

“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.”

Course	TEXT AND INTERPRETATION INTD 0851
Date and Time	SEPTEMBER 13 – DECEMBER 6, 2021 MONDAYS 11:15 AM – 2:05 PM
Instructor	JOHN KESSLER, Docteur de l’Université, Sorbonne-Paris IV; Docteur en Théologie, Institut Catholique de Paris, Doctorat Conjoint Telephone number: 416-226-6620 ext. 6724 Email: jkessler@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The classes will be livestreamed on Mondays from 11:15 AM – 2:05 PM. Office Hours: I will be available for Zoom meetings each week. Please e-mail me with several potential times so that we can set up an appointment. On-campus meetings may also be arranged. Please contact me via e-mail: jkessler@tyndale.ca . General questions about the course can also be sent to me at this address.
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.

Note: This is a draft syllabus. While the broad outlines of the syllabus will remain the same (assignments, requirements, textbook), certain minor modifications may be made until the end of the first week of class.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the various issues involved in the reading of the Bible in the context of the faith and life of the Christian community. It is a course that deals with two inter-related questions: (1) when we talk about the ‘meaning’ of a text what are we talking about, and (2)

how do we ascertain what a given text calls us to *do*? As such, the following dimensions of reading the text will be examined:

- (1) exegetical, historical, and literary matters;
- (2) hermeneutical considerations, especially the relationship between the Testaments;
- (3) reading strategies for approaching the biblical text;
- (4) the interface between text, theology, and canon, and
- (5) the history of interpretation.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. demonstrate competence in examining the grammatical, historical, philological, redactional and literary dimensions of a biblical text as well as matters of introduction related to the text.
2. articulate the major positions regarding the relationship between the historical meaning of a text and its authorship and literary history, and its function as Holy Scripture/Divine Discourse.
2. explain and evaluate various contemporary and historical reading strategies and hermeneutical approaches utilized in the reading of the Hebrew Bible within the Christian tradition.
3. apply the broader perspectives of Theology and Canon to the interpretation of a text.
4. interact with the history of interpretation of a given text.
5. suggest relevant paths of reflection for the contemporary significance of a biblical text.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Nicholas Wolterstorff. [*Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks*](#). Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

A series of weekly readings will be posted on the course page.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Readings (10%) and Class Preparation and Participation (10%)

Students will be expected to prepare for class by completing the weekly readings and related assignments in advance of the class. A sheet will be passed around in each class session upon which students will indicate whether they have done the reading for the week. Students will also be evaluated on their participation in class discussion.

Leading Class Discussion (20%)

Each week, one or two students will lead the class in the analysis and discussion of a text or article. The length of the time involved is 10 to 15 minutes. Students may expect to do this three to four times during the semester. These presentations will be of two main types.

In ***the first type of presentation*** the student presenter will introduce the class to a technique of biblical interpretation (i.e. allegorism, midrash, typology etc.) or to an issue in biblical interpretation by summarizing an article assigned to them. *The other students will*

not have read the article beforehand. These presentations should involve a summary of the article in such a way as to make it comprehensible to the class.

In the ***second type of presentation*** the student presenter and the whole class will have read the article. The student presenter will prepare a series of observations and questions so as to lead the class in a discussion of the article and its implications. *The presentation must not be a simple re-statement of the content of the article.* **If the student presenter simply re-states the content of the article the professor will stop the presentation and move on to the next presenter.** The presenter must formulate an introduction and discussion questions that get to the heart of the purpose and core argument of the document under study. Simply asking “what did you think of the article?” is insufficient. It is advisable for the leader to send the discussion questions to class members a few days before class session, if at all possible.

Response Paper (15%). Due by 11:59 pm, Sat, Oct 23.

The student will prepare a short paper of *no more than 9 pages (marks will be deducted if the paper exceeds this limit)*. This paper will be *a response* to the approaches of hermeneutical theorists Steinmetz, Brown, Poythress, and Kaiser, regarding how the “meaning” of a text is to be determined. As you prepare this paper, consider the views of each author on issues such as the relationship between the human author’s likely intended meaning, the relationship between the OT and NT, the relationship between an individual text and the canon as a whole, the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of the production of Scripture, the likely intended use of a text by the community. These questions need not all be answered in your paper, but they may be of assistance to you as you read the articles and write the paper. This paper should focus upon your sense of the validity of the various positions proposed, your own narrative of what you thought before doing these readings, and your position now. **It should not be an extensive re-statement of the position of these authors.** This paper is to be submitted, in pdf form, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Marks will be deducted if the paper is sent to any other email address, or sent in any other than a pdf format.

