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BIBL 503: BIBLICAL EXEGESIS AND INTERPRETATION

Matthew Lynch

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Winter 2022

Class Times: Wed, 3:00-6:00pm

Tutorials (2:30-3:30pm): Jan 31, Feb 7, Feb 11, Mar 7, Mar 28, Apr 4
(3:00-4:00pm): Feb 4, Feb 18, Mar 4, 25, Apr 1

3 graduate credit hours

It is recommended to have already taken: BIBL 501, BIBL 502, and LANG 500, 510 or 550
TA's:

Vivian Lee (vlee@regent-college.edu)

Lucas Franco (lfranco@regent-college.edu)

Conor Wilkerson (cwilkerson@regent-college.edu)

Davinson Bohorquez (dbohorquez@regent-college.edu)

Course offered on campus; apply for online access when registering for course

Special Notes

On Campus and Online: This course is being offered on campus and online in Winter 2022. Students may apply to take this course online when registering for the course through REGIS. In order to support students who are unable to attend the regular online class sessions, recordings will be made available on the course Moodle page for 48 hours following each class. In some cases, attendance at other sessions may be required.

Tutors will be available at set times each week to assist students in gaining facility with the techniques and tools of biblical exegesis. Students are encouraged, but not required, to avail themselves of this help in grasping the material and in fulfilling the short assignments. The scheduled times of tutor-availability will be announced near the start of the term.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the art of biblical exegesis and interpretation. It is designed to help students gain confidence in text analysis, become self-critically aware of the challenges and opportunities of reading the Bible in modern contexts, and consider the ongoing relevance of Scripture for the Christian life while remaining open to the work of the Spirit. As an introductory course, it seeks to acquaint students with the basic *hermeneutical issues* involved in interpreting the Bible and to introduce the *basic approaches to doing biblical exegesis*. Students are encouraged to hone the skills developed in this course by taking Advanced Exegesis course in OT and NT. As a graduate-level course, it is appropriately challenging, combining theory and practice. Interpreting the Bible requires both the rigor of the scientist and the imagination of the artist. Understanding comes through both the application of principles and the sympathetic engagement with the biblical text. The course is

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designed for students at varying levels of training, and assignments will be set for those with English only and those with some training in Hebrew and/or in Greek. All students will need to become familiar at least with the Hebrew and Greek alphabets.

Learning Objectives

At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. articulate a deeper awareness of the pre-understandings that they bring to the act of biblical interpretation;
2. demonstrate greater confidence in their ability to exegete and interpret the biblical text;
3. understand and thoughtfully use the various tools, technical commentaries, and journal literature;
4. produce a well-written and informed exegesis paper on an assigned text.

Estimated Time Investment

Lectures/Class Time	36 hrs
Required Reading (440 pages)	30 hrs
Tutorials and Short Assignments	48 hrs
Final Exegesis Paper (2,500 words)	21 hrs
TOTAL	135 hrs

Please note: The amount of time taken by students will vary. This information is intended to be used as an approximation for planning purposes.

Assignments

1. Weekly Readings

Students are required to complete weekly readings **by the beginning of each class**, and to keep a reading log, with (a) one paragraph summaries of each reading and (b) the date on which they were completed, submitted on the last day of class.

Due on April 20, by 11:55pm, on Moodle.

2. Critical Self-Reflection

In a short paper (700 to 1000 words; no research required for this one), reflect on what experiences—cultural, familial, ecclesial, educational, personal, spiritual, etc.—have influenced your attitude towards and engagement with the Bible. How would you describe your relationship with Scripture? In a final sentence or two, state what you most hope to gain from BIBL503—apart from three credits.

Due in class, Jan 26, on Moodle

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3. Exegesis Journal

For six weeks, students will submit an exegesis journal (EJ) that follows an “Exegesis Journal Template” (on Moodle) and *one* of the EJ texts indicated on the course outline below for relevant weeks.

Due by each class, as per course outline, on Moodle.

4. Final Exegesis Paper

Students will complete one major exegesis paper on a passage from the texts selected for your exegesis journal. The paper should be 2500 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography. See further details in the “Guidelines” below.

Due on April 27, by 11:55pm, on Moodle.

Evaluation

Weekly Reading Summaries	15%
In-Class Participation	10%
Critical Self Reflection Paper	5%
Six Exegesis Journal Assignments	30%
Final Exegesis Paper	40%

Important Policies

Note that while every effort is made to ensure that assignments do not go missing, students are strongly advised to keep a copy of all course work in the event that resubmission is required.

Course Evaluations are an essential way for the College to measure and improve the effectiveness of its courses. Submitting a course evaluation is considered a requirement of this course. Near the last class session you will receive an e-mail notice with a link to an online course evaluation. Once you have submitted your evaluation you may then view your course grade online.

