

**North Portland Bible College
Portland, Oregon**

**BF101 Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics
Fall 2016
(3 credits)**

Instructor: Christopher R. Smith
Phone: (202)780-6483

E-Mail: christophers@npbc.education

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tuesday Evenings 6:30-9:30 (Sept. 27 to Dec. 9)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce the hermeneutical process, highlighting context and observation of the text. The student will be shown each step of the hermeneutical process that is covered, and then will practice that step on their own.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Better understand the need for careful study of the biblical text.
2. Understand and explain the importance of genre in the study of the biblical text.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in making observations and asking good questions of the biblical text.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Sailhamer, John. *How We Got the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1998. **978-0310203919**
2. Stein, Robert H. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing By the Rules*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011. **978-0801033735**

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The following resources are not required for the course, but can be helpful for further study. We will discuss each in class. If you plan on buying any of these, it is recommended that you wait until after they have been discussed, so you are able to see if they will be a wise investment.

1. Carson, D. A., and Douglas J. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005. **978-0310238591**
2. Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. **978-0310246046**
3. Garland, David E. *NIV Application Commentary: Colossians and Philemon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1998. **978-0310484806**

4. Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Leicester: IVP Academic, 1993. **978-0830817788**
5. *Zondervan NASB Exhaustive Concordance*. Grand Rapids, MI: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 2000. **978-0310236252**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading: All assigned reading should be completed prior to the beginning of the corresponding class. This includes reading from the required text, as well as assigned supplementary articles.

Assignments:

Reading: All reading is due by the beginning of class on the day it is listed. At the end of the semester, the student will turn in a reading log with an honest statement about what reading was completed on time.

Hermeneutical Projects (8): Each student will select a passage from the book of Colossians, with the approval of the instructor. For each hermeneutical step discussed in class, the student will complete a project based on the chosen passage to practice that step.

1. **Historical Background Study:** The student will complete a Historical Background Study of the book of Colossians using the following method, **Due: Oct. 11th:**
 - A. The purpose of this study is to examine the historical background of the book. Your paper should answer the following questions:
 1. Who wrote the book?
 2. Who was the book written to?
 3. Why was the book written? (Was there a specific historical circumstance that led to the book's writing?)
 4. Is there anything significant about the people the book was written to that may impact how the book is understood?
 5. Any other pertinent information?
 - B. Read the book of Colossians two times (in two different translations)
 - C. Read the section on Colossians in *An Introduction to the New Testament* by Carson and Moo.
 - D. The paper should be 2-3 pages in length (Double Spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font). The paper should be based on two readings of the book of Colossians and the reading from Carson and Moo.
 - E. Use parenthetical notes to document any information you cite from a source. (*Last Name, Page Number*)
2. **Synthetic Outline:** The Student will complete a synthetic outline of the book of Colossians using the following method, **Due: Oct. 18th:**
 - A. Read the book through several times
 - B. Note the basic subject matter of the book
 - C. Identify the paragraph breaks
 - D. Give a title to each paragraph (short, descriptive, unique)
 - E. Determine the major divisions and subdivisions within the book
 - F. Create a synthetic outline that incorporates the major divisions, subdivisions, and paragraph breakdown that you've discovered.

- 3. Observations/Interpretive Questions:** The student will make observations on the text they have selected from the book of Colossians, and write interpretive questions based on those observations, using the following method, **Due: Oct. 25th:**

Observations

- A. Make 20 observations
- B. Write your observations in the following format
 - i. Make them complete sentences
 - ii. Enumerate each observation
 - iii. Include verse numbers relevant to each observation

Interpretive Questions

- A. Use your observations as the basis for your interpretive questions. (Since the observations were focused primarily on terms and structures, the interpretive questions will also be, for the most part. However, you may feel free to develop questions that probe literary and atmospheric issues, too.)
 - B. Spend two hours writing interpretive questions. In two hours you might expect to find at least 15-20 interpretive questions.
 - C. Write your questions according to the following guidelines:
 - i. Write them in complete question form.
 - ii. Enumerate each question.
 - iii. Include the verse number(s) relevant to each question.
 - iv. Identify each question with the observation upon which it is based (e.g., O.1, O.22, O.26, etc.)
- 4. Word Study:** The student will do a word study on a term from the passage selected (and approved by the instructor) from Colossians, using the following method, **Due: Nov. 1st:**
- A. Identify the Greek term using the Bible App website. (<http://www.biblewebapp.com/study>).
 - B. Find all occurrences of the Greek term. If there are more than 30 occurrences, discuss ways to limit the search with the instructor.
 - C. Copy each verse where the term occurs into a word document, replacing the word with “-----“.
 - D. Make observations on uses of the word based on the individual context of each passage.
 - E. Write a paragraph summarizing the usage of the word based on your findings.
 - F. Write a paragraph applying your findings to the passage you have chosen from Colossians.