Class Seminar and Term Paper (45%). Final Submission date: 11:59 pm, Dec 4.

Papers must not exceed 23 pages, double-spaced, (not including bibliography). This paper is to be submitted, in pdf form, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Marks will be deducted if the paper exceeds this limit, is sent to any other email address, or sent in any other than a pdf format.

The student will choose one of the types of paper indicated below and will also prepare a class seminar on the topic. If so desired, students may elect not to present the class seminar, and have their mark based entirely on the term paper.

A. AN EXEGETICAL/HERMENEUTICAL PAPER.

The student will prepare a paper on one of the passages listed in the document 'Biblical Texts for Exegetical/Hermeneutical Paper' (on the course page), or another, chosen with the permission of the course professor. *This is not to be an exegesis paper per se.* Rather, it is meant to enable the student to see the degree to which hermeneutical pre-understandings and judgments of the interpreter (or of the interpretive community) affect one's reading of the text.

First, the student will identify the key aspects of the text which have given rise to varying interpretations over the centuries. These are the kind of issues which are explored in Dr. Bill Webb's "Validation" assignment in his BI course.

Second, the student will then examine how the text has been understood in various interpretive traditions (Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anabaptist). This is best done by choosing **one representative of a tradition as an example of it**, e.g., Luther for the Lutheran tradition. The student will take special note of the interplay between the interpretive decisions taken regarding the text, and the *a priori* judgments made by the interpreter about theological or hermeneutical issues rooted in the theological convictions of the interpreter's community.

Important Note. In their analyses of the following essay topics, students are encouraged to integrate, where appropriate, examples drawn from their own cultural-ecclesial and theological traditions. Significant authors or interpreters should be cited as examples. Thus, in the discussion of Sabbath (point 6 below), those with insights into the understanding of the Sabbath within the Korean Presbyterian or Seventh Day Adventist traditions and experience are encouraged to integrate this into their papers. The same could be said for the Chinese experience (Hong Kong, Mainland, Singapore, Taiwan), the South Asian approaches (various regions within India and Sri Lanka), or the First Nations experience, to name but a few.

Examples and potential paper topics:

1. The theme of election in Rom 9:10-16. This passage is exegeted differently in the Wesleyan and Reformed traditions. How do these interpretative traditions differ on their reading of the passage? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical framework is implicit in each? How does each treat the OT material? What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play?

2. The call to obey the state, and the state's use of force in Rom 13:1-7. This text is understood differently in the pacifist/Anabaptist community versus others. How do these interpretative traditions differ on their reading of the passage? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical framework is implicit in each? How does each treat the OT material? What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play?

3. The discussion of various spiritual gifts in Romans and Corinthians is presented differently in 'cessationist' versus 'non-cessationist' or 'charismatic' communities. How do these interpretative traditions differ on their reading of the passage? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical framework is implicit in each? How does each treat the OT material? What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play?

4. The question of war in the Bible. How does the interpretation of the OT texts involving war and conquest in the pacifist tradition (or "peace churches") differ from mainstream Catholic or Protestant interpretation? How do these interpretative traditions differ on their reading of the passage? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical framework is implicit in each? How does each treat the OT material? What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play? How have the biblical narratives of war and conquest influenced the attitudes of Christian communities (especially those in the 'minority world' or 'first world' towards other cultures? What may be learned from such influence and attitudes?

5. Wealth and poverty. Many biblical texts speak of the dangers of wealth and the sympathies of God with the poor. What are these texts? How have these texts been read in various theological/ecclesial traditions? What differences appear? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical framework is implicit in each? How does each treat the OT material? What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play? Which interpretive traditions have focused on them, and seen voluntary poverty as especially virtuous? How are they interpreted in more mainstream traditions? Have these traditions done justice to these biblical texts? What arguments are brought to bear regarding their interpretation? Do these texts have any relevance for the contemporary church, and if so, how?

