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Winter	
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BSTH 201(3): Hermeneutics

Instructor:	Dr. Jen Gilbertson
Class Day:	Tuesday
Class Hours:	8:15 am – 11:05 am
Website:	Classes.tyndale.ca
Email:	jgilbertson@tyndale.ca
Office Hours:	Drop-in — Thursday 8:00–11:00 am Appointment — drjengilbertson.youcanbook.me
Classroom:	<i>Please refer to registrar's list available before the semester begins.</i>

I. COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Provides an orientation to the different types of literature in the Bible, with a practical study of relevant methods used in their interpretation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Express the exegetical method taught in this course, and exegete biblical passages accordingly as careful observers of the text.
- Articulate with greater understanding and conviction how to read the Bible as *Scripture*.
- Identify the different genres in the Bible and the rules for reading implied by those genres.
- Display awareness of various hermeneutical methods and provide a general assessment of both their strengths and weaknesses.
- Describe the general differences between translations and the reasons why they can trust the text of Bible is reliable.
- Access and research from reputable, scholarly resources such as Bible dictionaries and commentaries.

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

You are expected to purchase your books before the course begins.

1. A **print Bible** in a committee-based translation
 - You must bring a physical copy, not digital.
 - Recommended translations in alphabetical order include ESV, NASB, NIV and NRSV.
 - I will use the NIV primarily in class.

2. Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.
3. Porter, Stanley E. and Beth M. Stovell, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.
4. Additional Readings and Videos on Moodle. Please see Course Outline.
 - Blomberg, Craig. "1 Corinthians 8:1–13." Pages 159–171 in *1 Corinthians*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
 - Blue, B.B. "Food Offered to Idols and Jewish Food Laws." Pages 306–310 in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
 - McCaulley, Esau. *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020.
 - Provan, Iain. "Literary Competence and Biblical Authority." *Word & World* 26 (2006): 375–382.
 - Wright, N.T. "'Authority of Scripture' as Part of a Larger Whole." Pages 17–25 in *Scripture and the Authority of God*. London: SPCK, 2005.

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS AND RESOURCES

1. Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
 - This book provides a helpful introduction to each book of the Bible. It gives a succinct overview of the content, structure and themes of each book as well as tips for reading the book well. As you read Scripture, consulting this resource will help you to read with more understanding.
 - This is not a required text for the course, but rather a resource commended to you as a reader of the Bible. It will be a useful resource for you in other courses, especially your BSTH courses.
2. Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.
3. [BibleProject.com](https://www.bibleproject.com/) — helpful videos and podcasts on the content and themes of the Bible as well as how to read it.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topics	Assigned Readings and Videos	Assignments
Tuesday September 12	1. Welcome to Hermeneutics <i>What is the Bible anyway? Why do we need to study it? Isn't it just enough to read it? What do you mean by "exegesis" and "hermeneutics"?</i> Authority & Inspiration <i>What does it mean to read the Bible as Scripture?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Syllabus 	
Tuesday, September 19	2. The Canon & Its Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.T. Wright, "'Authority of Scripture' as Part of a Larger Whole." 	Short Assignment A – Authority & Exegesis

	<p><i>How did we get the Bible? Why are these books in the Bible and not others?</i></p> <p>Textual Criticism <i>Why can we trust that the text of the Bible is accurate?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video: Tim Mackie, "Where did the Bible come from and why should we care?" ● Video: Daniel B. Wallace, "How can you trust the New Testament when the original manuscripts are different?" 	
Tuesday, September 26	<p>3. Thinking about Language & Translation <i>Why are there so many English translations? And how do I pick a good one?</i></p> <p>Scripture as Communication: Our Exegetical Model <i>How can we hear what God is saying to us today through the Bible?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GGW, "1. Bible Translation" ● GGW, "2. The Interpretive Journey" ● GGW, "10. Who Controls Meaning?" 	
Tuesday, October 3	<p>4. How to Read <i>Don't I already know how to read? How do the details matter?</i></p> <p>The Circles of Literary Context <i>How much context is enough context?</i></p>		
Tuesday, October 10	No Class — Reading Days		
Tuesday, October 17	<p>5. OT Narrative <i>What if there isn't a moral lesson to every story? How is Hebrew storytelling different from ours?</i></p> <p>OT Poetry <i>So Hebrew poetry isn't about rhyming sounds, but rhyming ideas? How can I appreciate the artistry and theology when I don't know Hebrew?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GGW, "18. Old Testament — Narrative" ● GGW, "20. Old Testament — Poetry" 	Short Assignment B — <i>Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views</i>
Tuesday, October 24	<p>6. The Bible as History <i>Is the Bible a reliable record of past events? What makes good historiography?</i></p> <p>Socio-Historical Contexts <i>How do I bridge the gap between me and the people to whom the Bible was originally written? Where can I find reliable resources for historical research?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GGW, "6. The Historical-Cultural Context" ● GGW, "7. What Do We Bring to the Text" ● 1 Cor 8:1–13 ● Blomberg, "1 Corinthians 8:1–13" ● Blue, "Food Offered to Idols and Jewish Food Laws" 	Reading Quiz #1

