



Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
(205) 776-5650

BT1205 – Hermeneutics Syllabus

Semester: Fall 2025

Day & Time: Thurs. 5:30-7:20PM CST

Professor: Rev. Thad James, Jr. PhD

Email: thad@bts.education

Course: BT1205 - Hermeneutics

Room: A202/VC

Credits: 2

Phone: 205-746-7356

Course Note: All work must be submitted on the prescribed due dates. Moreover, it is important that all reading assignments be completed on time so that all students will be able to effectively participate in class discussions. Carefully **proofread** your work before submitting written assignments, no errors.

Submit a **400-word essay** describing your personal expected learning outcomes for this course. Begin with identifying and explaining your current understanding of Bible Interpretation/Hermeneutics. This is due the second week of class **9/11**.

Course Study Guide is in conjunction with the *McQuilken* and *Duvall/Hays* books and is **designed to assist you in your pre-class reading and study preparation**. In your pre-class readings **fill in the workbook prior to the corresponding course lecture**, this will enable you to be prepared to participate in class discussions and have a better understanding of the lectures. The lectures are intended to fill in misunderstandings and bring clarity to your readings and studies.

Course assignments and/or self-studies at the end of each chapter in the course study guide are designed to **strengthen** your understanding of the material. **Read the syllabus carefully each week for assignments**. Be prepared to discuss the assignment questions in the syllabus each week.

All workbook assignments are due by 11:59 PM CST on the due date, these are graded pass/pass-/fail. Late assignments will not be accepted. This is a component of the class participation grade. Please attach as a word document-Turabian compliant.

There will be one exam, a mid-term from your readings and lectures. **Your workbook is the study guide for your mid-term.** **Need a proctor – send contact information via email**

Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the theory and practice of Bible Interpretation or Hermeneutics. To assist students in gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to determine the meaning of any passage of Scripture and to apply it authentically to the contemporary context.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze diverse biblical texts, identifying underlying cultural, historical, supposed contradictions, and linguistic influences that shape the interpretation of Scripture.
2. Evaluate the validity and reliability of different hermeneutical approaches, considering their theological implications, and impact on biblical interpretation.
3. Through critical thinking, students will synthesize information from various biblical commentaries, scholarly articles, and historical sources to construct well-reasoned and nuanced interpretations of selected passages.
4. Apply hermeneutical principles learned in class to contemporary issues, demonstrating an ability to relate biblical texts to current cultural, social, Worldview, and ethical challenges.
5. Critically evaluate interpretations presented by their peers, identifying logical fallacies, cultural biases, traditions, or theological presuppositions, and providing constructive feedback for improvement.
6. Synthesize various exegetical methods to develop a comprehensive understanding of a biblical theology.
7. Create Hypotheses: building on their understanding of literary and historical contexts, students will develop and defend hypotheses regarding the authorial intent behind specific biblical passages.
8. Assess methods of studying God's Word for preaching, teaching, and personal improvement.

Required Texts:

- There are about 800 pages within the two assigned texts and the book critique.
- Robertson, McQuilken. *Understanding and Applying the Bible: Revised and Expanded*
- ISBN-13:978-0802490926
- J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays *Journey Into God's Word: Second Edition: Your Guide to Understanding and Applying the Bible* ISBN-13:978-0310108962
- Logos Remote Research Library
- ***Books for Book Critique (Choose one)**
- Louis Berkhof *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* ISBN 10- 0801064775
- Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth 4th Ed.* ISBN-13:978-0310517825
- Justin Holcomb *Know The Heretics* ISBN: 978-0-310-51507-4

Collateral or Recommended Texts:

- Kate L. Turabian *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations Ninth Edition* ISBN-13:978-0226430577
- Mortimer J Adler, and Charles Van Doren *How to Read A Book: A Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading* ISBN-13:978-0671212094
- Third Millennium He Gave Us Scriptures
<https://thirdmill.org/seminary/course.asp/vs/HGB>

Course Requirements and Assessments:

***Book Critique:** Each student is to write a **two-three-page (2-3)** book critique. Choose one of the designated books. Follow the steps below to evaluate the book's strengths and weaknesses, this is not a book report.

- Begin your critique with the bibliographic information (Title, author, publisher, place, and date of publication) of the book.
- Write a summary of the main theme and any major secondary themes of the author. Provide enough detail to show that you have read and digested the material.
- Include your analysis of the arguments the authors set forth. Your analysis should be focused upon how faithfully the authors have interpreted and applied the Scripture.
- Evaluate how the authors either succeeded or failed in considering all of Scripture (in other words, is it a systematic argument or simply a use of some isolated proof texts?) citing instances from the book to support your evaluation.
- Explain why you agree or disagree with their conclusion(s), using the Scriptures to substantiate your views.
- Conclude with a paragraph that states what you have gained personally and professionally from reading this book.