6. The Sabbath. Many biblical texts speak of the Sabbath and give regulations for its observance. What are these texts? How have these texts been read in various theological/ecclesial traditions? What differences appear, for example between the Reformed, Catholic, Wesleyan, dispensationalist, and other traditions? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical

framework is implicit in each? How does each treat the OT material? What arguments are brought to bear regarding their interpretation? What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play in the way these interpreters treat the material? Do these laws have any relevance for the contemporary church, and if so, how?

7. Lot casting. Both the OT and NT speak of the casting of lots as a way of identifying the will of God. Where do these passages occur? How have these texts been interpreted in various religious traditions and communities? When and where has lot casting been used in post-biblical history? How successful was this endeavour? Was it continued or discontinued?

8. Dietary Laws. The OT contains numerous dietary laws. Where do these appear? What are the principal requirements of these laws? How have these texts been read in various theological/ecclesial traditions? How are these laws observed in various Jewish communities and traditions? How are these laws observed in various Christian communities and traditions? What differences appear, for example, between the Reformed, Catholic, Wesleyan, dispensationalist, and other traditions? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical framework is implicit in each? How does each treat the OT material? What arguments are brought to bear regarding their interpretation?

What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play in the way these interpreters treat the material? Do these laws have any relevance for the contemporary church, and if so, how?

9. Usury and Money Lending. The OT contains numerous laws regarding usury and money lending. Where do these appear? What are the principal requirements of these laws? How have these texts been read in various theological/ecclesial traditions? How were these laws observed and utilized in post-biblical history, especially in Europe? How are these laws observed in various Jewish communities and traditions? How are these laws understood/observed in various Christian communities and traditions? What differences appear, for example, between the Reformed, Catholic, Wesleyan, dispensationalist, and other traditions? Upon which key exegetical decisions do these differing understandings rest? What broader hermeneutical framework is implicit in each? What arguments are brought to bear regarding their interpretation?

What role, in your opinion, do the presuppositions of the interpreting community play in the way these interpreters treat the material? Do these laws have any relevance for the contemporary church, and if so, how?

10. Other topics, with the permission of the professor.

NOTE: The following resources will be extremely useful for understanding the hermeneutical stance, principles of interpretation, and leading figures of the various theological/ecclesial traditions mentioned above:

The Oxford Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref:obso/9780199832262.001.0001/acref-9780199832262>

A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation

<https://tyndale.on.worldcat.org/v2/search/detail/20489285?queryString=Dictionary%20of%20Interpretation&clusterResults=true&groupVariantRecords=false>

The Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception

<https://www.degruyter.com/document/database/ebr/html>

Third, the student will reflect on the hermeneutical, theological, and practical implications of his/her study, especially noting what she/he has learned from this exercise. Most especially, the student will engage the question of how the predilections of the interpreter and the interpreting community affect the outcome of one's exegesis. Is a 'neutral' or 'objective' interpretive stance even possible? Should prior reasoning and personal experience influence exegesis. Why or why not?

Essentially, in the paper the student will be required to show a command of the following skills:

1. the ability to identify the elements of the passage likely to yield differing results depending on the readers hermeneutical and interpretive stance.
2. the ability to weigh the arguments involved in deciding between varying interpretive options.
3. the ability to identify key interpretive/hermeneutical decisions that readers and reading communities make (or have made) regarding how to approach the text. The section should also include a survey of the approaches of various communities and traditions to these key interpretive decisions.
4. the ability to present a brief discussion of the relevant historical material regarding: (1) the world *within* the text (that is the world depicted and narrated within the text) and (2) the world *behind* the text (i.e., the world of the narrator who configured the text and the community for which it was destined) and (3) the *central preoccupations of the text* in the world in which the text was produced.
5. the ability to reflect upon the contemporary use of the text in the Christian community, and upon the lessons learned regarding hermeneutical theory in general.

