- Readings due for each class
- Specific due dates for course requirements

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Tyndale Library supports this course with e-journals and e-books. See the Library FAQ page.)


**Hebrew and Greek Websites:**

http://dailydoseofhebrew.com/

http://dailydoseofgreek.com/

http://aoal.org/

Hebrew Alphabet Song: Aleph Bet Song

Hebrew Alphabet Song: Shalom Sesame

Greek Alphabet Song