Extensions for course work are granted only in cases of a demonstrated unforeseeable and unavoidable emergency. See the Extension Policy for details (<http://www.regent-college.edu/current-students/academic-catalogue/course-policies>). The deadline for applying for an extension is the due date of the assignment(s). For Fall and Winter end-of-term assignments, you must first ask your instructor for an extension before applying through the Student Services Office.

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Attendance is expected at all classes. If you must miss a class, for whatever reason, you are encouraged to contact your instructor prior to the class. Instructors are at liberty to assign grade penalties for unexcused absences.

Academic Honour is upheld by Regent College, as the highest standards of academic responsibility are part of our commitment to Christ in all of life. Students are required to familiarize themselves especially with the discussion of “Academic Integrity” in the College Catalogue.

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment/Readings DUE (in class):
Week 1	Jan 19	Orienting Ourselves Curiosity and Wonder	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 1-26
Week 2	Jan 26	Knowing your Bibles Literary Context and Structure	Keener, <i>Context</i> , 3-17, 35-37. Gorman, <i>Elements</i> 37-50 (skim 50-64), 88-108. (=50pp.) Short Assignment Due: Critical Self- Reflection
Week 3	Feb 2	Text Criticism	Anderson and Widder, ch.2 (=ca. 15 pp.) Metzger, <i>Textual Commentary</i> , 1-16 (=16pp.) EJ #1 Due: Gen 9:1-7 / Heb 1:1-4 Deeper Dive: Literary Structure
Week 4	Feb 9	Word Studies	Walton, “Principles for Productive Word Study,” 161-71 (=11pp.) Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 108-137 (=29pp.) EJ #2 Due: 1 Sam 10:17-27 / Eph 1:1- 14 Deeper Dive: Text Criticism
	Feb 16	READING WEEK - NO CLASS	
Week 5	Feb 23	Genre (OT)	Keener, <i>Context</i> , 53-73. (=20pp.) EJ #3 Due: Ruth 3:6-18 / 2 Cor 5:11- 21 Deeper Dive: Word Study

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Week 6	Mar 2	Genre (NT)	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 137-151. (=14pp.)
Week 7	Mar 9	Historical Analysis (OT)	Karen Wenell, "The Setting" in <i>Scripture and Its Interpretation</i> 23-44 (=21pp.) EJ #4 Due: Prov 26:4-5 / Matt 11:7-19 Deeper Dive: Genre
Week 8	Mar 16	Historical Analysis (NT)	Keener, <i>Context</i> , 37-53. Guest Lecturer – Dr. Jonathan Greer – "The Science and Art of Archaeology: A Case Study from Tel Dan"
	Mar 23	READING WEEK - NO CLASS	
Week 9	Mar 30	Inner-Biblical Connections (Listening for Echoes)	Jeannine Brown, <i>Scripture as Communication</i> , pp. 212-232 (=20pp.) EJ #5 Due: Gen 11:1-9/ John 19:38-42 Deeper Dive: Historical Context
Week 10	Apr 6	Biblical-Theological Analysis	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 151-187 (=26pp.) EJ #6 Due: Acts 2:17-21 / Luke 3:21-22 Deeper Dive: Intertextual analysis
Week 11	Apr 13	Reading with Different Lenses	McCaulley, <i>Reading While Black</i> , 25-46. Echevarria, "Middleton and Wright," 47-62 (=36pp.)
Week 12	Apr 20	Reading the Bible for Today	Reading log due by 11:55pm
	Apr 27		Final paper due by 11:55pm

Bibliography

Required Books

Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020.

Keener, Craig. *The Bible in its Context*. Unpublished. PDF Provided on Moodle.

Required Articles or Book Chapters (on Moodle)

Anderson, Amy and Wendy Widder. *Textual Criticism of the Bible*. Rev. ed. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018, ch. 2.

Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007, pp. 212-232.

Echevarria, Miguel G. Jr. "Middleton and Wright Have We Loved, but Padilla and Escobar? North American Eschatologies and Neglected Latino Voices." *Southeastern Theological Review* 11 (2020): 47-62.

McCaulley, Esau. *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020, 25-46.

Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. London/New York: United Bible Societies, 1994, pp. 1-16.

Sandy, D. Brent, and Ronald L. Giese, Jr., eds. *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995, pp. 1-27.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. "Introduction: What Is Theological Interpretation of the Bible?" Pages 19-25 in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005

Walton, John. "Principles for Productive Word Study." Pages 161-171 in *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by W. VanGemeren, Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997

Wenell, Karen J. "The Setting: Biblical Geography, History and Archaeology." Pages 23-44 in M. J. Gorman (ed.) *Scripture and Its Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

Recommended Texts/Resources

Anderson, Amy and Wendy Widder. *Textual Criticism of the Bible*. Rev. ed. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018.