OR

B. A PAPER ON A SPECIFIC TEXT AND THE HISTORY OF ITS INTERPRETATION

The student will choose one of the texts listed in the document 'Biblical Texts for History of Interpretation Paper' on the course page, and present a paper containing the following elements:

1. A five to seven-page summary of the *sensus literalis* of the text as understood by a minimum of four major modern exegetical commentaries on it (see below).
2. A discussion of the text's reception in later parts of the OT (if applicable), the inter-testamental literature (if applicable), and the NT. Put another way, the student will examine the way in which where the text is taken up in the later OT, inter-testamental literature or NT and how it is understood, appropriated, and applied in these texts. The use of the [*Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*](#) (EBR), available online through our library, will be essential for this assignment.

The areas listed below in points 3-8 are some of the types of interpretation that may be considered. *It may not be possible to cover them all, and not all may not be relevant.*

3. The understanding and use of the text in the Patristic literature.
4. The Jewish understandings of the text, including early Rabbinic medieval, and contemporary Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox approaches.
5. The understanding/use of the text by Luther or Calvin (or both), and, if relevant, the understanding reflected in later Calvinism and Lutheranism.
6. The approach to the text taken in traditional 19th-20th C critical scholarship (J. Wellhausen; S. R. Driver; etc.).
7. The approach to the text in more recent scholarship (including modern critical and literary approaches)
8. A summary statement of what you have learned from this survey.

As noted above, the following resources will be extremely useful for understanding the hermeneutical stance, principles of interpretation, and leading figures of the various theological/ecclesial traditions mentioned above:

The Oxford Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref:obso/9780199832262.001.0001/acref-9780199832262>

A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation

<https://tyndale.on.worldcat.org/v2/search/detail/20489285?queryString=Dictionary%20of%20Interpretation&clusterResults=true&groupVariantRecords=false>

The Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception

<https://www.degruyter.com/document/database/ebr/html>

A preliminary list of some possible texts.

Gen 3:16

Gen 4:1-16

Gen 12:3

Hag 2:6-9

Amos 9:11-12

Further texts are posted on the course page. Other texts may be chosen with the professor's permission.

F. 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.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Readings	10 %
Class Preparation and Participation	10 %
Leading Class Discussion	20 %
Response Paper	15 %
Class Seminar and Term Paper	45 %
Total Grade	100 %

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLE ON THE QUALITY OF PAPERS AT THE ADVANCED MASTERS LEVEL

Your paper must reflect Th.M. level research and writing skills, that is, the research and writing skills you have perfected in your M.Div. or M.T.S. work. As relevant, it must demonstrate the ability to:

- A. carefully analyze and exegete primary sources (Bible, ANE texts, various writings in the history of interpretation).
- B. locate and interact with the key scholarly discussions of a text or topic in the secondary literature.
- C. interact critically with the key advocates of various positions with reference to the texts or topics under consideration (ex D. J. McCarthy vs. M. Weinfeld on covenant as 'imposed obligation').

Assignments will be marked according to the following general principle: papers which satisfactorily meet the professor's expectations will receive a B/75%.

Grades above or below B will reflect the degree to which the student's work manifests strengths or deficiencies relative to the satisfactory level in the following areas:

- a. form and presentation (Note: correct bibliographic form must be used. Additional information is available on the Library's [Citing Your Sources: Home page](#): and [tip sheets](#) from [Writing Services](#));
- b. depth of reflection and critical engagement with primary sources;
- c. number and quality of primary and secondary sources studied (major commentaries on relevant passages, and articles in Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, articles in journals and edited volumes);
- d. logic, flow, and quality of argumentation;
- e. clarity of expression.

Generally, a *minimum* of 20 good sources is required to write a Th.M. paper. These should generally include the major primary sources (i.e., the Bible, and direct citations from major figures in the history of interpretation), 5-10 articles in refereed journals or edited volumes, 1-5 survey or specialized articles in Bible Dictionaries or Encyclopedias, or Theological Wordbooks, the major and most significant commentaries in refereed series (e.g., AB, NICOT, NICNT, WBC, ICC, NCBC) of any biblical texts being discussed. **NOTE: each article/entry from a Bible Dictionary or Theological Dictionary counts as a source and needs to be cited separately in the bibliography.**

A step-by-step description of the essay-writing process can be found in the document “Tyndale Seminary Research and Writing Manual” on the mytyndale or Moodle page for this course. *It is virtually impossible to write a B-level (or higher) essay without a thorough knowledge of the material in this document.*

NOTE 1: Use of the ATLA database.

