



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

FALL 2019
BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION
BIBL 0501
(SECTION 01)

SEPTEMBER 10 – DECEMBER 3
TUESDAYS, 6:45 PM – 9:35 PM

INSTRUCTOR: DR. WILLIAM J. WEBB

Email: bwebb@tyndale.ca

“Office Hours”:

You are welcome to post questions in the appropriate forums online. Posted interaction with the professor benefits the whole class. For other matters where more direct communication is helpful, we can set up a phone call, Skype or, if possible, meet at any Starbucks in Waterloo, ON (where I live). Kindly email me to book a time. Thanks.

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.

Hermeneutics is concerned with understanding the meaning of the text as well as its significance for people today. This course will develop some of the philosophical and practical

skills needed for the complexities of biblical hermeneutics. As a subcategory of communication theory in general, students will explore the relationship between the author, text and reader and how each contributes to the formation of meaning. Various interpretive models are examined in order to explore their value and limitations.

II. LEARNING ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, by:

1. Conducting and presenting a semantic-fields (word meaning) study involving the ability to recite Greek and Hebrew alphabets and use a concordance and lexicon,
2. Building a validation case for choosing between semantic fields where there is ambiguity in meaning (mutually exclusive options) and through interacting with other student's validation,
3. Presenting an application study, which wrestles with interfacing two distinctly different horizons,
4. Developing and writing an exegetical paper on a selected passage of Scripture,
5. Discussing the application of biblical interpretation skills with colleagues, and
6. Reflecting upon course materials (lectures, handouts, textbooks, etc.),

Students will be able to:

- Explain the dynamics involved in reading and understanding texts.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of competing approaches within the spectrum of interpretive methods.
- Formulate a “personally adopted” hermeneutical philosophy—not necessarily the professor’s perspective—that integrates all three areas of author, text, and reader.
- Demonstrate basic skills in using a range of Hebrew-English/Greek-English tools as well as scholarly commentaries and periodical articles for the task of exegesis.
- Articulate how the Bible has been interpreted in the past, both within Scripture itself and within second-temple Judaism and church history.
- Explore approaches to re-reading and “hearing” the ancient text that foster a healthy understanding of biblical authority.
- Develop an attitude of “hermeneutical humility”¹ towards the correctness of one’s own interpretive conclusions.

¹ “Hermeneutical humility” lies somewhere between the polar attitudes of absolute *dogmatism* and absolute *skepticism* about our ability to derive/know personally the correct biblical meaning; it is methodologically based upon degrees of *reasoned probability* in the assessment of that meaning

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS & TOOLS

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Third edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. [ISBN: 9780310524175].

Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women, & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. [ISBN: 0-8308-1561-9].*

[*Note: If you have taken the Tyndale course *Wrestling With Troubling Texts* and have already read *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* as a textbook for that course, please let me/the professor know and I will assign you an alternative textbook possibly from the recommended list below.]

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.).**

[**Note: If you have one of the higher-end software programs—Bibleworks, Accordance, Logos, etc.—you are welcome to do comparable search work with these tools. Please do *not* rely on the software tools for the best commentaries, monographs or periodical articles.]

B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Brown, Jeannine K. *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: Scripture as Communication*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation. An Integrated Approach*. Third edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.

Webb, William J. *Corporal Punishment in the Bible: A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic for Troubling Texts*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Research-Based Forum #1: Semantic Fields (5%)

The semantic-fields assignment comes in three parts: (a) learning the Hebrew/Greek alphabets, (b) doing a NT word search on *sarx* using stepbible.com, and (c) completing the actual assignment on semantic fields [SFs]. Parts #1 and #2 can be accomplished in any order but both need to be done and verified *before* part #3.

