



**TYNDALE**  
Seminary

**Course Syllabus  
FALL 2011**

**BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION:  
INTERPRETING AND APPLYING THE BIBLICAL TEXT  
BIBL 0501W**

**SEPTEMBER 12 TO DECEMBER 9, 2011  
WEB BASED**

**PROFESSOR KEVIN QUAST**

780-405-0070 (cell)

109 rue Moreau, Beaumont, Alberta, T4X 1T1

Email: [kevinbquast@hotmail.com](mailto:kevinbquast@hotmail.com)

To access your course materials at the start of the course, please go to  
<http://class.tyndale.ca>

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study of the pivotal methods and interpretative principles involved in discerning the meaning of the biblical text. Topics covered include essential steps in interpreting the Bible, the variety of methods and approaches available to the contemporary student of Scripture, historical and theological issues arising out of the interpretative task, the relationship between the testaments, word studies and literary genre. Students learn to use the standard tools of advanced biblical research.

**II. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By actively participating in online forums, writing a series of weekly assignments, and developing and presenting a final research paper, learners will

- Describe and evaluate the development of hermeneutical theory and practice from the time of the closing of the Old Testament canon to the present;
- Discuss various theological and biblical issues surrounding the interpretation and application of Scripture;
- Comment in depth on a section of the Biblical text taking into full account such things as genre, philosophical presuppositions, biblical criticism and history of interpretation.
- Articulate and evaluate the various approaches of a number of contemporary translations.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation. An Integrated Approach*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Peabody: Hendrikson, 2008. ISBN: 9781598560800

McKenzie, Steven L., and Stephen R. Haynes, eds. *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*. Revised and expanded. Westminster John Knox Press, 1999. ISBN 0-664-257894-4

The student is expected to read the textbooks through during the course. While specific passages are not assigned for each week, as the textbooks do not follow the weekly topics closely, the student will find that they provide a solid background to the topics at hand.

In addition, each student must have access to at least *two* modern translations of the Bible, preferably employing different translation techniques. For example, students may choose one of the following “dynamic” translations: NIVI, NIV, NEB, GNB; and one of the following “formal” translations: NRSV, RSV, NASB, NKJV. I highly recommend the NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION and will be using it in class.

#### B. RECOMMENDED READING:

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Klein, W., Blomberg, C. L., and Hubbard, R. L. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993. [This is a good overall introduction to hermeneutics and is a bit broader than Fee & Stuart].

Dyck, Elmer, ed. [\*The Act of Bible Reading: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Biblical Interpretation\*](#). Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

#### C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The following assignments are designed to enable the student to realize the course objectives by:

- *Raising sensitivities to what we as readers bring to the biblical text in terms of background and expectations;*
- *Cultivating an eye for what the individual biblical authors intended to convey independent of what scholarship has proposed;*
- *Acquiring an informed appreciation of the contribution of scholarship to our understanding of the Bible, and;*
- *Using all the tools at our disposal to conduct our own research resulting in a substantiated interpretation and application of a passage of Scripture.*

1. **Weekly Assignments.** Five assignments worth 6% each (total 30% of final grade). Each assignment will relate to the topic and discussion question for the week and is due by the Monday following the week it is assigned.

## 2. Forum Participation: 40% of final grade.

Student participation will be graded in relation to participation in on-line forums and discussions. Besides regular participation in the weekly forums, the evaluation will reflect the level of preparation the student brings to the discussion, respect for the opinions of others, contribution to on-going discussion, analytical thinking, open-mindedness and ability to arrive at significant interpretations.

Discussion forums are a key aspect of this course. They are your opportunity to wrestle with the relevant chapters under consideration, to share your ideas with your peers, and share the evolving group consensus.

After week 2, students will be divided into small groups by the professor, with each group responsible to share their opinions on a given question with the class. Each student is expected to make a useful contribution, either in the form of opinions proffered, critical engagement, relevant contribution from a key secondary source, or responses to comments from the other members of your group.