1. **Exegetical Paper** – interpret (exegete) the passage using the techniques and principles learned from the course. This paper will be **10-12 pages** not including the cover page, table of contents and bibliography. You should have a minimum of seven (7) **scholarly** references **other than your required texts**, along with proper citations of footnotes and bibliography. One (1) of the references must come from a **scholarly** journal; one (1) reference may come from a commentary; three (3) **references must come from Logos Bible Software**, no Study Bibles.
2. See **T.H.E. R.O.A.D.** and **Guidelines for Exegetical Paper** in your Course Study Guide for formatting and instructions pgs. 5-7, follow the **format 100%**. Choose one of the passages from the following:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| A. John 15:5-7 | C. Hebrews 12:1-3 | E. Ephesians 1:3-6 | G. Philippians 4:8-9 |
| B. 1 John 1:1-4 | D. 1 Peter 2:9-10 | F. Romans 5:7-9 | H. 2 Timothy 4:3-5 |

GRADING WEIGHT & COMMENTS

COURSE REQUIREMENT	GRADE WEIGHT	COMMENTS
Weekly readings, assignments, and class participation	20%	An assessment of learning objectives
Book Critiques	20%	Identifying authorial intent
Midterm	25%	Understanding the lectures/readings
Exegetical/Theological Research Paper	35%	Comprehension and Application of Learning Objectives
Total	100%	

BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

Course Schedule:

Thurs. 9/4 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- Student and course Introductions.
- Review Syllabus and Workbook (Study Guide).
- PowerPoint Introduction.

Assignments

- ***Read the syllabus prior to class.***
- Be prepared with questions concerning class content & requirements

Thurs. 9/11 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- Worldview PowerPoint
- *Journey* chapters 2 & 4

Assignments

- **400-word** personal learning objectives due
- Describe and articulate the basic principles and prerequisites of Bible Interpretation.
- Assess methods of studying God's Word for preaching, teaching, and personal improvement.

Thurs. 9/18 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- **Part I: Presuppositions and Principles**
- PowerPoint
- Read *McQuilken* chapters 1-3

Assignments

- Have you previously given thought to your Worldview or presuppositions?
- What are the results of these faulty interpretations personally and corporately?
- Why is the Bible Trustworthy?
- Critique Interpretations: Students will critically evaluate interpretations presented by their peers, identifying logical fallacies, cultural biases, traditions, or theological presuppositions, and providing constructive feedback for improvement.

Thurs. 9/25 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- **Part I: Presuppositions and Principles**
- PowerPoint cont'd
- Read *McQuilken* chapters 4-6

Assignments

- What is the effect of Postmodernism, Millennialism, Gen X, and Gen Z upon today's culture?
- How did Existentialism lead to Postmodernism?
- What are the positives and negatives of Dogmatism?
- What are the presuppositions at work in the interpreter to impede the development of a Biblical Worldview?
- Critique Interpretations: Students will critically evaluate interpretations presented by their peers, identifying logical fallacies, cultural biases, traditions, or theological presuppositions, and providing constructive feedback for improvement.

Thurs. 10/2 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- **Part II: Guidelines and Skills – Human Authorship: Application**
- PowerPoint cont'd
- Read *McQuilken* chapters 7-8
- *Journey* chapters 5-6

Assignments

- **Faulty Approaches Assignment (WB 17- 18)**
- What is the importance of proper exegesis and rightly dividing Scripture in its original historical and cultural context?
- What is the importance of communication and understanding?
- Evaluate: Students will evaluate the validity and reliability of different hermeneutical approaches, considering their theological implications and impact on biblical interpretation.

Thurs. 10/9 Reading/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- **Part II: Guidelines and Skills – Human Authorship: Application**
- PowerPoint cont'd

- Read *McQuilken* chapters 9-10
- Read *Journey* chapters 1 & 10

Assignments

- **Revelation and John 4 Assignment (WB22)**
- Why are words troublesome, why do word studies?
- What do you do when you do not understand the thought structure?
- Analyze: Students will be able to analyze diverse biblical texts, identifying underlying cultural, historical, supposed contradictions, and linguistic influences that shape the interpretation of Scripture.

Thurs. 10/16 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- **Part II: Guidelines and Skills – Human Authorship: Application**
- PowerPoint cont'd
- Read *McQuilken* chapters 11-12
- Read *Journey* chapters 3 & 8

Assignments

- **Word Study – Perfect (WB24)**
- Why did the Apostle John use “Word” instead of “Jesus” in John 1?
- What is the importance of context? Why is context King?
- Why figurative language? What is the struggle in interpretation?
- Who controls the meaning?
- Apply Principles: Students will apply hermeneutical principles learned in class to contemporary issues, demonstrating an ability to relate biblical texts to current cultural, social, Worldview, and ethical challenges.