It is virtually impossible to do adequate research for your paper without the resources accessible via the ATLA database. Locate this database via the Tyndale Library’s Website <http://www.tyndale.ca/library>. Go to “online resources” and select the ATLA Religion Database from the column on the left. Searching can be done by author, topic, or scripture reference. Many of the results include downloadable pdfs. Learn to use this invaluable resource.

NOTE 2: Documentation Style and Form.

Papers must be done in either SBL or Chicago formats. Papers submitted using MLA style (e.g., Smith, 2006, 471) will be docked a full letter grade.

Papers must be submitted with footnotes not endnotes. Papers submitted with endnotes (i.e., notes at the end of the paper, rather than at the bottom of the page) will be docked up to a full letter grade.

For SBL style Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, comps. *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Second Edition. Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2014 or the document “SBL Manual of Style” on the course page for this course. Please note especially pages 3-5. For fuller details on correct citation formatting see also <http://libguides.tyndale.ca/citations>. Alternatively, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#). See the fuller examples and discussion in the “Instructions for Essays” folder. Please note that the recent, updated [SBL Handbook of Style \(2014\)](#) is available as an e-book through the Tyndale library.

Students may also consult the document “SBL Handbook of Style” on the course page for this course. *Please note especially pages 3-5.*

For fuller details on correct citation formatting see Library’s [Citing Your Sources: Home page](#) or citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Special Note Regarding the Citation of Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias.

In many instances you will find important material contained in individual entries in Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias. Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias have an overall editor (or editors), as well as various individual authors write the specific entries. When you quote from an entry you must attribute the quote to the **author of the entry *not to the editor of the Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia.***

So, for example, D. N. Freedman is the overall editor of the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, but the author of the entry (or article) on Abraham is Alan R. Millard. The author’s name is found at the end of the entry. When you want to refer to that specific entry (or example) you must cite it by *the name of its author*, not by the name of the editor of the dictionary as a whole.

Thus:

CORRECT METHOD

In a footnote:

A. R. Millard, “Abraham,” *ABD* 1:35-40

In a bibliography:

Millard, Alan R. “Abraham.” *ABD* 1:35-40

INCORRECT METHOD:

In a footnote:

D. N. Freedman, “Abraham,” *ABD* 1:35-40.

In a bibliography:

Freedman, D. N. “Abraham,” *ABD* 1:35-40.

Furthermore, as noted above, each article/entry you cite must be listed separately in your bibliography. Thus, if you cite four different articles/entries from the *IVP Dictionary of the OT, Prophets*, you must cite each article/entry separately, under the name of its author. Do not just cite the Dictionary as a whole, under the name(s) of its editor(s). This is not sufficient.

NOTE 3: Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.

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 takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

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.

Plagiarism is a major problem in contemporary education. As such Tyndale Seminary academic policy stipulates that a paper may be given an F should it contain plagiarized content. Remember: if you use someone else's words, put them in quotation marks and cite the source in a footnote. If you refer to someone's ideas (i.e. 'covenant is the centre of OT theology') or a fact derived from your reading which is not common knowledge (e.g. 'the territory of Benjamin did not suffer significant destruction during the Babylonian invasions'), but the words are not put in quotation marks, you must still cite your source.

Do not cut entire paragraphs out of books or articles and insert them into your text even if they are footnoted (unless it is to illustrate the position of a specific author that you intend to discuss or critique). An essay is *not a series of long quotes strung together*. Such essays will not receive a passing grade. You must attempt to read and assimilate various sources, then attempt to collate, compare, contrast and evaluate them.

Avoid extensive word-for-word citations of the biblical text. Generally speaking, shorter biblical quotations or references (e.g. Exod 3:14) will do.

Attempting to do your best is far better than copying and failing the assignment and possibly the course, or even worse losing the opportunity to learn new things by doing the assignment. Remember, essays are about you, as a student learner. You do not have to provide the last word on complex subjects.

Plagiarism will be taken extremely seriously and be dealt with according to the Tyndale Student Handbook.

