



**Online Course Syllabus
BIB 505**

Biblical Hermeneutics

Winter 2021 – Dec 13 to Jan 7

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Scott Shiffer
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Instructor Office Hours: 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM M-F

Course Description and Prerequisites

This course will provide a study of the transmission and the translation of the Scriptures as well as the principles and procedures of their interpretation and application.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the aforementioned topics. While it will include documented lectures, it also will include reading, research, and interaction with fellow classmates. Furthermore, at the end of this course, students should demonstrate the ability to . . .

1. Outline a brief history of the formation of the English Bible, giving strengths and weaknesses of major modern translations in English.
2. Recognize and define the pertinent issues, fundamental terms, and theological categories that are used when discussing the process of biblical interpretation.
3. Explain historical movements, current trends, and controversial issues in hermeneutics.
4. Distinguish different genres of biblical literature and demonstrate proficiency in applying the basic rules that govern the interpretation of each kind.
5. Analyze a given passage of Scripture using the basic steps of inductive Bible study.

Required Textbooks

- * *The Bible*: The professor typically uses the *New American Standard* in written course lectures.
- * Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- * Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God’s Word*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- * Goldsworthy, Graeme. *According to the Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2002.
- * Plummer, Robert. *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Textbook Reading	20%
Lecture Reading	10%
Discussion Board Participation	10%
Quizzes	20%
Paper	40%

Total	100%
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Textbook Reading Assignments (20%)

The approximately 1000 pages of required textbook reading are a crucial component of this course. As the class progresses, it is expected that students will read the assigned pages thoughtfully and according to the order given on the *Course Schedule*. Likewise, by the end of the semester, students will be required to report the percentage of reading that has been completed.

Lecture Reading Assignment (10%)

Students are required to read the written lectures that cover the topics of the class. This is why the course schedule provided in this syllabus outlines the order of lectures. To access them, students can click the *Course Lectures Hyperlinks* that are available in the various weeks of the class. Note that the *Course Schedule*, which is the second hyperlink on the left side of the Canvas homepage, provides an outline of the order of lectures for each week; e.g., Week 1: Lectures 1-3; Week 2: Lectures 4-5, etc. Finally, similar to the textbook reading assignments, by the end of the semester students will be required to report the percentage of lectures that have been read. To do so-

Discussion Board Participation (10%)

Students will participate in three Discussion Board (DB) forums, each spanning a one-week interval. On each assigned week, students will answer the forum question(s) in a new thread of 400–500 words. During the same week, students must reply to two classmates' threads, in 200–250 words.

In order to receive full credit for class participation every week, each student must respond to the professor's Class Discussion question for that week by Wednesday at 11:55 P.M. of that week. Next, the student must respond to at least two other students' posts by Friday at 11:55 P.M. of that same week. Finally, the student must answer any questions that are asked of him/her by other students by Sunday at 11:55 P.M. in your time zone at the end of that week. Please be courteous to other classmates by not waiting until the last minute each week to post on the Discussion Board.

Additional Discussion Board Guidelines (Maria Puzziferro):

An acceptable post to the Discussion Board would contain accurate, original, and relevant comments. The comments should stimulate additional thought about the issue being discussed. A simple "I agree" or "I disagree" will not be counted as an adequate comment.

- Your postings should reflect a) facts, b) logical reasoning, c) be related to the topic, d) be written well (no spelling errors, etc.), and e) be on time. Try to avoid sharing your personal opinions if you cannot back them up with facts and/or statistics.
- You may certainly express your views and beliefs in the context of the discussion topic, but DO NOT use your views to attack others. Simply use your best judgment and treat others with respect. This will be important to bear in mind as we discuss very sensitive and controversial issues.
- Read the assigned chapters before you post your response to the question so that you can tie in the main ideas and facts in the readings to your postings.
- You will be evaluated on the quality and thoughtfulness of how you present your point of view. A quality message is well thought out, clearly presented, and well-formulated.
- When posting, be sure to present your thoughts and point of view in an unbiased way. You can and should cite evidence for your assertions where appropriate. Use your textbook, and other selected web resources as educational aids.

- Your postings should be clear, yet concise. Please do not feel as though you have to write a lot. Think quality over quantity.
- Please try to keep messages to one paragraph (150-200 words), if possible.
- Once you have posted, check back frequently to see if anybody has responded to you

Quizzes (20%)

Assorted quizzes pertain to the content that is discussed in designated chapters of *Duvall/Hays* and the course lectures (L1, L2, etc). To know the content that is covered in each quiz, students can consult the Assignments Column of the *Course Schedule*, which is the second link located on the Canvas course homepage or the following information in this section of the syllabus. Specifications for taking the quizzes include the following points

Quizzes can only be taken in the weekly order as listed in the course schedule and only during the specified days that are listed in the syllabus.