Over the semester, each student will be required to post **two** summaries of the discussion of the group for consideration by the full class. The roster will be decided within the group. Normally there will be 4-5 students in a group to cover 8-10 weeks of summaries. The summaries should be approximately 300 words. They should outline areas of consensus reached by the group and highlight any areas where consensus could not be reached and why. You will be reporting on the outcome of the discussion to the full class on behalf of your group by Friday 5 p.m. Summaries will be graded according to the rubric at the end of the syllabus.

You can expect to spend about 1-1.5 hours in the discussion forums every week, including an initial response to the assigned question and about 4 meaningful and constructive responses to the group.

As a guideline, student should plan their activities according to the following schedule:

- Day 1 - Review the discussion question and use this to focus your reading.
- Day 2 - Post your initial response to the discussion question.
- Day 3 - Respond to the postings of other group members, suggesting to the person responsible for writing the summary points of consensus and difference that you see emerging.
- Day 4 - If it is your turn to write the summary, compose and draft a summative reflection and send it to your group. Other members will respond with their comments and suggestions.
- Day 5 - All members continue to review and comment on the draft summary. The final summary should be posted by 5 p.m.
- Day 6 - Professor posts response to the summary statements of each group. Students may respond as they wish.

**3. A Final Research Paper:** Due on December 16, 2011; 40% of final grade.

This paper should be a substantial piece of theological analysis dealing with one of the topics that will be provided for this assignment on the first day of class. The paper should not simply report, summarize, or review class materials (though you are encouraged to draw from class lectures, discussion and readings). It should demonstrate careful research, thoughtful reflection, accurate analysis, and a well-developed thesis. It should explore various approaches to the topic and display fairness in its evaluation of differing conclusions. **The paper should be in the range of 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced.**

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

Students should 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. The *Academic Calendar* is posted at <http://www.tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar>.

At the beginning of the course, the professor will post guidelines for writing an inductive study and a research paper specific to the discipline of biblical interpretation. The research paper can be attached (in *Microsoft Word* format) to an email sent to [kevinbquast@hotmail.com](mailto:kevinbquast@hotmail.com) or mailed to Kevin Quast at 4704 – 103 Avenue NW, Edmonton, AB, T6A 0S7. If mailed, they should be post-marked no later than the due date to avoid incomplete marks and late deductions.

**E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Course Participation	30%
Weekly Assignments (5 at 6% each)	30%
Research Paper	40%
<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS**

<i>Week of</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
Sep 12	Introduction to the Course Rabbinic and Early Church Hermeneutics	<i>Personal Hermeneutical Reflection</i>
Sep 19	Medieval and Reformation Hermeneutics	

	Modern Hermeneutics, Theological and Denominational Frameworks	
Sep 26	Establishing the Text - <i>Textual, Source and Redaction Criticism</i>	
Oct 3	Reconstructing Contexts - <i>Historical Criticism</i>	<i>Reconstructing Historical Contexts</i>
Oct 10	Respecting Genre - <i>The Literary Criticisms</i>	
Oct 17	Working with Words - <i>Grammar, Syntax and Form Criticism</i>	<i>Doing Word Studies</i>
Oct 24	Bringing the Text Forward – <i>Reader Response and Post-Modern Criticisms</i>	<i>Comparing Versions</i>
Oct 31	Respecting Faith Traditions – <i>Canon Criticism</i> Evaluating Versions: <i>Translation Theory and Practice</i>	<i>Inductive Study</i>
Nov 7	Issues: <i>Law and Gospel</i>	
Nov 14	Issues: <i>The Search for the Historical Jesus</i>	
Nov 21	Issues: <i>Gender and Authority</i>	
Nov 28	Issues: <i>Prophecy and Eschatology</i>	
Dec 5	Course Conclusions	<i>Complete on-line Review Quiz</i>

## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. General Reference

- Danker, F. W. [\*Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study\*](#). 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003.
- Dockery, D. S., Mathews, K. A., & Sloan, R. B., eds. *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation. A Complete Library of Tools and Resources*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Dunnett, W. M. *The Interpretation of Holy Scripture*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984.
- Goldingay, J. E. [\*Models for Interpretation of Scripture\*](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Hayes, J. H., & Holladay, C. R., eds. [\*Biblical Exegesis. A Beginner's Handbook\*](#). Rev. ed. Atlanta: John Knox, 1987.
- Henrichsen, W. A. *A Layman's Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Kaiser, W. C., & Silva, M. [\*An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
- Klein, W. W., Blomberg, C. L., & Hubbard, R. L. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 1993.
- Maier, Gerhard. [\*Biblical Hermeneutics\*](#). Trans. Robert Yarbrough. Wheaton, ILL: Crossway, 1994.
- McCartney, D., & Clayton, C. *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1994.
- McQuilkin, J. R. *Understanding and Applying the Bible*. Chicago: Moody, 1983.
- Morgan, R., & Barton, J. *Biblical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

- Osborne, G. R. [\*The Hermeneutical Spiral. A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation.\*](#) Rev. ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.
- Ramm, B. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation.* 3rd Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970.
- Smart, J. D. *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church.* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976.
- Soulen, R. N. [\*Handbook of Biblical Criticism.\*](#) 3rd ed. Atlanta: John Knox, 2001.
- Tate, W. R. [\*Biblical Interpretation. An Integrated Approach.\*](#) 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008.
- Virkler, H. A. *Hermeneutics. Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Walter C. Kaiser, J. *Toward an Exegetical Theology. Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

## **B. Specialized Introductions**

- Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
- Cotterell, P., & Turner, M. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989.
- Long, V. P. [\*The Art of Biblical History.\*](#) Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Longman, T. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.
- Ryken, L. *How to Read the Bible as Literature.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Ryken, L. *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
- Silva, M. [\*Biblical Words and Their Meaning. An Introduction to Lexical Semantics.\*](#) 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Swartley, W. M. *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women. Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation.* Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1983.

## **C. History of Interpretation**

- Grant, R. M., & Tracy, D. *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible.* 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Neill, S. *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1961.* London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Rogerson, J. *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century. England and Germany.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984.
- Silva, M. [\*Has the Church Misread the Bible?\*](#) 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.

## **D. Old Testament Interpretation & Exegesis**

- Alter, R. *The Art of Biblical Narrative.* New York: Basic Books, 1981.
- Alter, R. *The Art of Biblical Poetry.* New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Armerding, C. E. [\*The Old Testament and Criticism.\*](#) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- Barton, J. [\*Reading the Old Testament. Method in Biblical Study.\*](#) London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1984.
- Berlin, A. [\*Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative.\*](#) Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983.

Petersen, D. L., & Richards, K. H. [\*Interpreting Hebrew Poetry\*](#). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Sternberg, M. [\*The Poetics of Biblical Narrative. Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading\*](#). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Stuart, D. [\*Old Testament Exegesis\*](#). 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

### E. Books Devoted to New Testament Interpretation & Exegesis

Black, D. A., & Dockery, D. S., eds. *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

Fee, G. D. [\*New Testament Exegesis. A Handbook for Students and Pastors\*](#). 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Westminster, 2009.

