

Course Syllabus

I. Course description

This course introduces the student to proper Bible study methods and tools for sound and accurate biblical interpretation. It surveys the major interpretive approaches to the Bible, both historical and contemporary, by examining parables, types, prophecies, poetry, and a great variety of figurative biblical literature. This course also emphasizes the principles of literal, normal, cultural, and historical interpretation.

II. Course objectives

This course is designed to help each student:

- A. Learn the principles and methods of sound biblical hermeneutics
- B. Grow in the ability to exegete a text of Scripture by applying sound biblical hermeneutics
- C. Receive friendly, direct, correction and exhortation related to his hermeneutical application
- D. Move closer to, and grow more richly in, his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ

III. Course materials

- A. Professor's notes and handouts
- B. *Basic Bible Interpretation* by Roy B. Zuck
- C. *The Interpretation of Prophecy* by Paul Lee Tan (available at CBD)

IV. Course requirements

- A. Attendance of and participation in all classes
- B. Book reviews

1. Read each of the two assigned textbooks and critique them chapter-by-chapter, evaluating the author's inclusion of his material into his argument for the book.
2. Write approximately 3 pages per review (certificate and bachelor students will read and review Zuck only).

C. Papers

1. Construct a rough and final outline of Genesis (instructions will be given under the "Macro exegesis" portion of the course – do not consult any material but a non-outlined Bible)
2. Construct final outline of Revelation
3. Choose 3 topics from the following list and write 6-8 page exegetical defense papers (bachelor students will outline Genesis and choose two exegetical papers, certificate students will outline Genesis and choose one exegetical paper).

- a. Isaiah 7:10-17 – Identify the virgin and her son in Isaiah’s prophecy
- b. Isaiah 53:6 – Are the sheep in this passage humanity in general or someone or some group more specific? In this context, what does it mean for the sheep to have gone astray?
- c. Ezekiel 37:1-14 – Determine whether this is a spiritual or literal resurrection
- d. Joel 2:1-11, 25 – Identify the nature of this army (literal or figurative)
- e. Acts 1:10-11 – From the context of Acts 1 are these verses referring to the rapture or Second Coming of Christ?
- f. Acts 2:14-21 – Is this event a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy?
- g. Galatians 4:21-31 – Identify why Paul used allegory and determine whether it is or is not a legitimate use of our interpretation of the Old Testament today
- h. Revelation 11:3-14 – Identify the two witnesses
- i. Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21– Is Babylon historic Old Testament Babylon or is it representative of another city?
- j. John 15:1-8 – Considering the context, who is Jesus referring to in these verses when He mentions the branches “in Me” who do not bear fruit and are taken away (2), and who do not abide in Him and who are cast out and burned (6)?
- k. Malachi 4:5-6 – From New Testament passages such as Matthew 11:12-15; 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:17; and John 1:21, determine if John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy.
- l. Matthew 9:35-38 – What does Jesus mean that the people “were weary and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd”?
- m. Luke 21: 1-4 – Why does Luke insert this passage at this point?
- n. John 1:29; John 3:16 – Specifically, what does “world” refer to in these verses? How does John use the word “world” generally in his Gospel?
- o. John 12:32 – Who does “all” refer to in this verse?
- p. Ezekiel 3:16-21 – Can the watchman be more broadly applied to anyone else besides Ezekiel? If so, who?
- q. I Corinthians 2:6-16 – Identify the “we,” “us,” the “natural man,” and “he who is spiritual” in this passage.
- r. I Corinthians 3:10-17 – Identify the “anyone” and “each one” in verses 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 in this passage.

Note: Papers shall be 1” margins, double-spaced New Times Roman 14 font (or equivalent), each with a cover page. General guidelines for papers will be discussed in class.

Only hard copies of book reviews or papers will be accepted. No email copies.

V. Course grading

Thirty-five percent of the grade will be based on class attendance and participation, 25 % on reading and book reviews, and 40 % percent on outlines and exegetical papers.

All late book reviews and papers will be reduced 1 ½ letter grades for not being turned in on time with an additional 1 ½ letter grade reduction for late reviews each week after that.

Each absence will be counted as a one letter grade reduction on the final grade.

VI. Course schedule

1	April 1		Orientation, hermeneutics and exegesis resource books, discussion of required papers, knowledge quiz
2	April 8	Lesson 1: Lesson 2:	Definition of hermeneutics and other related disciplines Need for hermeneutics Papers selection due
3	April 15	Lesson 3:	Qualifications and presuppositions for hermeneutics First outline of Genesis due
4	April 22	Lesson 4:	Bibliographical resources Zuck reading and review due
5	April 29	Lesson 5:	Hermeneutical systems: Chronological, eschatological, and theological First exegetical paper due for masters
6	May 6	Lesson 6:	General hermeneutics: Approaches General hermeneutics: Macro exegesis – identifying structural markers
7	May 13	Lesson 7:	General hermeneutics: Macro exegesis – identifying authorial purpose and theme General hermeneutics: Macro exegesis – charting
8	May 20	Lesson 8:	General hermeneutics: Micro exegesis Final outline of Genesis due
9	May 27	Lesson 8:	General hermeneutics: Micro exegesis (continued) Second exegetical paper due, first for bachelors
10	June 3	Lesson 9: Lesson 10:	Special hermeneutics: Definition and genre Special hermeneutics: Figures of speech, symbols, prophecy, types
11	June 10	Lesson 11:	Special hermeneutics: Figures of thought – parables Tan reading and review due, final outline of Revelation due Third exegetical paper due for masters, second for bachelors, first for certificate

Selected Bibliography

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- Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutic: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*: Baker, 1981.
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- Zuck, Roy B. *Basic Bible Interpretation*: Victor, 1991.