2. TIPS FOR ESSAY WRITING

Students are *strongly* encouraged to:

A. Be conversant with the documents “Tyndale Seminary Research and Writing Manual” and “SBL Handbook of Style” on the course page *before* beginning their work.

B. Use the library website and, if possible, the library itself for the preparation of this assignment, especially the reference and periodical collections. *Any one of the suggested topics can be completed at a B+/A- level using only materials which NEVER leave the library.* Such materials include periodicals, encyclopaedias and Bible Dictionaries and reference copies of commentaries.

Similarly, a massive amount of material is available online in downloadable PDF files via the library’s e-resources (especially EBSCO HOST/ATLA and JSTOR). There is a gigantic difference in the quality of the resources available through the library’s e resources and those available on the internet in general.

Remember—only quote qualified experts in the subject you are studying. Be sure to use scholarly, reputable sources. These are usually found in peer-reviewed series and journals (e.g., scholarly journals such as *Vetus Testamentum*, the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, or the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* or the supplements to these journals, some of which are available via ATLA or JSTOR on our website, or held in the stacks in our library). Other credible sources include edited commentary series (e.g. New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Anchor Bible Commentaries, Word Biblical Commentaries, etc.). Do not use ‘popular’ level works for the preparation of academic essays. Similarly, do not use academic works that are over 30 years old without assessing how the discussion of the issue under study has progressed since the older publications.

Similarly, be sure to check out the ATLA Database and other online resources (JSTOR; Gale Reference Library; Oxford Bibliographies Online).

C. Err on the side of caution when in doubt whether to cite a source.

Practical Suggestions:

- a) Use the commentaries, Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias in the Reference Section of the library. *See note below on choosing the best commentaries.*
- b) Use the [Library’s Online Resources](#), especially [Journal Search](#) via EBSCOHost, ATLA or JSTOR;
- c) Use the reference volumes available via the [Gale Virtual Reference Library](#) (once in the Gale site, choose “Religion.”). This gives you access to several excellent Encyclopaedias including the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.
- d) For bibliographies for your subject see the [Oxford Bibliographies Online](#) or go directly via <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/obo/page/biblical-studies>. These excellent

bibliographies will give you an orientation to the subject, and a place to start. Similarly check out the [Oxford Biblical Studies Online](#) portlet.

- e) **Before you start your research, read an overview of your subject area, or the book you are studying in a major Bible Dictionary or Encyclopaedia**, such as the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, the *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* or the *New International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, or the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*. You will find entries on each biblical book (e.g. “Jeremiah”) and most major topics (e.g. “covenant”) in these resources. You should also look for overview discussions in the Oxford Bibliographies Online.
- f) Begin early and take time to *think and pray about your work*.
- g) Make sure that you have consulted *at least* 20 sources, and that these sources are listed in *proper bibliographic form* at the end of your paper.
- h) Make sure your paper has a title page.
- i) **Make sure your pages are numbered.**
- j) Ask a friend to proofread your work before handing it in.
- k) ***As noted above, NEVER cite the editor of an encyclopaedia or dictionary article as the author of the article. Example: D. N. Freedman is the editor of the Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD), but not the author of its individual entries (articles). ALWAYS cite the name of the author of the article, e.g. A. R. Millard, “Abraham” ABD 1:35-40 (see the SBL Manual of Style for fuller details).***
- l) Make use of the [Tyndale Centre for Academic Excellence Webpages](#). This amazing website brings together virtually everything you will need for essay writing in this course. It will help you with documentation (i.e., citing your sources) as well as tips on good style, grammar, punctuation, sharpening your thesis statement, being concise and much more. As well, there are numerous links to other excellent web-based resources for essay writing. Take time to go through each section of this site.
- m) Schedule an appointment or simply drop by the Centre for Academic Excellence. The friendly and helpful staff are available to discuss any problems you may be having in getting your essay written. See their website for further details.

3. CHOOSING AND USING THE BEST COMMENTARIES.

In your papers you must work with commentaries on the biblical passages you are discussing.

FAILURE TO USE THE BEST COMMENTARIES ON THE PASSAGES RELEVANT TO YOUR TOPIC WILL RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF YOUR MARK. IN GENERAL, A MINIMUM OF THREE COMMENTARIES FROM THE SERIES MENTIONED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION ARE NECESSARY TO ATTAIN A GRADE OF C+.