Marshall, I. H., ed. *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

(See also Tyndale’s [Biblical Interpretation and Application virtual Reading Room](#))

## VI. MARKING RUBRIC

### 1. Weekly Assignment Rubric

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Preparation and comprehension</b>	Answer demonstrates that student has reviewed all the required material and has an excellent grasp of the significance of the weekly subject.	Answer demonstrates that student has reviewed the required material and has a good grasp of the significance of the weekly subject.	Answer demonstrates that student has reviewed the material. Exhibits some grasp of the significance of the weekly subject.	Answer demonstrates that student has reviewed some of the required material. Exhibits minimal grasp of the significance of the weekly subject.
<b>Writing</b>	All answers are written clearly in essay format with no grammatical and spelling errors and clear structure. Answers clearly address the question for that week.	All answers are written in essay format with few grammatical and spelling errors and clear structure. Answers address the question for that week	Answers are written in essay format. Contains some grammatical and spelling errors. Answers do not fully address the question for that week	Answers lack structure. Contains several grammatical and spelling errors. Answers do not clearly address the question for that week.
<b>Resource use</b>	Demonstrates in depth knowledge of course material including lecture notes, audio lectures and textbook.	Demonstrates knowledge of course material including lecture notes, audio lectures and textbook	Demonstrates knowledge of required course material only. (lecture notes and audio lectures). No evidence that have read textbook.	Answers contain errors that could have been avoided with adequate knowledge of the of the required course material for the week. (lecture notes and audio lectures)
<b>Integration of material</b>	Insightful integration of material from	Demonstrates ability to integrate	Demonstrates some ability to	Answers generally based on current

	previous lectures in answers where appropriate.	material from previous lectures in answers where appropriate.	integrate material from previous lectures in answers where appropriate.	week's material only. Contains little or no evidence of integration of previous material.
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## 2. Final Paper Rubric

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Identifies Issues/Problems (if applicable)</b>	Demonstrates a clear and deep understanding of the contemporary issue clearly based in theological understanding of contemporary culture	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the contemporary issue based in theological understanding of contemporary culture	Demonstrates an understanding of the contemporary issue based on theological understanding of contemporary culture	Demonstrates superficial understanding of the contemporary issue based on limited theological understanding of contemporary culture
<b>Connections: Theory and Practice.</b>	Makes appropriate, insightful and powerful connections between the issue/problem and the material covered.	Makes appropriate and insightful connections between the issue/problem and the material covered.	Makes appropriate but somewhat vague connections between the issue/problem and the material covered.	Makes little or no connection between the issue/problem and the material covered.
<b>Integration of all material covered</b>	Accurately and precisely integrates all relevant conceptual material from the course. References clearly recognizable.	Accurately integrates relevant conceptual material from the course  References recognizable.	Limited integration of conceptual material from the course  References somewhat obscure and difficult to identify.	Integrates few or no concepts from the course.  References difficult to find.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Makes realistic, appropriate and insightful recommendations clearly supported by the theological principles learnt.	Makes realistic and appropriate recommendations clearly supported by the theological principles learnt.	Makes realistic or appropriate recommendations supported by the theological principles learnt.	Makes realistic or appropriate recommendations with limited support from the theological principles learnt.
<b>Incorporation of redemptive mission of God, call of the church and understanding of eschatology</b>	Response clearly framed in terms of God's redemptive mission, eschatology and consequent call to and mission of the church as covered in the course.	Response framed in terms of God's redemptive mission, eschatology and consequent call to and mission of the church as covered in the course.	Response contains some references to God's redemptive mission, eschatology and consequent call to and mission of the church as covered in the course.	Response contains little reference to God's redemptive mission, eschatology and consequent call to and mission of the church as covered in the course.
<b>Deductive reasoning</b>	Shows clear evidence of deductive reasoning.	Shows evidence of deductive reasoning. Definition of problem	Shows some evidence of deductive reasoning.	Shows little evidence of deductive reasoning.