Thurs. 10/23 Fall Break

Thurs. 10/30 Mid-Term

Thurs. 11/6 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- PowerPoint cont'd
- Read *McQuilken* chapters 13-14
- Read *Journey* chapter 14-15

Assignments

- Why parables? What is the struggle in interpretation?
- What must we understand about Hebrew poetry for meaning?
- Why must we understand the emotions and circumstances of the author?
- Create Hypotheses: building on their understanding of literary and historical contexts, students will develop and defend hypotheses regarding the authorial intent behind specific biblical passages.

Thurs. 11/13 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- **Divine Authorship: Interpretation**
- PowerPoint cont'd
- Read *McQuilken* chapters 15-16
- Read *Journey* chapters 9 & 11

Assignments

- **Things of God Assignment (WB 30)**
- What is the importance of discovering the unity of Scripture?
- What is the difference between a theological principle and a practical application?
- How should you read the Book of Acts?
- What is the battle with truth & application to contemporary contexts?
- Synthesize various exegetical methods to develop a comprehensive understanding of a biblical theology.

Thurs. 11/20 Readings/Assignments

Readings and Materials

- **Divine Authorship: Interpretation**
- PowerPoint cont'd
- Read *McQuilken* chapters 17-20
- Read *Journey* chapters 12-13

Assignments

- How should the Book of Revelation be read?
- How do you grasp the Old Testament journey?
- Scripture and Science – are there discrepancies?
- Why must there be humility in reading prophecy?
- Synthesize: Through critical thinking, students will synthesize information from various biblical commentaries, scholarly articles, and historical sources to construct well-reasoned and nuanced interpretations of selected passages.

Thurs. 11/27 Thanksgiving

Thurs. 12/4

Readings and Materials

Journey chapter 7

- **Divine Authorship: Application**

Assignments

- What is the importance of knowing the recipients/audience?
- God desires faith and obedience – what does this mean and require?
- Synthesize various exegetical methods to develop a comprehensive understanding of a biblical theology.

Thursday 12/11 No class Briarwood Walk-Through Nativity

- Work on book critique and exegetical paper
- **All papers due 12/18**

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

[NOTE: Standard BTS Attendance Policy is that students may not miss any more than three classes without a course penalty. Given the reality of distance-based students and video conference options, if students clearly identify at the beginning of the semester that they will primarily be asynchronous students (depending on the digital recording of class because of a conflict with their schedule), then the student may attend without incurring a penalty for their “absences,” providing they are turning in all their work on time. Please see the BTS Faculty Handbook for more information on synchronous and asynchronous video conference students and policies and the commitments a faculty member agrees to when they teach a video conference or a live hybrid class]

Class Policies and Procedures:

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3-point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

Video Conference Policies and Procedures:

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.

- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

Course Bibliography

Arthur, Kay and David Arthur and Pete DeLacy *The New How to Study Your Bible* Harvest House Publishers ISBN 0736926829

Berkhof, Louis *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950.

Bray, Gerald *Biblical Interpretation Past and Present*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Bullinger, Ethelbert William. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. London; New York: Eyre & Spottiswoode; E. & J. B. Young & Co., 1898.

Carson, Donald A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.

Dockery, David S. Kenneth A. Mathews, and Robert B. Sloan, eds. *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994.

Dyck, Elmer (editor), *The Act of Bible Reading: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996. Contributions by Gordon D. Fee, Craig M. Gay, James Houston, and J. I. Packer.

Easton, M.G. *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, c1897.

Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Geisler, Norman L. *Explaining Hermeneutics: A Commentary on the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics*. Oakland, California: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, 1983.

Hayes, John H. and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: a Beginner's Handbook*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987.

Kaiser, Walter C. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.

Kaiser, Walter C. and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

- Kaiser, Walter C. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985.
- Klein, William W. Dr. Craig L. Blomberg and Dr. Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. W Publishing Group: Nashville 1993
- MacArthur, John, Jr. *How to Study the Bible. John MacArthur's Bible Studies*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1996,
- Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- Packer, James I. "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. by D.A. Carson and J.D. Woodbridge. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.
- Ryken, Leland *How to Read the Bible as Literature* Grand Rapids Zondervan
- Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order*. electronic ed. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996.
- Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
- Zuck, Roy B. *Basic Bible Interpretation*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991.
- Zuck, Roy B. *Rightly Divided: Readings in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids Kregel Publications 1996
- Thomas, Robert L. *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981.

GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A to A-	B to B-	C to C-	D to D-
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, overused, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>

BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

1: this outcome is not covered in this class

2: this outcome is only touched on in this class

3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material

4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)

5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)

1. **Scripture**: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
2. **Reformed Theology**: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. **Local Church**: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. **Wisdom**: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. **Discipleship**: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. **Communication**: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. **Worldview**: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. **Leadership**: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rational (one sentence)
Scripture	5	Foundational every class
Reformed Theology	5	Foundational every class
Local Church	4	Foundational every class
Wisdom	5	Foundational every class
Discipleship	3	Integral to class
Communication	5	Foundational every class
Worldview	5	Foundational every class
Leadership	4	Integral to class