Part #1: Hebrew/Greek Alphabets. Believe it or not, the Greek alphabet is incredibly easy to learn. If you know “alpha” and “omega”, then you already know two of the letters. The student must now learn the rest of the Greek alphabet. This part of the SFs assignment will be tested orally for recognition (*not* for written reproduction) of the alphabet. You can work off a Greek alphabet list in front of you. See resources under “RB Forum #1” for the alphabets. E.g., at the point of testing, when you see the first small Greek letter on the alphabet list, you say “alpha” (without peeking at the English word “alpha” next to the Greek letter—only the person listening to you can look at both the Greek letter and the English “alpha” pronunciation).

The student must be able to read the Greek alphabet (small letters) and the Hebrew alphabet by the second week (Week 2). This stage of the assignment is like an admissions test (GRE) for entering law or medicine. While it does not count towards your grade, the two alphabets are a *requirement for entry* into doing the remainder of the SFs assignment and the next assignment on validation. Learning the two alphabets has immense payback. Students can now do the following:

- ✓ begin using Hebrew/Greek-English concordances
- ✓ start reading interlinear Hebrew/Greek-English Bibles
- ✓ crack open Hebrew/Greek-English dictionaries (called, “Lexicons”)
- ✓ enjoy Hebrew/Greek-English theological lexicons (entire articles on H/G words)
- ✓ gain a greater comfort level in using Hebrew/Greek-English commentaries (no longer “skipping over” those foreign language words)
- ✓ allows you to do word studies that (a) explore the range of possible meanings for a H/G term and (b) engage in the validation process of choosing between semantic domains (dictionary meanings) for a particular passage

Before moving to the third part of the assignment (i.e., the actual “semantic fields” portion), the professor must receive an email confirmation that “[*your name*] has recited perfectly or almost-perfectly (one ‘mulligan’ allowed) the Greek and Hebrew alphabets.” Please have the adult person/friend who heard the two alphabets send this email confirmation. Thanks.

Part #2: Searching Sarx—128 NT Uses. Using stepbible.com, do a search of the Greek word *sarx* (flesh) within the NT Greek-based manuscripts (even though you be reading an English version like ESV). Click on the [week #1] forum link: “Yes . . . I got my 128 uses of sarx. Yeah!” After clicking on the link, follow the instructions for getting the 128 uses and for verifying your use of stepbible.com with the rest of your group.

Part #3: Exploring Semantic Fields. Reciting the two alphabets and posting a screen shot of 128 uses of *sarx* makes you “game ready” for the first assignment. After completing these two preliminary steps, the student may now do the semantic-fields part of this assignment. Use the instructions, grading rubric and various resources posted on the course site under “RB Forum #1: Semantic Fields”.

2. Research-Based Forum #2: Validation (20%)

Becoming familiar with the concept of semantic fields and how they work is the first step in word studies. The next step is to wrestle with meaning in a text where several semantic fields are possible and commentators are divided over which one is correct. In this assignment students will begin to develop the skills for choosing between semantic fields in a case where there is ambiguity in meaning. Please use the instructions, grading rubric and various resources posted on the course site under “RB Forum #2: Validation”.

3. Research-Based Forum #3: Reading Slavery Texts from Two Horizons (25%)

The process of applying Scripture to our lives involves assessing the interface between two horizons (a) the *ancient* world horizons of the biblical text and (b) our *contemporary* horizon—the world in which we live. Applying or appropriating Scripture in a cogent manner requires just as much rigorous thinking and skill as does a good word study or choosing between interpretive options. Kindly use the instructions and grading rubric posted under “RB Forum #3: Reading Slavery Texts from Two Horizons”.

See the discussion of late RB Forum submissions below.

4. Exegetical Paper (50%)

The culmination of the course is the writing of an exegetical paper. Choose one of the following passages of Scripture and write your exegesis (+ application) paper on it:

- Exodus 34:1-9*
- Isaiah 64:1-7*
- Jonah 2:1-10
- Mark 8:22—9:1
- Philippians 2:1-11
- Revelation 7:1-17*

[*While the selection of a text is completely your choice, there may be some greater learning benefit choosing a text that is not known as well by the Christian community and/or one that you have not worked on before.]

