Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction to Interpreting the Bible

Fall 2015 Syllabus

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The Plowman’s Institute Mission Statement
The Plowman’s Institute seeks to serve Raiford Road Church, Baker County, and the world by equipping people for worship and disciple making through biblical and theological education.

Core Competencies
To fulfill the mission of The Plowman’s Institute we seek to develop the following competencies in students who participate in this program:

I. Spiritual Formation: Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue personal spiritual growth and service in the local church.

II. Biblical Exposition: Demonstrate the ability to properly and effectively interpret, apply, and communicate the Scriptures.

III. Theological Integration: Demonstrate an ability to apply the doctrines of Christianity to all areas of life and ministry.

We strive to do all of this while cultivating in students a delight in God, His Word, and His Church.

Course Description:
An introduction to the basic principles of biblical interpretation and hermeneutical procedures

Course Overview
This course will loosely follow the structure of the primary textbook, 40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible. The course will consist of three major sections. The first will focus on the nature of the Bible, with an aim to understand how issues such as inspiration, authority, and transmission and translation impact the task of interpretation. The second section of this class will cover broad interpretive issues including the goal of interpretation and major interpretative frameworks. The third section will focus on the application of hermeneutical principles to specific genres and specific texts.
**Course Objectives**
Those who complete this course should:

1. Develop a conceptual framework and vocabulary that explains the role of the author, text, and reader in the act of interpretation.
2. Learn the basic principles of inductive Bible study.
3. Be able to identify central historical, literary, and theological contextual issues impacting the interpretation of a biblical passage.
4. Become proficient at identifying the structure and “seams” of a text.
5. Become proficient at identifying the main idea of the text.

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Bibliography**

**Biblical Theology (The Story of the Bible)**


**Interpretive Methods**


**Philosophical Hermeneutics**


**History of Hermeneutics**


Course Requirements

1. Students are expected to complete all required reading according to the provided reading schedule and complete reading quizzes. There will be 10 quizzes, and the lowest two will be dropped.

2. Students are expected to prepare 4 interpretive outline assignments from the following texts. The objective of this assignment is to help you identify the meaning of the text and then move from interpretation to application. These papers must be completed before class according to the assignment schedule below.

   a. Genesis 22:1–19
   b. Psalm 51
   d. Romans 5:12–21

In this assignment you will provide the following (all assignments must be typewritten):

   a. MIT Outline: This outline should include a provisional title, a Main Idea of the Text (MIT), and main points that reflect the theological “theme” of the text. Remember, the MIT reflects the “heart of the text” and seeks to capture the central thrust of the passage in its original context.

   b. MIM Outline: This outline should include a message title, a Main Idea of the Message (MIM), and main points that reflect the theological “theme” of the message. Remember, the MIM reflects the “heart of the message” and should be theological or application-oriented with a contemporary audience in mind.

   c. In both outlines you need to structure the text, dividing the passage into its main divisions (the divisions in your MIT should match the divisions in your MIM). The MIT main points will be more descriptive of the biblical author’s theological intent, while the MIM main points should be stated in complete, present tense sentences. Note: the MIM outline could be more theological in nature (e.g. Ruth example) or application-oriented (e.g. 2 Timothy example).  

   d. Provide a title for each outline that captures accurately and creatively both the Main Idea of the Text (MIT) and the Main Idea of the Message (MIM).

   e. Give at least as many application points as there are main points. State the application points in present tense imperative sentences.
3. Sermon Review — D.A. Carson (Good Samaritan)
   An audio recording a sermon will be provided. Students are required to provide a 1–2 page review of this sermon. Approximately 50% of the review should be a summary of the structure and main idea of the message. The rest of the paper should be evaluative.

4. Jonah Paper
   The student should provide a two-page survey of the major introductory issues concerning the book of Jonah, including date, authorship, genre, major themes, and main idea. Additionally, each paper should consist of a single page MIT and MIM outline for each chapter of Jonah.