Tuesday, October 31	7. Humble but Confident Interpretation <i>How do we make conclusions about the meaning of the text? What does “meaning” mean anyway?</i> (Re)Contextualization <i>How does the Bible speak to us now where we are? How do I live in the story of Scripture?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GGW, “11. Levels of Meaning” • GGW, “12. The Role of the Holy Spirit” • GGW, “13. Application” • McCaulley, <i>Reading While Black</i>, 25–46. 	[Group Project Check-In #1: Textual and Genre Analysis]
Tuesday, November 7	8. OT Legal Material <i>Why shouldn’t you cook a goat in its mother’s milk? Is OT law relevant today?</i> OT Prophecy <i>Is prophecy always about the future? How is prophecy connected to the law?</i> OT Wisdom <i>What is wisdom? Are you sure that proverbs aren’t promises?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GGW, “19. Old Testament — Law” • GGW, “21. Prophets” • GGW, “22. Wisdom” 	[Group Project Check-in #2: Textual, Genre and Socio-Historical Analysis]
Tuesday, November 14	9. NT Gospels & Acts <i>How does reading these books as whole narratives help you know Jesus better?</i> NT Epistles <i>How does God speak to us through somebody else’s mail?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GGW, “15. New Testament — Gospels” • GGW, “16. Acts” • GGW, “14. New Testament — Epistles” • Video: BibleProject, “The Parables of Jesus” 	[Group Project Check-In #3: All Five Pieces of Exegesis]
Tuesday, November 21	10. Group Learning		Group Learning Peer Assessments
Tuesday, November 28	11. Discussion of Five Views <i>What are the strengths and weaknesses of each model of hermeneutics?</i> Revelation <i>So Revelation is meant to encourage me, not scare the life out of me? How can I understand all the crazy imagery?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GGW, “17. New Testament — Revelation” • Video: BibleProject, “Apocalyptic Literature” • Video: BibleProject, “Revelation Ch. 1–11” • Video: BibleProject, “Revelation Ch. 12–22” 	Exegesis Group Project
Tuesday, December 5	12. Thinking about Biblical Hermeneutics <i>How do we read the Bible faithfully as Christians?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provan, “Literary Competence and Biblical Authority” 	Reading Quiz #2 Short Assignment C — Revelation as a Reason for Hope

	Wrap-Up		
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EVALUATION & ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments & Evaluation	Due Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Short Assignment A <i>Authority and Exegesis</i>	Tuesday, Sept. 19 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle or in person	15%
Short Assignment B <i>Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views</i>	Tuesday, Oct. 17 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle	20%
Reading Quizzes (2 x 5%)	Oct. 24, Dec. 5 in class	10%
Group Learning Peer Assessments	Tuesday, Nov. 21 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle	5%
Exegesis Group Project	Tuesday, Nov. 28 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle	40%
Short Assignment C <i>Revelation as a Reason for Hope</i>	Tuesday, Dec. 5 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle	10%
		100%

Assignment Evaluation — The assignments for this course will be graded using rubrics which provide criteria for assessment and describe expectations. We will discuss each assignment and its rubric in class. The rubrics will be made available on Moodle.