Use the instructions, grading rubric and various resources posted on the course site under “Exegetical Paper: Resources.” The exegetical paper is due *through email submission* as an attached file [bwebb@tyndale.ca] on the date specified in the syllabus schedule below. See discussion of late submissions below. Length: 12 – 15 pages. The page count does not include title page and bibliography; these are additional pages beyond the 12 – 15 page count. Please use single-spaced 10 point footnotes (no endnotes and no short-form, author-year citations within the body of the text). Footnotes are included in the page count. Going over the allowable page limit will result in a reduction of the grade. The final paper must use correct Turabian style in all of its components—font size, title page, headings, paragraph spacing, margins, block quotes, footnotes, bibliography, etc. See grading rubric.

Due date: **Dec. 10th, 2019**. See the discussion of late Exegetical Paper submissions below.

5. Fun Forums (5% bonus on Exegetical Paper)

Every course needs some fun. Students can achieve a 5% bonus (maximum) towards their exegetical paper by participation in some “fun forums” during the semester. These are class discussions online where you get bonus points simply based on participation. If you contribute something to a fun forum, you have just earned yourself a 1% bonus. It is possible to collect up to a 5% bonus increase on your final paper grade. So, join us for some fun.

D. 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.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following:

RB Forum #1: “Semantic Fields”	5%
RB Forum #2: “Validation”	20%
RB Forum #3: “Reading Slavery Texts from Two Horizons”	25%
Exegetical Paper	50%
<u>Fun Forums [bonus added to EP grade]</u>	<u>*5% bonus (maximum)</u>
Total Grade	100%

F. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, 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](#).

Submissions. Kindly email all assignments as attached files (either MSWord or PDF formats are fine) to the professor at: bwebb@tyndale.ca

Late FORUM Submissions. The initial “assignment” post to a RB Forum is due between Monday and Thursday (midnight, Eastern Standard Time) of the week it is scheduled in the course. Two subsequent “critical interaction” posts are due by the end of the week—i.e., by Sunday (midnight, Eastern Standard Time). Any interaction the following week is encouraged but optional. *The penalty for late RB Forum submissions is one letter grade reduction per day*

late (rather weighty) since these submissions play an educational component for all students within the course.

Late EXEGETICAL PAPER Submissions, part I: *ON OR BEFORE* the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE] Deadline. The last day of exams in a semester is the official deadline for any late submissions. After that day the professor cannot accept late work without the explicit/written approval of the Registrar’s Office (see below). If student recognizes that a late submission on or before the LDOE deadline does not involve clear extenuating circumstances (defined below), they may submit the material to the professor as **(i) a late submission with penalty** until midnight of the LDOE. In this case there is no need to contact the professor for approval. For every day late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (i.e. one day late: 82 % A- becomes 77% B+; two days late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction for a partial day late counts that same as a full day late. On the other hand, if there are clear extenuating circumstances, the student may ask the professor for **(ii) a late submission without penalty** (or with partial penalty). By clear mitigating circumstances I mean something along the following lines. Suppose I as your professor were to take your circumstances to the class (hypothetically, not in reality) and ask them the following question, “Should I treat this student differently regarding late penalties than I would treat the rest of you based upon their particular [mitigating?] circumstances?” If the class were to respond with an overwhelming, “Yes, of course,” then you have a case of clear mitigating circumstances. If you wish to ask for this sort of late submission without penalty (or with only partial penalty) where the submission is on or before the LDOE, please contact the professor. The student must take the initiative in this matter.

Late EXEGETICAL PAPER Submissions, part II: *AFTER* the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE] Deadline. Any submissions after the LDOE require a formal process of appeal to the Registrar’s Office (not to the professor). Requests for such extensions beyond the LDOE must be (a) submitted in writing using the Tyndale Extension Forms, explaining the reason why the extension is needed and (b) submitted to the registrar before the LDOE unless there are reasons why this was not possible. No assignments will be accepted after the LDOE unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the dean/registrar (again, not to the professor). Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to a heavy work load, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

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.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

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.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Office (Room B302; aau@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

G. 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

KBH = Klein, Blomberg, Hubbard, *Biblical Interpretation*

W = Webb, *Slaves, Women, & Homosexuals*

W2 = Webb, *Returning Home* (Appendix A & B) (handout)

W3 = Webb, "Balancing Paul's Original-Creation and Pro-Creation Arguments"; article in *Westminster Theological Journal* (handout)

Note: W2, W3 and other reading materials will be posted online with their corresponding week and topic.