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- Bauer, David R. and Robert A. Traina. *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- De La Torre, Miguel A. *Reading the Bible from the Margins*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002.
- Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 3rd ed. Louisville: WJK, 2002.
- Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Fuhr, Richard Alan Jr., and Andreas J. Köstenberger. *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016.
- Gorman, Michael J., ed. *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*. Baker Academic, 2017.
- Hoffman, Mark Vitalis and Robert A. Mullins. *Atlas of the Biblical World*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.
- Long, V. Philips. *The Art of Biblical History. Edited by Moisés Silva. Vol. 5. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. London/New York: United Bible Societies, 1994.
- Sandy, D. Brent, and Ronald L. Giese, Jr., eds. *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995.
- Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Würthwein, Ernst. *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to Biblica Hebraica*. Translated by Erroll F. Rhodes. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, pp. 113-120.

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Written Assignments

Exegesis Journal Assignments (30%). Specific guidance for each assignment will be provided on Moodle.

- a) **Research:** You should aim to spend about 6 hours on each assignment. In addition to the scheduled Tutor hours, you may find it very helpful to find others with whom you can work in an informal study group. Please note, however, that each individual must submit her or his own work. No group submissions are permitted.
- b) **Format:** The 6 exegesis journal assignments (no more than 700–1000 words each) may be completed in several different ways. Your key aim should be to capture in some fashion (outline, bullet-point, brief sentence(s) or paragraph(s)) the process and results of your research in the assigned areas. This flexible system is intended to lessen students' anxiety over the short assignments and thereby facilitate their actual engagement with the research methods and materials. Your research will help give you practice in the skills needed for your final research paper, so it is important to work consistently throughout the semester.
- c) **Focus:** Since it is important that you learn to be biblical (not just OT or NT) exegetes, you should give some attention to both testaments (where appropriate) in your short assignments when appropriate. However, students with prior training in Hebrew or Greek will be required to declare it, and to do the appropriate assignments.
- d) **Grading:** Each exegesis journal assignment is worth 5%.

Final Exegesis Paper (40%)

- a) **Format:** Your term/exegesis paper must be typewritten, with adequate margins, and 11 or 12 pt. font.
- b) **Style:** Write in grammatically complete sentences. Be sure to proofread your exegesis paper. Follow an appropriate style consistently. When in doubt, consult a manual of style, ideally the *SBL Handbook of Style*,¹ or Chicago/Turabian.² Good style, like good grammar, lends credibility to your paper. In accordance with these style guides, students should seek to employ inclusive language when referring to human beings.
- c) **Citations:** All verbatim quotations must be acknowledged in footnotes, according to the appropriate style manual, except for biblical citations, for which in-text citations are used, e.g., “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1). It is not necessary to reproduce the entire biblical text upon which you are commenting. Cite only phrases or words when they are important; otherwise, use chapter and verse references. Ideas from other resources need to be properly referenced in footnotes.
- d) **Focus:** You should give some attention in this paper to both OT and NT, although you will likely focus more on one or the other. The virtues of a good paper are (a) succinct and accurate description of the text or problem in question; (b) clear isolation and careful analysis of the issues; (c) good use of argument and evidence; and (d) creative insight.

¹ *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2d ed. (Atlanta: SBL, 2014). Available for purchase online at <https://www.sbl-site.org/publications/sblhandbookofstyle.aspx> Note also the “Student Supplement for *The SBL Handbook of Style*,” published online at <https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/SBLHSupp2015-02.pdf>

² Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013)

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Appendix 2: Useful Electronic Resources

Internet resources should always be appraised and used judiciously. These are some of the more helpful sites and resources.

Bible Software

Accordance Bible Software (www.accordancebible.com): for Mac (OS 7.0+, OS X), or PC using Mac emulation software (available free from Accordance).

Logos (www.logos.com): for PC or Mac

Bible/Language Sites

biblehub.com/interlinear/: Greek and Hebrew Interlinear

biblewebapp.com/reader/: Greek and Hebrew Reader's Bible.

blueletterbible.org: A free website with some useful features for biblical studies.

biblos.com: A useful constellation of tools in a user-friendly website.

Biblical Studies

<http://net.bible.org/bible.php>: The NET Bible. This is a very useful site. Explore and you'll find some great free information.

www.ntgateway.com: The premier Internet gateway to all things New Testament. The site is maintained by Dr. Mark Goodacre, Associate Professor of New Testament at Duke University.

www.biblicalstudies.org.uk: Rob Bradshaw has amassed a great database of open source articles and books in biblical studies. A great resource for research.

www.biblical-studies.ca: A helpful internet resource for Hebrew exegesis, maintained by Prof. Tyler Williams of The King's University College (Edmonton); he is a Regent College graduate.

<https://african.theologyworldwide.com/> - A freely accessible online platform for African Christian Theology that includes substantial resources on biblical interpretation.