1. Short Assignments (35%)

A. Authority and Exegesis (15%) — Due Sept 19 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle or in Person

- Short answer questions based on N.T. Wright, “‘Authority of Scripture’ as Part of a Larger Whole” plus one to two other articles.

B. Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views (20%) — Due Oct. 17 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle.

- Short answer questions based on your textbook, Porter and Stovell, eds., *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*

C. Revelation as a Reason for Hope (10%) — Due Dec. 5 @ 11:00 pm on Moodle

- a pastoral letter to a friend explaining how to read Revelation as a book of hope and worship
- Further guidance on these assignments will be provided in class. Detailed directions will be available on the course website at least two weeks before the due date.

2. Reading Quizzes (10% — 2 x 5%) — in class on Oct. 24 and Dec. 5

- **Purpose:** to ensure that students not only keep up on course reading, but to help them review and learn the abundance of material they are exposed to in this course.
- **Format:** 10–15 multiple choice questions in 10–15 minutes
 - o In class
- **Content:** course readings and videos
- These quizzes will be **closed book**. The questions will be straightforward if you have engaged with the course material.

3. Group Learning Peer Assessments (5%) – Due Tuesday, Nov. 21 on Moodle

- **Purpose:**
 - o 1. To learn from one's classmates
 - o 2. To share one's own research and insights in a small group
 - o 3. To provide encouragement and feedback to one's peers
 - o 4. To practice discussing big topics.
- **Description:** For class on Tuesday, Nov. 21, you will be divided into small groups for three sets of discussions:
 - o 1. The outcomes of your Gen 38 group projects and your progress on your final projects.
 - o 2. Your growing understanding of biblical hermeneutics and which of the five views in the textbook seems the most appropriate to you.
 - o 3. A topic arising from our class conversations.
- **Grading:**
 - o 1. Using the rubric supplied by the professor, students will assess other members of their group and assign them a mark out of five. The student's grade will be an average of their peers' assessments.
 - o 2. Each student must provide two comments to each group member:
 - An affirmation of their strengths or insights as seen through their participation in the group discussion.
 - A kind but thoughtful encouragement of how they can grow as a communicator, group participant, or a scholar.
 - o 3. **Any student who fails to provide assessments of the other members of their group will receive an automatic zero.**
 - o 4. Time will be provided at the end of class to complete the peer reviews.

4. Exegesis Group Project — Genesis 38 (40%, including 5% for peer evaluation)

- **Purpose:** to practice faithful exegesis, interpretation, contextualization, and communication in a group context
- **Format:** Group work in an online document
- **Evaluation:**
 - o Quality of Work (30%)
 - o Timely Group Progress (6%) — determined by check-ins on Oct. 31, Nov. 7 and Nov. 14
 - o Peer Evaluation (4%)
- **Key Dates**
 - o Oct. 17 — Groups Announced and Online Document Available
 - o Oct. 31 — Check-in: Textual and Genre Analysis
 - o Nov. 7 — Check-In: Textual, Genre and Socio-Historical Analysis
 - o Nov. 14 — Check-In: All Five Pieces of Exegesis

- Nov. 28 — Completed Project Due
- Further instructions will be provided in class.

Course Bibliography

- Adeyemo, Tokunboh, ed. *Africa Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Revised and updated ed. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011.
- Brown, Jeanine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2007.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *A Pathway of Interpretation: The Old Testament for Pastors and Students*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.
- Castleman, Robbie F. *Interpreting the God-Breathed Word: How to Read and Study the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.
- Evans, Craig A. and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Long, V. Phillips. *The Art of Biblical History*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 5. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Martin, Ralph P. and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Mburu, Elizabeth. *African Hermeneutics*. Bukuru, Nigeria: Hippo Books, 2019.
- McCaulley, Esau. *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020.
- Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991.
- Peppiatt, Lucy. *Unveiling Paul's Women*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018.
- Provan, Iain. *The Reformation and the Right Reading of Scripture*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017.
- Provan, Iain, V. Phillips Long, and Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
- Ryken, Leland, et al. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1998.
- Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Stuart, Douglas K. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 4th ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009.
- Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2008.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Wintle, Brian, ed. *South Asia Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2015.
- Wright, N.T. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992.
- Zimmerman, Jens. *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.