

# HERMENEUTICS

## European Nazarene College

**Semester:** Summer, 2009  
**Dates:** May 14–June 24  
**Class Sessions:** May 14-16  
**Location:** Vlaardingen, Netherlands  
**Course Number:** BIB1305  
**ECTS:** 5

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### **1. Course Description**

An introduction to the principles and practice of biblical interpretation. This class is designed for developing skills in communicating the Word of God. It will focus on: learning the appropriate tools and process of interpreting and applying Scripture; understanding the principles of interpretation that are specific to the various types of literature in the Bible; and engaging in various issues and hermeneutical problems that affect how Scripture is interpreted in the church.

### **2. Place of the Course in the Curriculum**

This is a first year course that is required for all programs. It provides a foundation for all exegetical classes. Introduction to Old and New Testaments are prerequisites for this course.

### **3. Intended Educational Outcomes**

40% Content	Knowledge of principles and issues of biblical interpretation  CN1: Bible. The students will know the content and theology of the Old and New Testaments, its historical backgrounds and the various kinds of literature, as well as key issues of hermeneutics.
40% Competency	Ability to interpret Scripture  CP1: Interpretation. Students will be able to interpret Scripture in exegetically and theologically sound ways and be able to apply it.
10% Character	Developing a love for Scripture with the goal of embodying its message in the students' life  CH1: Integration. The students will be able to apply the knowledge they have received to their personal lives.  CH2: Transformation. The students will have grown in their pursuit of living a holy life in all its various dimensions of daily life and personhood.
10% Context	Ability to apply sound hermeneutical principles to key issues in the contemporary context.  CT1 : Relevance. The students will be able to communicate the Gospel in relevant ways to the people in a certain context, using sound hermeneutical principles.  CT4: Integration. The students will be equipped to relate the Christian faith to all areas of life from the Wesleyan theological perspective.

#### **4. Course Objectives**

In order to reach the above stated intended educational outcomes, by the end of the course the students will be able to...

1. Discuss the need for and importance of biblical interpretation. (Supports CN1, CP1, CH1, CT1)
2. Identify some significant approaches to Scripture interpretation in the history of the Church, as well as various contemporary methodologies for doing biblical interpretation. (Supports CN1)
3. Identify and discuss some of the key issues related to interpreting the Bible and discovering the meaning of the text. (Supports CN1, CH1)
4. Identify and apply appropriate hermeneutical principles to the various types of literature in the Bible. (Supports CN1, CP1)
5. Apply sound hermeneutics to a difficult and controversial issue facing the church today in order to discover appropriate and Scriptural responses. (Supports CN1, CP1, CT1, CT4)
7. Read and understand Scripture as a lover of the Word with a goal of embodying its message within his or her own life. (Supports CN1, CP1, CH1 CH2)

#### **5. Course Requirements**

1. **ATTEND CLASS FAITHFULLY AND PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS and ONLINE POSTING.** Faithful class attendance and participation in online discussions is expected and essential to benefit from this course. Much of your learning will depend on your participation in class assignments, activities and discussions. Students are expected to come to class on time and prepared. See the Absence policy below regarding the missing of classes and irregularity of posting during the online component. *Please bring your Bible to each class.* (Needed to reach outcomes CN1, CP1, CH2)
2. **READ THE TEXTBOOKS** as assigned in the course calendar. In addition, scriptural passages and other shorter readings may be assigned to be read in connection with class discussions. Assigned reading should be done on time assigned by the instructor. Students may be asked to report on daily reading assignments at any time. (Needed to reach outcomes CN1, CP1, CH1)
3. **TAKE A QUIZZ ON FEE's book.** You will have one hour for this quiz. **Quiz on Fee and Stuart June 6.** (Needed to reach outcomes CN1, CP1, CH1)
4. **WRITE A BOOK REPORT on Virkler's book.** This report is to be a 1000-1500 words in length and must reflect your thinking in relation to the textbooks: what most important things you learned from the author, what questions were raised or answered by the reading, what criticisms arose etc. Do not just summarize the book (no more than 30% of the report should be summary information), reflect on the reading, share what important things you have learned from or what criticisms you might have of it. Book report will be **due on May 30** (by midnight). (Needed to reach an outcome CN1, CH1)
5. **COMPLETE A SERIES OF EXEGETICAL WORK SHEETS.** In order to gain practice in Bible study and interpretation you will complete a series of worksheet assignments that deal with different aspects of hermeneutical method. These assignments will allow you to work with a wide spectrum of biblical literature, different genres and books, and apply different types of analysis to the assigned texts. These work sheets will be provided separately at class sessions and will follow and be related to topics discussed in class. Work sheet will have to be turned at the following day morning class session if not stated otherwise by the teacher. The teacher reserves the right to give the worksheets in the way that will fit better

with the progress of the class and the intention of reaching our educational outcomes. **For due dates, see the class schedule** (Necessary to reach the outcomes CP1, CT1, CH2)

6. **COMMON ASSIGNMENT: WRITE A CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION PAPER.** This paper (1500-2000 words) will consist of two parts.

