



On-Campus Course Syllabus
BIB 505 L1
Biblical Hermeneutics
Fall 2023

Class Information

Day and Time: M 7:30–10:00 PM

Room Number: E 205

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Joshua Hebert

Instructor Email: jhebert@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: (214) 293-1612

Instructor Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description and Prerequisites

An advanced study of the transmission and translation of the Scriptures and of the principles and procedures of their interpretation and application.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Discuss the history and philosophy of English Bible translation.
2. Understand the current presuppositions and methodologies of Biblical interpretation.
3. Distinguish between the various genres present in the Bible, categorize texts by genre, and recognize the differences necessary in interpretation between genres.
4. Articulate and advocate for a specific model of Biblical interpretation.
5. Utilize appropriate tools when interpreting Scripture.

Required Textbooks

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible. Fourth Edition.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020. ISBN: 9780310109174. (N.B. the quizzes are based on the *fourth* edition.)

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998. ISBN: 9780310324690.

A pdf from Abernathy, Andrew. *Savoring Scripture: A Six Step Guide to Studying the Bible.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2022.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Reading (15%): Students are expected to complete all assigned reading. There is a heavy reading load for this class (roughly 1,000 pages), so students are encouraged to plan ahead, develop a reading plan, and start early. Students must submit their reading report (a one question “quiz” asking how much of the reading the student completed) on Canvas by 11:00 PM (CST) on **December 11**.
2. Quizzes (20%): Students will take weekly quizzes over the assigned reading in *Grasping God’s Word*. These quizzes will be *open book* and should be taken in conjunction with the assigned reading. All quizzes are available at the start of the semester; each week’s quiz must be *completed* by 7:30 PM (CST) on the day assigned in the schedule below. The lowest two scores will be dropped.
3. Participation (15%): after completing the required readings, students are expected to be able to discuss the topics at hand with an emphasis on critical evaluation. As such, regular and thoughtful participation in class discussion is required of all students.
4. Book Review (20%): Students will prepare a 5–6 page book review over *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* by Vanhoozer. The paper should be organized in this way: three pages should be committed to summary, one to two pages to evaluation, and one page to synthesis. This review is due by 11:00 PM (CST) on **November 6**.
5. Research Paper (30%): Students will compose a 12–15 page research paper that will advocate for a chosen hermeneutical method. This essay should address questions such as who determines meaning, how one accounts for interpretive/theological presuppositions, and how one moves from interpretation to application, among other relevant questions. This paper must be an original product of the student, have a clear thesis statement, and demonstrate appropriate research in the field. A draft outline of the paper must be turned in by **October 9**; this will account for 10% of the paper grade (3% of the total class grade). Students will present a draft version of the paper in class on **December 4** and should expect to answer questions from their colleagues for five to ten minutes. Final submissions are due by 11:00 PM (CST) on **December 11** and should take into account any feedback offered during the in-class presentation.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

All assignments are *DUE BY THE DEADLINES LISTED IN THIS SYLLABUS*. Any late submissions will be docked one letter grade per day.

Students may record class sessions, though these should not be distributed without the professor’s permission.

Computers are allowed to be employed during class. *Please* use them appropriately and for class purposes only. Cell phone use should be avoided.

Fellow students should be treated with respect and dignity. Critical evaluation of our readings, lectures, and discussions will be welcomed, but it should always be carried out in a spirit of generosity toward our dialogue partners.

Arriving to class by more than fifteen (15) minutes late or departing class more than fifteen (15) minutes early will count as an absence unless approved in advance by the instructor. Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences for this course. After this, each unexcused absence will result in a letter-grade deduction in final grade. Thus, six (6) unexcused absences will result in the student failing the course.

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they (1) anticipate being able to attend every on-campus class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, or (2) participating in academically related activities as identified in online-course schedules including synchronous class sessions conducted remotely by video, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any missed information. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades. Professors apprise students of such information in course syllabi.

Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships must meet specified requirements of various departments at the college and should consult relevant sections of the *Academic Catalog*. To ensure such funds will not be forfeited, students are responsible for contacting the proper departments to ascertain any specific course participation requirements and consequences of not meeting such requirements. Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships should consult the Financial Aid office.

While Criswell College is a non-attendance taking institution, it nevertheless must demonstrate that students begin their courses in order to comply with Federal Aid regulations. Accordingly, students must participate in academically related activities during census periods. Failure to meet this requirement will result in students being administratively dropped from courses.

Academically related activity is defined as any course-related activity that may be used as evidence of attendance. Examples include:

- physical presence in a classroom during a class session with the instructor present,
- participation in a synchronous remote video class session with the instructor present,
- submission of an academic assignment, quiz, or exam,
- participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,
- participation in a study group or discussion board that is assigned by the instructor,
- documentation showing that the student and a faculty member corresponded about the academic subject of the course.

NOTE: Logging into a Canvas course alone and logging into a Synchronous Online class session without active participation or with the camera off are not considered attendance.

NOTE: A census period begins on the first day of a semester/term and runs through the end of the last day to drop courses. During the census period, attendance data is collected in order to demonstrate compliance with Federal Aid regulations. There is no census period for winter terms since there is no last day to drop courses.

Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

Grading Scale

Letter	Range	Grade Points
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 instructors 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 close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, 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 Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

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.

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 instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

Resources and Supports

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. The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information is located on the college website at [Criswell College Mental Health Resources](#), and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu. Login credentials are emailed to students near the beginning of the semester.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can schedule an appointment through Calendly (<https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>) or by visiting the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203. For questions, call 214.818.1373 or email at tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Outline/Calendar

Week	Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments (Quiz chapter numbers in bold)
1	August 21	Introduction to course and syllabus; Introduction to Canon and Text; History of English Bible Translation	DH Chapter 1
2	August 28	Principles and Philosophy of Translation; Introduction to Textual Criticism.	DH Chapter 2
3	September 4	Labor Day (No Class)	
4	September 11	Introduction to Hermeneutics; Philosophy of Hermeneutics	DH Chapter 10 and Chapter 11
5	September 18	Philosophy of Hermeneutics II; History of Interpretation	DH Chapter 12
6	September 25	The Reader's Context; Historical Context	DH Chapter 6 and Chapter 7
7	October 2	Historical Context; Literary and Canonical Context	DH Chapter 8
8	October 9	Bridging the Ancient and Modern Contexts; Interpretive Method	Draft Research Paper Outline Due! DH Chapter 3 and Chapter 4
9	October 16	STUDENT DEVELOPMENT WEEK — NO CLASS!	
10	October 23	Interpretive Method II, Interpretive Errors (Exegetical Fallacies)	DH Chapter 5 and Chapter 9
11	October 30	Intro to Interpretive Tools; Genre	DH Chapter 14 , Chapter 15, and Chapter 16
12	November 6	Genre II	DH Chapter 17 , Chapter 18, and Chapter 19 Book Review Due!
13	November 13	Genre III	DH Chapter 20, Chapter 21 , and Chapter 22
14	November 20	FALL BREAK — NO CLASS!	
15	November 27	From Interpretation to Application	DH Chapter 13 , PDF from Abernathy
16	December 4	Student Presentations	
17	December 11–15	FINALS WEEK — NO CLASS!	Research paper due (Dec 11)! Reading report due (Dec 11)!