

BIBL 290 • INTERPRETING THE BIBLE
SPRING 2012 • M/W/F 9:40–10:30am • Hoover 207
Prof. Timotheos Tsohantaris PhD

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is part of the Biblical Studies curriculum and is planned to help the student understand and apply sound principles of Biblical interpretation. We will study the history of interpretation, general hermeneutical principles, specific hermeneutical lenses, and apply them to the different kinds of Biblical literature.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Every reader of the Bible has a set of personal interpretive presuppositions. We will attempt to become aware of them and critically examine them. These presuppositions may include issues of inspiration and the authority of Scripture, as well as a variety of methods of Biblical interpretation (some more objective and others more subjective). Another concern to be addressed is the preoccupation with issues of historicity and the many attempts of connecting the “then” to “now.” In other words, what do the Biblical stories mean for us in the present? We will also examine our personal theology and how it is impacted by tradition, Scripture, experience, intellectual reason, and other factors.

REQUIRED READINGS

Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Zondervan, 2003. (ISBN 0310246040)
Kaiser, Walter C., and Silva Moises, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Zondervan, 1994. (ISBN 0310530903)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Read all required assignments from the texts
- 2 Come to class, listen, ask questions, and contribute to class discussions
- 3 Practice the principle learned in the course to selected Biblical passages
- 4 Apply sound hermeneutical principles to complex ethical issues.

COURSE EVALUATION

- 1 Class participation and attendance (100 points)
- 2 There will be three exams (100 points each) on the readings, class lectures, and group presentations, which will include an application of the principles learned.
- 3 Group class presentations. (100 points), details will be given in class.
- 4 Position paper. In a 5 to 7 page paper, describe your view of the Bible. Specifically, address the weight of authority that you give Scripture, and how it informs your view of truth. Also, describe the hermeneutical lens through which you interpret Scripture. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your lens and how do you deal with difficult passages?

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The **Academic Resource Center (ARC)** on the Newberg campus provides all students with free writing consultation, academic coaching, and learning strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note taking, study, time management). The ARC housed on the second floor of Murdock Learning Resource Center (library), is open hours from 1:00 – 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Call 503-554-2327 or email the [the arc@georgefox.edu](mailto:arc@georgefox.edu) to schedule an appointment. Visit arc.georgefox.edu for information about ARC Consultants' areas of study, instructions for scheduling an appointment, and helpful learning tools.

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Office as early as possible so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to Disability Services. For more information, go to ds.georgefox.edu or contact Rick Multhiah, Dean of Learning Support Services (503-554- 2314 or rmulthiah@georgefox.edu).

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week One: January 9th Silva 1, Fee/Stuart 1.

Week Two: January 16th Silva 2, Fee/Stuart 2.

Week Three: January 23th Silva 3, Fee/Stuart 3.

Week Four: January 30th Silva 4, Fee/Stuart 4.

Week Five: February 6th Silva 5, Fee/Stuart 5.

FIRST EXAM, will be on Friday February 10th.

Week Six: February 13th Silva 6, Fee/Stuart 6.

Week Seven February 20th Silva 7, Fee/Stuart 7.

Week Eight February 27th Silva 8, Fee/Stuart 8.

Week Nine March 5th Silva 9, Fee/Stuart 9.

Week Ten March 12th Silva 10, Fee/Stuart 10.

SECOND EXAM will be on Friday March 16th.

Week Eleven March 19th Silva 11, Fee/Stuart 11.

Week Twelve April 2nd Silva 12, Fee/Stuart 12.

Week Thirteen April 9th Silva 13, Fee/Stuart 13.

Week Fourteen April 20th Silva 14.

FINAL EXAM will be on final exam week.