First, you will find and list two current examples of inadequate hermeneutics. Examples could be found in sermons, TV programs, Internet sites, magazine articles, etc. They may come from Christian or secular sources. They must, however, involve inadequate interpretation of the Bible. Then write a brief paragraph on each of the 2 examples, explaining why you feel this is *not* an example of good hermeneutics. (CN1, CP1, CH1, CT1)

The second part of the paper will consist of your demonstrating how sound hermeneutics can apply to a controversial issue in the church. Choose one issue on which Christians are divided or that is a problem for the church in your setting (e.g., women in ministry, speaking in tongues, the second coming of Christ, homosexuality, worship styles, Christians' role in politics, conflict with demons, etc.). Briefly state what the controversy is over and at least two major positions. Then state the specific hermeneutical perspectives and principles that you feel would help to shed light on this issue and lead Christians to a better understanding of it. In other words, apply what you have learned about hermeneutics to this issue. I'm not as interested in a "solution" as in seeing the hermeneutical approach you would take to the controversial issue and the questions that would need to be asked. You will probably want to consult other resources. Be sure to cite quotations or important ideas you gained from another source, and include a bibliography of sources consulted at the end of the paper. (Necessary to reach outcomes CN1, CH2, CT1, CT4)

The Common Assignment is **due on June 24** at midnight.

7. **TAKE A FINAL EXAM.** On **June 20** there will be a comprehensive final exam, based on class lectures, discussions and activities, and required readings. Exam will contain mostly objective questions and short answer questions. Students will receive a study guide in preparation for the exam. (CN1, CH2)

**6. Grade Distribution and Study Hours**

Assignment	Percentage of final grade	Study Hours
1. Class Hours and online reading and posting	10%	35
2. Reading & Quiz (on Fee)	18%	30
3. Reading & Report (on Virkler)	12%	26
4. Exam	20%	16
5. Exegetical Work Sheets and exercises	25%	15
6. Application Paper	15%	13
	100%	135 hours of study

**7. Textbooks:**

1. *The Bible*. A modern translation.
2. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
3. H. A. Virkler. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes in Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
4. Selected pages from Walter C. Kaiser Jr. and Moises Silva. *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

## 8. Course Calendar

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SESSION</b>	<b>READING/ASSIGNMENTS</b>
May 14 Session 1	Introduction to the Course	
May 14 Session 2	Introduction: Defining Hermeneutics, need for Hermeneutics	
May 14 Session 3	Interpreter's Role, meaning of the text, challenges of the interpreter	
May 15 Session 1	The Historical Background of Biblical Hermeneutics	Sample worksheets on the OT use in the NT
May 15 Session 2	The Historical Background of Biblical Hermeneutics	
May 15 Session 3	The Historical Background of Biblical Hermeneutics	Sample worksheets in class
May 16 Session 1	Canon and the translator	
May 16 Session 2	Continuing with the Canon; The Interpreter: qualifications and preunderstandings of	
May 16 Session 3	The goal of interpretation: levels of meaning, textual meaning, reader-oriented interpretation	
May 16 Session 4	Continuing with The goal of interpretation: The question of historicity, determining accuracy in interpretation	Sample worksheet on context
May 16 Session 5	Formational reading	Sample worksheet in class
May 18 (Monday)	Review "Historical Background on interpretation"	Worksheets or exercises
May 19 (Tuesday)	Read chapter "The meaning of meaning" from Kaiser and Silva	Post your response
May 20 (Wednesday)	Read "Why get Entangled with historical Interpretation? The role of history" from Kaiser and Silva	Worksheets or exercises on historical analysis
May 21 (Thursday)	Review "Context"	Worksheets or exercises on contextual analysis
May 22 (Friday)	Review "Formational reading"	Worksheets or exercises on formational reading
<b>May 23 (Saturday)</b>		<b>All the work from May 18-22 is due at midnight</b>
May 25-30	Read Virkler and work on report	
<b>May 30 (Saturday)</b>		<b>Report on Virkler is due</b>
June 1-6	Read Fee and prepare for Quiz	
<b>June 6</b>		<b>Quiz on Fee and Stuart</b>
June 8 (Monday)	General rules of interpretation: Interpreting prose	<i>Read instructor's notes</i>
June 9 (Tuesday)	General rules of interpretation: Interpreting prose	Worksheets or exercises on genre analysis of prose
June 10 (Wednesday)	Continuing with General rules of interpretation: Interpreting poetry	<i>Read instructor's notes</i>
June 11 (Thursday)	Continuing with General rules of interpretation: Interpreting poetry	Worksheets or exercises on genre analysis of poetry
June 12 (Friday)	Types of Literature in the Old Testament	<i>Read instructor's notes</i>
<b>June 13 (Saturday)</b>	Continuing with Types of literature in the Old Testament	Worksheets or exercises on OT literature <b>All work from June 8-13 is due at midnight</b>
June 15	Types of Literature in the New	<i>Read instructor's notes</i>