Your most valuable resource for identifying the various commentaries and their value for your paper is:

Evans, John F. *A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works*. 10th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

This guide is on reserve in the library and lists the best commentaries available on each biblical book and describes its approach and methodology. It is also available in the Tyndale Bookstore and is a most worthwhile investment.

The major and most significant commentaries are generally found in the following refereed commentary series:

Anchor Bible (AB), moderate orientation, excellent scholarship, broad spectrum
New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT), excellent scholarship, primarily evangelical
Word Biblical Commentary (WBC), excellent scholarship broad spectrum-evangelical
International Critical Commentary (ICC), highly detailed, critical
New Century Biblical Commentary (NCBC), detailed, critical, broad spectrum
New International Biblical Commentary (NIBC), evangelical, more popular level, but still good for your work in this course
Hermeneia, broad spectrum, excellent scholarship
Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (TOTC), brief, evangelical, excellent scholarship
New International Version Application Commentary (NIVAC), evangelical, more popular, written by excellent scholars
Old Testament Library (OTL), broad spectrum, excellent scholarship
New American Commentary, evangelical
Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary (JPS), excellent scholarship, faith-based, worthwhile
Westminster Bible Companion (WBC), popular but still scholarly
Interpretation (Int), popular but still scholarly
Continental Commentaries, scholarly, broad spectrum, technical
Torch Bible Commentaries
Eerdmans Critical Commentaries (ECC), excellent scholarship, broad spectrum

The following multi-volume tool may also be used:

The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary and Reflections for each book of the Bible, including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books.

NOTE: do NOT use the Ancient Christian Commentary series for the *exegetical* section of your assignment. It is, however, highly valuable for the *history of interpretation* of a given text in the patristic period.

The following books (available in either the reference collection or on reserve) can also be extremely helpful in finding and evaluating commentaries:

D. A. Carson. *New Testament Commentary Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2007.

John Glynn. *Commentary & Reference Survey: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical and Theological Resources*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2007.

John Goldingay, Mark Lau, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. Madison, WI: Theological Students Fellowship, 1981.

Tremper Longman III. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.

Douglas K. Stuart. *A Guide to Selecting and Using Bible Commentaries*. Dallas, TX: Word, 1990.

For additional valuable information also check:

- (1) the introductory sections in the major commentaries on the book you are studying;
- (2) the entries on the various OT books in the major Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias.

4. SUBMITTING YOUR WORK

You must submit your papers by e-mail, in PDF format. Submissions must be made to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca and must be received by 11:59 PM on the due date.

5. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Please note: The Seminary requires the Professor to identify students who display difficulties with English language skills in their assignments and refer them for further language assessment in the [Writing Services](#). To help them improve in their studies, students may then be required to take the English for Academic Purposes course in conjunction with current courses. Please see the attached Guidelines for Written Work for further information.

6. LATE GRADING POLICY

Late assignments are assessed at **2.0% per day to a maximum of 3 weeks, after which the paper receives a zero**. It is far better to submit your work on time than to take a late penalty. Days are calculated from 11:59 pm on the due date.

7. EXTENSIONS AND DATE CHANGES

Extensions for assignments are granted *only* in exceptional circumstances. These include illness (a medical attestation is required), crisis, severe illness, or death in the family, etc. Requests for extensions must be submitted to the professor in writing.

Extensions will NOT be granted for mission trips, ministry responsibilities, heavy workload in other courses, computer or printer problems, slowness of reading, etc.

Try to follow the '24 hour rule' i.e. have a final version of your work ready 24 hours before it is due.

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.

8. ATTENDANCE

Attendance at class is of vital importance for this course. In accordance with Tyndale Seminary policy, missing more than two classes without reasonable cause such as illness (a medical attestation is required), crisis, severe illness or death in the family, etc., may result in a receiving an F for the course. If a discussion group session is missed without reasonable cause (as above), the student will receive a zero for the session.

I. 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

An outline of the weekly topics and readings will be posted on the course resource page.

Note: There will be no class on Oct 11 Thanksgiving Day.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

See information above.

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)