Date	Lecture/Subject	Assignments/Reading
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I. Author-centered Approaches

Week 1	Syllabus Dimensions of Communication	KBH (<i>skim</i> chp. 2) Sarx 128 Uses
Week 2	Authorial Intent: a rationale SOCIAL, CULTURAL, & HISTORICAL analysis The Spirit & Interpretation	Grk./Heb. Alphabets KBH (chps. 1, 5)
Week 3	Dimensions of Language	RB Forum #1: “Semantic Fields” KBH (chp. 6, 7) W2 (two appendixes)
Week 4	Validation of Semantic Fields	RB Forum #2: “Validation”

II. Text-centered Approaches/Genre

Week 5	A Text-Centered Approach: a rationale INTRO TO GENRE NARRATIVE RITUAL TEXTS	KBH (417-50)
Week 6	GOSPELS EPISTOLARY (reading; no lecture) POETRY PROVERBS & WISDOM	KBH (510-31) KBH (541-57) KBH (chp. 8; 451-61) KBH (493-504)

Tues. Oct 22nd: No class (Reading Days)

Week 7	PROPHECY APOCALYPTIC	KBH (462-90) KBH (491-92; 558-66)
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III. Reader-centered Approaches

Week 8	THE READER & MEANING A Reader-Centered Approach: a rationale
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Reader-Oriented Methods: “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly!”
Use of Scripture in later Scripture
Canon and Community

Week 9	SW&H OVERVIEW <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Criteria #1—9• Criteria #10—18	W (all); W3 RB FORUM #3: “Reading Slavery Texts”
Week 10	Applying the Bible Redemptively <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slavery texts• Women texts	
Week 11	Application I—General Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principle/Abstraction Approach• CP texts	
Week 12	Application II—The Covenants Application III—The Will of God & Scripture <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hermeneutical Spiral²• Never Ending Story• The Bible & God’s Will	KBH (chps. 11, 12)

EXEGETICAL PAPER: Due December 10th, 2019.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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

GENERAL HERMENEUTICS

Bartholomew, Craig, Collin Greene, and Karl Möller, eds. *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Barton, John. ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.

Conzelmann, H. and A Lindemann. *Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of N.T. Exegesis*. Trans. by S. S. Schatzmann. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988.

² I am drawing upon the spiral metaphor as popularized by Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006).

- Cosgrove, Charles H. *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Danker, Frederick W. *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*. Rev. ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993.
- Dockery, D. S., Mathews, K. A., & Sloan, R. B., eds. *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Dyck, Elmer, ed. *The Act of Bible Reading: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis*. 3rd ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
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- Ferguson, Duncan S. *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1986.
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- Green, Joel B., ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.
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- Johnson, Elliott E. *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Academia, 1990.
- Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. Revised and expanded ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.
- Keegan, Terrance J. *Interpreting the Bible: A Popular Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Revised and updated ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004.
- Kuhatschek, Jack. *Taking the Guesswork out of Applying the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990
- Lundin, Roger, Clarence Walhout, and Anthony C. Thiselton. *The Promise of Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.
- Marshall, I. H., ed. *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Method*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977.
- McCartney, Dan and Charles Clayton. *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994.
- McKim, Donald K. *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.
- McKenzie, Steven L., and Stephen R. Haynes, eds. *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*. Revised and expanded ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- McKnight, Scot, ed. *Introducing New Testament Interpretation*. Guides to NT Exegesis 1. Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Meadors, Gary T., ed. *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

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- Rohrbaugh, Richard, ed. *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.
- Silva, Moisés, ed. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.
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