Week 2 (6/3-6/9): Quiz 1- **Duvall/Hays Chp 6 & Lecture 4**

Week 3 (6/10-6/16): Quiz 2- D/H Chp 10 & L8

Week 4 (6/17-6/23): Quiz 3- D/H Chp 12 & L11

Week 5 (6/24-6/30): Quiz 4- D/H Chp 18 & L14

Week 6 (7/1-7/7): Quiz 5- D/H Chp 20 & L17

Week 7 (7/8-7/14): Quiz 6- D/H Chp 14 & L18

Quizzes are to be taken in the allotted time of 30 minutes without consulting notes, textbooks, or other helps. Also once students begin each quiz, a set timer in Canvas commences which cannot be paused and will continue to run until the allotted time is complete.

Paper (40%)

Each student will be required to write a 12-15 page research page paper (*double-spaced*) that examines one of the following eight issues pertaining to the topics covered in this course. Those topics include-

1. Research a particular biblical passage that is heavily disputed among textual critics as to whether it is authentic or not; e.g., Mark 16: 9-20; John 8:1-11, 1 Jn 5:7.
2. Examine the hermeneutical approaches of a major thinker in Christian history; e.g., Origen of Alexandria, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, etc.
3. Address modern-day objections to a particular passage in the Torah pertaining to slavery, genocide, marriage or uncleanness regulations. How should the passage of your choice be understood in its original context and in light of the New Testament?
4. Try to resolve a passage in the Old Testament that speaks about God repenting over a decision he made or changing his mind in light of diverging circumstances. How should such a passage be interpreted?
5. Write an exegetical paper that examines the meaning of a parable that Jesus told in one of the gospels.
6. Write a paper that examines one particular account that is mentioned by all of the Synoptic Gospels and show how they can possibly be harmonized exegetically.
7. Analyze the way a passage in the Old Testament is interpreted by a New Testament author.
8. Discuss the Old Testament background to a specific image that is prominent in the book of Revelation; e.g., The woman clothed in the sun, the four beasts before God's throne, the slain lamb who makes war with the nations, or Jesus coming in the clouds to judge the world, etc.

Note that the paper will consist of three distinct parts. The first section will involve choosing one of the aforementioned topics and compiling a bibliography. The second part will involve formulating a thesis and an

outline for the paper. Then final part will entail the writing of the paper itself, which aligns with the thesis, outline, and bibliography submitted in the previous two phases. *Each section is to be uploaded into Canvas in either Word or PDF format. No other software options will be accepted.* Also, there are form templates available under Course Documents to see how each assignment is to be properly structured and formatted.

1. Phase One (Due by the end of Week 2): 5% of paper grade. After choosing a topic upon which to write, students will be required to submit an initial bibliography. This bibliography (including title page) will consist of a minimum of 10 academic sources that students will use in their paper. No Internet sources may be used other than on-line journals. This does not mean students cannot use the internet to find books, journals, and other materials. The point is that all cited sources must be published academic material. Also, popular level works (e.g., devotionals, study bibles, laity level books etc.) are not permissible. Finally, at least 3 sources must be essays found in theological journals, anthologies, and/or dictionaries. And the bibliography is to increase to at least 20 sources when the final paper is completed. Finally, students can submit this assignment under the link entitled *Phase 1: Written Assignment* that is available under the Week 2 menu.

2. Phase Two (Due by the end of Week 4): 5% of paper grade. In phase 2, students will formulate a thesis for their paper. A thesis is a clearly articulated purpose statement that defines the intention of the paper. Here, students are to state the intended conclusion. So an example of a thesis statement could be— “The following project will provide an exegetical analysis of the parable of the sower.” Likewise, this phase is to include a subsequent outline that describes the major points that the paper will follow to support a student’s argument. Once this assignment is submitted, it will be evaluated and recommendations will be made if it needs editing. Approval must be given before students can begin writing. Finally, students can submit this assignment under the link entitled *Phase 2: Written Assignment* that is available under the Week 4 menu.

3. Phase Three (Due Week 8): 30% of paper grade. The final phase is the completed paper and full bibliography. It will be graded according to several criteria including—

Content: The paper must be clearly defined and cover the material under consideration. It must be written in a logically coherent and readable manner, which includes an introduction, a body of the paper in which the ideas are developed, and then a conclusion.

Research: At least 20 sources must be used (again including the required minimum of 3 articles as described in Phase 1) and proper citation given in the final paper. Likewise, be aware of the rules against plagiarism.

Form and Style: The paper must be written using the correct format as well as proper grammar and spelling. Note that if the paper contains excessive grammatical errors, misspellings, or typos, it will receive a grade of a zero and students will not be able to rewrite the paper to change the grade. Other formatting requirements include the following points:

- * The paper must be typed in New Roman 12-point font, but not in italics, bold, or upper case-lettering. It must also be printed out in black ink.
- * All margins must be one inch.
- * Paper must have an unjustified right margin.
- * Properly formatted footnotes.
- * To see how the paper is to be formatted properly, students can reference templates for the title page, research paper and bibliography under the *Course Documents* link. In addition, all formatting issues are addressed thoroughly in *The Criswell College Manual of Style*. (Note if students have questions not addressed in CCMS, they should then consult the most recent edition of *Turabian’s guide to writing research papers*.) Students can download the CCMS by clicking the link entitled *Course Documents*, which is located in the left column of the Canvas course homepage and then clicking the link that is labeled as *Criswell College Manual of Style, 3rd ed.*

* There is also a *Research Paper Grading Rubric*, which is available under *Course Documents*, that students can consult to see how the paper will be graded.