	Definition of problem and response clearly derived from theology.	and response derived from theology	Some link between definition of problem and response and theology. Reverts to inductive thinking unrelated to theology on occasion.	reasoning. Reasoning indicates incoherent link with theology. Resorts mostly to inductive thinking unrelated to theology.
<b>Formulation of Response</b>	Response clearly addresses the problem in a way that fosters transformation/redemption based on sound theology.	Response addresses the problem in a way that fosters transformation/redemption based on sound theology.	Response addresses the problem. Response is not necessarily redemptive.	Response does not address problem directly. Tends to be prescriptive and not redemptive.
<b>Communication:</b>	Clearly articulates response in language devoid of Christianese. Response clearly directed at live audience. Truth is expressed fully and unambiguously yet graciously.	Articulates response in language mostly devoid of Christianese. Response directed at live audience. Truth is expressed unambiguously yet graciously.	Articulates response in language mostly devoid of Christianese. Response somewhat contrived. Truth is expressed somewhat ambiguously.	Language contains Christianese. Contains ambiguity.
<b>Adaption as opposed to adoption</b>	Message clearly adapted to perceived audience but avoids temptation to adopt cultural mindset. Clearly confronts and addresses problem without condemnation.	Message adapted to perceived audience but avoids temptation to adopt cultural mindset. Confronts and addresses problem without condemnation	Message somewhat adapted to perceived audience. Mostly avoids temptation to adopt cultural mindset Exhibits some accommodation with culture.	Message not adapted to perceived audience. Tendency to accommodate culture and avoid presentation of the truth.

### 3. Forum Discussion Evaluation Rubric

Category	1	2	3	4
<b>Completeness of post</b>	addresses none of the questions presented; far too short; nearly all are incomplete	addresses less than all of the questions; shorter in length; several answers are incomplete	addresses all parts of the questions; respectable length; somewhat complete	completely addresses all parts of the questions; respectable length; complete response
<b>Promptness and Initiative</b>	initial posting after Tuesday; does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	initial posting on or before Tuesday; responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	initial posting on or before Tuesday; responds to most postings within a timely manner; requires occasional prompting to post	initial posting on or before Tuesday; consistently responds to postings in a timely manner; demonstrates good self-initiative

<b>Delivery of Post</b>	utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings
<b>Relevance of Post</b>	posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; post prompts further discussion of topic	consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references, post prompts further discussion
<b>Expression Within the Post</b>	does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to topic	unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas; mostly unsubstantiated opinions	opinions and ideas are occasionally substantiated; stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic	expresses substantiated opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic
<b>Contribution to the Learning Community</b>	does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent	occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic



**BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION:  
INTERPRETING AND APPLYING THE BIBLICAL TEXT  
BIBL 0501W**

## **Online Assignments**

### **1. Week 1 – Personal Hermeneutical Reflection**

Go to the following web page and do the following personal hermeneutical quiz to see how you might place in the spectrum of Christians when interpreting Scripture:

<http://buildingchurchleaders.com/quiz/?id=TCTOC>. On-line, we will discuss how we fared in relation to others (remember, there is no “right” or “wrong” position or score in this exercise).

Once you have done this, write a three page paper reflecting on the way in which you presently see your cultural, religious, academic and person background and experience affecting how you interpret Scripture.

### **2. Week 4 – Reconstructing Historical Contexts**

Describe the historical context of a book of the Bible and explain how it helps to arrive at an accurate understanding of a particular passage in the book.

### **3. Week 6 – Doing Word Studies**

Do a Word study on a particular passage of scripture. See “A Brief Guide to Words Studies for more guidance on this assignment.

### **4. Week 7 – Comparing Versions**

Read the translator’s preface and a particular passage in different versions of the Bible with a view of comprehending the goals of the different translators. Compare the differences between the translators and highlight how these differences contribute to fulfilling the purposes of each particular version.

### **5. Week 8 – Studying Inductively**

Using only personal observation and analysis, with no secondary sources for your research, perform an inductive Bible study on a particular passage of Scripture.

### **6. Week 13 – On-Line Review Quiz**

As a review and learning exercise of the entire scope of materials provided for this course, do the on-line quiz. You may use any helps your require, but the quiz will be timed and you will not be able to continue once the time limit is up. So, the better prepared you are, without the need to access notes and other resources, the better you will do.