- 5. Mechanical Layout:** The student will complete a Mechanical Layout of their text from the book of Colossians using the following method, **Due: Nov. 8th:**

- A. Use an unruled sheet of paper, turned so that the long edge is horizontal. This gives more room for lateral recording. (This can be done in a word processing program as well).
- B. Work from left to right and top to bottom.
 - i. Main ideas begin at the left margin.
 - ii. Subordinate ideas are placed under those terms they modify. This creates a "stair-step" effect toward the lower and right sections of the layout.

- iii. The initial idea is placed at the top, with the following ideas moving toward the bottom of the layout.
 - iv. Coordinate ideas or clauses should begin in the same vertical column under and parallel to the previous phrases they co-ordinate.
- C. "Correct" form allows some flexibility in the manner in which thoughts are divided, but any particular horizontal line of the diagram should not include too many words or ideas.
- D. Lists should be placed in vertical columns with modifiers placed so that the list format is not destroyed.
- 6. Historical/Cultural Analysis:** A part of the historic problem addressed in Colossians was a probable mix of Judaistic belief with an incipient Gnosticism. (This is not a universally-accepted claim. For purposes of this assignment, however, you are asked to accept it as a given.) Colossians 2:8-10 seem to hint at underlying Gnostic ideas. To get at this interpretive issue and to more thoroughly understand the particulars of the beliefs Paul was addressing, the student will complete a historical/cultural analysis of "Gnosticism" using the following method, **Due: Nov. 15th**:
- A. Read background material on Gnosticism from at least three sources. Be careful not to read back later Gnostic beliefs (i.e. second century). Rather, focus on what appears to be the state of the belief system in Paul's day. Suggested resources from which to choose include *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, *ISBE*, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* edited by Walter Elwell, books on New Testament introduction, and introductory articles in critical commentaries on Colossians. Note that some of these works were suggested when you did your historical background study.
 - B. Write a summary of your findings, in 2-3 pages, double-spaced. Be sure to credit your sources with reference notes. These may be footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical notes. Also, please include a bibliography of works you used.
 - C. Relate your findings to the substance of Colossians 2:8-10. In other words, explain the allusions made in view of a more complete understanding of Gnostic ideas. Demonstrate how your understanding of incipient Gnosticism helps you understand Paul's meaning in these verses.
- 7. Application Assignment:** The student will identify one principle from their passage in the book of Colossians and apply that principle to their own life and experience, using the following method, **Due: Nov. 22nd**:
- A. Identify one principle from Colossians 2:6-15.
 - i. State it in a complete, declarative sentence, worded in a timeless way.
 - ii. Identify which truth/principle type it is (i.e., command, axiom, promise, example, or affirmation about God)
 - B. In a paragraph or so, explain how you derived it. Was it a timeless statement to begin with, confirmed in the analogy of faith? Did you have to search the context for clues, and if so, which clues were significant? Did you abstract a historical or cultural specific to a generalized statement, and if so, what was the lineage of your thought? These paragraphs may reflect further interpretive work that you find necessary if the principle requires answers to interpretive questions you haven't yet addressed.

- C. Make a personal application to your own life. Be sure to incorporate the following guidelines:
 - i. Apply in a selective manner.
 - ii. Make the application specific.
 - iii. Make the application personal.
 - iv. Write it out.
 - v. Establish time frames.
 - vi. Establish a plan for accountability
- 8. Teaching/Preaching Outline:** The student will develop a teaching or preaching outline from their passage in the book of Colossians, using the following method, **Due: Dec. 6th:**
- A. Provide your mechanical outline of the passage you selected.
 - B. Identify the structure of the passage.
 - C. Identify your main points.
 - D. Give your message/lesson a title.