On Time: Students must turn in a paper to receive a passing grade in the course and the papers are due by Friday of Week 8. To submit a paper, students can upload their papers into Canvas by clicking the linked entitled *Phase 3: Written Assignment* that is available in the Week 8 menu.

4. If students choose to use the resources available in the Wallace Library, then note the means of access:

* Phone: 214.818.1348

* Web: http://www.criswell.edu/current_students/library/

* The Wallace Library manual is available at: <http://www.criswell.edu/images/uploads/wallace-library-handbook-2010-2011.pdf5>.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to participate weekly during the weeks appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. Such participation may include the following: completing quizzes or exams; emailing faculty or class members as part of an assignment; discussion board posting or response; turning in an assignment; or other communication reflecting ongoing learning in the course. When unavoidable situations result in non-participation, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how participation affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether participation affects course grades..

Grading Scale

(Assigning grade definitions [i.e., above average, average, below average] is optional. Please delete the last column below if not assigning definitions. Additionally, delete these instructions when completing syllabus.)

			Grade Definitions (optional)
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An “I” may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their professors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar’s Office. The “I” must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the grade was assigned, or the “I” will become an “F.”

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students’ institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Identity Verification

Students enrolled in Distance Education courses are required to present a photo ID to verify their participation in each course at the beginning of the term. Confirmation will occur through live-streamed meetings, video assignments, scheduled video conference calls, and/or another online video medium the professor assigns.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate

discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the professor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Resources and Support

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students, at deanofstudents@criswell.edu.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, go to the library website, or email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu.

Writing Center: Students are encouraged to consult with writing tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence by practicing techniques of clear and effective writing. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Writing Center located on the first floor near the Computer Lab, or they can schedule an appointment by emailing writingcenter@criswell.edu or calling 214.818.1373.

Distance Education

Students participating in courses through Distance Education, with or without live interaction, must complete the academic requirements for those courses with the integrity and commitment necessary to participate in and benefit from all of the exercises provided by the professor for learning the subject matter of the course. Therefore, credit for Distance Education courses is the same as credit for courses taken on campus.

Distance education students can access information about Criswell College's Wallace Library at http://www.criswell.edu/current_students/library/. The Wallace Library manual is available at http://www.criswell.edu/current_students/library/library_handbook/.

Course Outline/Calendar

WEEK	LECTURE CONTENT	ASSIGNMENTS	READING
Week 1 Dec 13-19	Lecture 1 (L1): Preliminaries L2: History of Interpretation L3: History of the English Bible	* Discussion Board (DB) 1	Plummer: Chps 1-2, 8-11, 38-40 Duvall/Hays: Chps 2-5 Goldsworthy: Chps 1-5
Week 2 Dec 13-19	L4: Textual Criticism L5: Bible Translation Strategies	* Q #1: D/H, Ch 6 & L4 * <i>Phase 1-Research Paper</i>	Plummer: Chps 5, 37 Duvall/Hays: Chps 1, 6-8 Goldsworthy: Chps 6-7
Week 3 Dec 20-26	L6: Philosophy of Hermeneutics L7: Theological Commitments L8: Interpretive Challenges	* Q#2: D/H, Chp 10 & L8 * DB 2	Plummer: Chps 3-4, 14-15 Duvall/Hays: Chps 9-11, Appendix 1 Carson: Preface/ Intro, Chps 1-3 Goldsworthy: Chps 8-17
Week 4 Dec 20-26	L9: The Role of the Holy Spirit L10: Applying the Bible L11: Figures of Speech	* Q#3: D/H, Chp 12 & L11 * <i>Phase 2- Research Paper</i>	Plummer: Chps 16, 21, 26-27 Duvall/Hays: Chps 12-13 Carson: Chps 4-5
Week 5 Dec 27-Jan 2	L12: Role of Literary Genre L13: Biblical Narrative L14: Law Treaties	* Q#4: D/H, Chp 18 & L14 * DB 3	Plummer: Chp 22 Duvall/Hays: Chps 18-19
Week 6 Dec 27-Jan 2	L15: Poetry L16: Proverbs L17: Prophetic Literature	* Q#5: D/H, Chp 20 & L17	Plummer: Chps 23-24, 28-31 Duvall/Hays: Chps 20-22
Week 7 Jan 3-7	L18: Parables L19: Epistolary Literature L20: Apocalyptic Literature	* Q#6: D/H, Chp 14 & L18 * DB 4	Plummer: Chps 25, 32-35 Duvall/Hays: Chps 14-17

Week 8	L21: What is Biblical Theology?	* Textbook & Lecture	Plummer: Chp 13, 17
Jan 3-7	L22: Tools for Bible Study	Reading Reports	Duvall/Hays: Appendix 2-3
		* <i>Phase 3- Research Paper</i>	Goldsworthy: Chps 18-26

Selected Bibliography

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