5. Final Exam
   A final exam will consist of material covered in the reading and class lectures.

**Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Scale (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>90–100 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpretive Outlines</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80–89 = B</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Sermon Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>70–79 = C</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Jonah Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>60–69 = D</td>
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<td>5. Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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# Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>Course Overview, What is the Bible</td>
<td>Plummer 1–2, Hendricks Preface–4</td>
<td>First Day of Class</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>A Trustworthy Bible</td>
<td>Plummer 3–7, Hendricks 5–7</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>The Nature of Interpretation (Why do we need to interpret the Bible?)</td>
<td>Plummer 8–9, Hendricks 8–17</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Principles of Interpretation (How do we interpret the Bible?)</td>
<td>Plummer 10–13, Hendricks 18–26</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>The Goal of Interpretation (What meaning is and how to know if you have found it)</td>
<td>Plummer 14–20, Hendricks 27–29</td>
<td>Genesis 22</td>
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<td>Oct 19</td>
<td>No Classes – Revival with Kenny Marr</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Outlining a Text</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>Working with actual texts (Interpreting narrative passages)</td>
<td>Plummer 21–25, Hendricks 30–34</td>
<td>Psalm 51</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>Working with Actual Texts</td>
<td>Plummer 26–27, Hendricks 35–38</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov 23</td>
<td>Working with actual texts</td>
<td>Plummer 32–35, Hendricks 42–45</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 30</td>
<td>Additional Areas of Study</td>
<td>Plummer 36–40</td>
<td>Romans 5</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Interpretation and Bible Teaching</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Sermon Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dec 21</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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Example MIT Outline

**Provisional Title:** Ruth, Boaz, and the Kinsman Redeemer

RUTH 2:1-23

**MIT:** The encounter between Ruth and Boaz was providential, resulting in protection, provision, and celebration.

I. Ruth, by divine guidance, “discovers” the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi. 2:1-3

II. Ruth finds favor in the eyes of Boaz, who responds with gracious protection. 2:4-13

III. Boaz responds to Ruth’s faithfulness with hospitality and provision 2:14-17

IV. Naomi and Ruth celebrate the providential relationship with Boaz, their kinsman. 2:18-23
Example MIM Outline

**TITLE:** THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS WITH GOD

RUTH 2:1-23

**MIM:** God works providentially through the ordinary events of life.

**IN GOD’S PROVIDENCE:**

I. Apparent Accidents Are The Occasion Of Divine Direction. 2:1-3

II. Apparent Accidents Are The Outworking Of Divine Protection. 2:4-13

III. Apparent Accidents Are The Opening For Divine Provisions. 2:14-17

IV. Apparent Accidents Are The Opportunity For Divine Celebration. 2:18-23

**Practical Applications:**

1. You can trust God to work in the lives of His faithful people.

2. You can trust God to work in the normal events of life.

3. You can trust God to meet your needs.

4. You can trust God and rejoice in His goodness.
MIT Outline

Provisional Title: Sincere Faith and the Work of the Ministry
(2 Timothy 2:1-7)

MIT:  Paul, the mentor, describes to Timothy, his apprentice, the characteristics of sincere faith (1:5) in the context of ministry

I. Sincere faith is passed on through the teaching legacy of faithful leaders 2:1-2

II. Sincere faith is demonstrated by the believer who, like the soldier, remains focused despite inevitable suffering 2:3-4

III. Sincere faith is demonstrated by the believer who, like the athlete, endeavors to win yet competes with integrity 2:5

IV. Sincere faith is demonstrated by the believer who, like the farmer, celebrates the harvest as the fruit of his hard work. 2:6-7
Example MIM Outline

“A PORTRAIT OF THE MINISTER OF GOD”
(2 Timothy 2:1-7)

MIM: The work of ministry is multifaceted and requires a multifaceted perspective for the minister.

I. Be a Teacher 2:1-2
1. Know where to stand. 2:1
2. Know what to share. 2:2
3. Know who to send. 2:2

II. Be a Soldier 2:3-4
1. Participate in conflict. 2:3
2. Please Christ. 2:4

III. Be a Competitor 2:5
1. Get into the contest.
2. Go for the crown.
3. Engage with care.

IV. Be a Farmer 2:6-7
1. Accept the requirement of hard work. 2:6
2. Anticipate the reward of heavenly wisdom. 2:7

Practical Application:
1. Find teachable disciples and focus on them.
2. Remember who you should please in ministry.
3. Serve Christ wisely and avoid pitfalls in ministry.
4. Be patient and trust God to bring fruit from your ministry.