Scripture Memorization: At the beginning of each class, the student will reproduce from memory the passage chosen for their hermeneutical projects. When the passage is chosen, the student will need to identify which translation they will be memorizing, and they will be graded against this translation throughout the semester.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Students are required to attend and participate in classroom activities. Students are expected to attend at least nine of the eleven scheduled classes for completion of a course of study. It is the student’s responsibility to make arrangements with instructors for completing class work and meeting attendance requirements.

Evaluation and Grading Policy

Letter Grades will follow the standards given on page 14 of the current catalog.

A	90-100	Excellent	4
B	80-89	Good	3
C	70-79	Average	2
D	60-69	Poor	1
F	0-59	Failure	0
W	-	Withdraw	0
Inc.	-	Temporary Extension	

Grades will be based on the following:

1. Attendance and participation 15%
2. Reading 15%
3. Hermeneutical Projects 50%
4. Scripture Memorization 20%

Late assignment policy

Assignments are due on the date specified, although situations may arise requiring an extension. It is the student's responsibility to request an extension from the instructor when necessary. Any assignment turned in later than 11:59 pm on the date due will incur a 5% grade reduction per day. Please let me know if you are having trouble and need additional help or an extension.

Guidelines for submitting written work

All papers should be typed double space in 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins on all sides, and should have a cover page and bibliography. Papers should be in MLA format, with all sources cited in parenthetical notes, with the reference listed in the Bibliography. Papers should reflect research and thought on their topic, include proper source citation, and be written with proper English grammar.

NPBC Writing Standards

All written material submitted must be the original work of the student. Plagiarism is a violation of academic integrity and constitutes a serious breach of scholarship standards at North Portland Bible College. When quoting the work of an author or an author's ideas are used in your paper, document, document, and document.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Course Topic	Preparation for Class	Assignments Due
Sept. 27	Syllabus/Intro Historical-Grammatical Interpretation		
Oct. 4	Development of the Canon History of the English Bible Choosing a Translation	Read Stein: Introduction pp. 11-60 Read Sailhamer pp. 9-28, 33-34, 36-42, 51-88	
Oct. 11	Implications of Genre	Read Stein Ch. 4 p. 73-79	Historical Background Study
Oct. 18	Genre: Epistles	Read Stein Ch. 12 pp. 169-186	Scripture Memorization #1
		Read Fee & Stuart: "The Epistles: The Hermeneutical Questions"	Synthetic Outline
Oct. 25	Genre: Biblical Narrative	Read Stein Ch. 11 pp. 151-167	Scripture Memorization #2 Observations/

			Interpretive Questions
Nov. 1	Genre: Parables	Read Stein Ch. 10 pp. 137-150 Read “Parable” in DOBI	Scripture Memorization #3 Word Study
Nov. 8	Genre: Prophecy and Typology	Read Stein Ch. 6 pp. 89-99 Read McQuilkin: “Biblical Prophecy”	Scripture Memorization #4 Mechanical Layout
Nov. 15	Genre: Poetry Figures of Speech	Read Stein Chs. 7-9 pp. 101-135 Read “Defining Terms: Image, Symbol, Metaphor, Simile” in DOBI	Scripture Memorization #5 Historical/ Cultural Analysis
Nov. 22	Genre: Proverbs/Wisdom Literature	Read Stein Ch. 5 pp. 83-87, 187-202	Scripture Memorization #6 Application Project
Nov. 29	Genre: Law	Read Stein Ch. 13 pp. 187-202 Read: Verbruggen: Of Muzzles and Oxen	Scripture Memorization #7
Dec. 6	Genre: Apocalyptic	Read: “Apocalypse: Genre Of” and “Apocalyptic Visions of the Future” in DOBI	Scripture Memorization #8 Teaching/Preaching Outline

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Corley, Bruce, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy. *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction To Interpreting Scripture*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996.

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006.

Klein, William W., Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 2004.

Lubeck, Ray. *Read the Bible For a Change: Understanding and Responding to God's Word*. Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005.

McQuilkin, Robertson. *Understanding and Applying the Bible*. Chicago, IL.: Moody, 1992.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991.

Porter, Stanley E., and Beth M. Stovell, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.

Sailhamer, John. *How We Got the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1998

Stein, Robert H. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing By the Rules*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey From Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999.