(Monday)	Testament	
June 16 (Tuesday)	Continuing with Types of Literature in the New Testament	Worksheets or exercises on NT literature
June 17 (Wednesday)	Theological analysis (read assigned reading)	Worksheets or exercises on Theological Analysis
June 18 (Thursday)	Applying Scripture; Using the Bible today	Read instructor's notes and do worksheets or exercises on Application
<b>June 19 (Friday)</b>	Review the material	Preparation for final exam <b>All work from June 15-18 is due at midnight</b>
<b>June 20 (Saturday)</b>		<b>Final exam</b>
<b>June 24 (Wednesday)</b>		<b>Final paper due</b>

NOTE : *The lecturer reserves the right to make changes in the course calendar and due dates, if necessary.*

### **9. Various Policies related to this Course:**

#### **Absence Policy**

Absence of more than 4 class sessions (of one hour) will normally mean a reduction of your grade (exceptions will only be considered in extreme circumstances, e.g., serious, extended illness, hospitalization), at the discretion of the lecturer. Absence of more than 25% of class sessions will normally mean failure of the class. A pattern of tardiness may also result in a deduction from your final grade.

#### **Late Policy**

People in ministry are continually face with deadlines. Consequently, reading reports or papers that are not turned in at the time will receive a reduced grade. Penalty for late work is: 5% reduction for each day beyond the due date, with a maximum reduction of 20% of the grade.

**Papers and reports are due at the time of the morning session on the date listed in the course calendar (unless specified otherwise by the instructor).**

#### **Academic Honesty**

At a Christian college we expect the highest standards of academic integrity. Any instance of cheating on an exam or clear plagiarism (using someone else's words, as your own without giving credit to the original source), fabrication, or other forms of academic dishonesty (such as working in groups when individual work is required) will normally result in a minimum penalty of a failing grade on that assignment. Any repetition of academic dishonesty may result in a failure of the course. *Any quotations must be properly documented* with quotation marks, source and page number. For example: (Murphy 1988, 423). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask the instructor and/or consult the EuNC style manual. We operate on the honor system that all work turned in is your own and all reading assignments are completed as reported. You are responsible for honesty in your behavior.

#### **Statement on English**

English comprises 10% of the grade for every written assignment. Students who have passed their TOEFL are expected to turn in assignments with very little to no grammar/spelling/format errors. Students who are still actively taking English classes are graded according to their level of English as follows: Of the 10% given to all papers, English I students are given 3% grace, English II students are given 2% grace, and English III students are given 1% grace.

## Additional Information

**Grading:** Grades will be computed as follows:

A	= 93-100%	Exceptional Quality Work
A-	= 90-92	
B+	= 87-89	
B	= 83-86	Good Quality Work
B-	= 80-82	
C+	= 77-79	
C	= 73-76	Meets Basic Requirements
C-	= 70-72	
D+	= 67-69	
D	= 63-66	Passable, but serious deficiencies in key areas
D-	= 60-62	
F	= below 60	Failing; unsatisfactory work

**NOTE:** *If you have questions or need help with anything related to the class, I want to be available to you. Please feel free to talk with me outside of class or to come to my office.*

**10. Common Assignment:** See the assignment number 6 under Course Assignments  
**Grading Rubric:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Exceeds standard</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>	<b>Points earned</b>
<i>Awareness of Contextual Issues</i>	Excellent awareness of contextual issues	Average awareness of contextual issues	Inadequate awareness of contextual issues	
Total points	18-20	12-17	6-11	
<b>Critical Analysis</b>	Excellent analysis and evaluation of the issues	Average analysis and evaluation of the issues	Reflects little analysis or evaluation of the issues	
Total points	18-20	12-17	6-11	
<i>Ability to apply hermeneutical principles to contemporary issues</i>	Shows excellent ability to apply hermeneutical principles	Shows average ability to apply hermeneutical principles	Shows little ability to apply hermeneutical principles	
Total points	27-30	20-26	10-19	
<b>Research</b>	Shows excellent research and use of sources	Shows average research and use of sources	Shows inadequate research and use of sources	
Total points	9-10	6-8	3-5	
<b>Style</b>	Shows essentially correct format and good organization	Shows mostly correct format and adequate organization	Shows incorrect format and a lack of organization	
Total points	9-10	6-8	3-5	
<b>Grammar</b>	Paper has few grammar mistakes	Paper has more than a few grammar mistakes	Paper has numerous grammar mistakes	
Total points	5	3-4	1-2	
<b>Spelling</b>	Very few spelling errors	More than a few spelling errors	Numerous spelling errors	
Total points	5	3-4	1-2	
Late deduction	-5 per day up to 20%			
<b>Cumulative Total Points</b>	100 points possible			