DM 9911: Formational Hermeneutics
Ashland Theological Seminary
October 5-8, 2015
Ashland Center
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I. Course Description
This course explores the interpretation of Scripture for the purpose of personal and ministry formation. Students will be challenged to develop a self-aware, consistent hermeneutic that integrates responsible interpretation with personal transformation. They will apply this hermeneutic to their own ministry contexts to enrich their use of Scripture in preaching, teaching, and spiritual formation.

II. Course Objectives and Outcomes
Course readings and class time will be directed toward enabling students to construct a hermeneutical paradigm that is both faithful to the biblical and Christian witness and flexible enough to adapt to changing ministry contexts and challenges. This course will teach students to:

1a. Construct a hermeneutical paradigm that is faithful to the Bible and fitting for one’s ministry location
1b. Develop strategies for extending the biblical vision into the lives and witness of Christians and Christian communities
1c. Interact critically with material relevant to the nature, authority, and interpretation of Scripture

III. Course Requirements
Textbooks
Required


Optional
Written work and class discussions will assume that the student has a grasp of the basic operations of critically-oriented biblical exegesis. The following texts are recommended for those looking for a refresher.


**B. Attendance**

Since the class sessions will depend heavily on the discussion of course texts and new material, your attendance at every session is required. Absence necessitated by an emergency (which does not include regular church or professional responsibilities) will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**C. Course Assignments**

*Reading Reports*

Preparation for our week together requires thoughtful interaction with each text assigned prior to the beginning of class. **Toward that end, you will submit a reading report on the Brown, Wright, Brauch, and Peterson texts by 8:00 a.m., October 5th.** Each paper will be no more than two pages in length.

- **Brown:** Reflect on three significant insights you gained from reading the essays in the book. Elaborate by interacting with the main ideas of at least three essays, one of which you closely identify with and another that provoked or stretched you. Reflect thoughtfully. Be clear about your responses and support the thinking behind them.

- **Wright:** Review and interact with Wright’s argument. You might ask, for example: What is Wright’s understanding of biblical authority? How does Wright’s view relate to more traditional views with which you are familiar? What are the implications of following Wright’s narrative hermeneutic?

- **Brauch:** Review and interact with Brauch’s argument. For example, what point(s) is he trying to drive home? What implications does his work have for the practice of ministry? What did you find challenging? Familiar? What practices are important in avoiding the ‘abuse’ of scripture?

- **Peterson:** Review and interact with Peterson’s argument. For example, what is the relationship between exegesis and preaching? between exegesis and the preacher? between exegesis and spiritual reading? Between exegesis and worship?
Case Study
One case study of a situation in your ministry that either raises a hermeneutical issue. If you have an idea what your doctoral project will be, consider bringing a case study related to that focus. Define and describe the situation in the space of a single paragraph. In a second paragraph, identify the issue the case raises and suggest how the Bible might shape perspective and response. In presenting your case study, do not use real names, but describe the facts of the situation as clearly and accurately as possible. The case study should be no more than two pages in length, typed, and single-spaced. Due by October 5th at 8:00 a.m.

Critical Synthesis
Read through The Art of Reading Scripture. The intent of this paper is to consolidate and extend your thinking on the ideas you encountered during the class. Select one of the Nine Theses as a focal point for your thinking and identify it at the head of the paper. Reflect on the thesis and its implications for your thinking and ministry, incorporating insights from at least three essays from that book and at least three other course texts. This is not a research paper but an elaboration of your own ideas, with the outside writers serving as conversation partners. Include no more than four quotations (excluding the Bible). Your informed and fair summary of the writers’ ideas will be sufficient. 8-10 pages. Due by November 16th at 8:00 a.m.

Course Paper
This paper will direct your work on the course toward a particular topic or issue of ministry. It will comprise three parts: 1) A description of a clearly-defined situation in ministry — in one page or less. This may be a case study (actual or made up), a project, or ministry practice. The point is to situate the issue within a specific context of ministry so your reader can better grasp the impact of your discussion. 2) A one-paragraph description of the ministry question or issue – the theological “big idea” – that arises from the context. 3) A discussion of how the Bible shapes your thinking and response to the issue. (This will comprise the bulk of the paper.) How do you think biblically about the issue? What do you conclude and why? What biblical texts or themes are central to your thinking on the issue? What do they say? How do you support your response? Include insights from course readings and class discussions where relevant, as well as information or perspectives drawn from at least seven substantive outside sources (e.g. journal articles, monographs, commentaries).

Think of this paper as an opportunity to practice and develop the biblical foundation for a ministry issue in preparation for the corresponding section of your doctoral project. If you have a project in mind, this paper may serve as an initial draft. If you do not, the paper will give you an opportunity to work through how you might approach this section once you’ve settled on a project. 12-15 pages in length. Due by January 18th at 8:00 a.m.

Class Participation and Discussion
Fruitful discussion and integration of course texts assumes that students have read them thoroughly and are familiar with the main points they raise. You should be prepared to speak knowledgeably about the assigned readings and lead a discussion on the whole or a section of a course text if assigned to do so.
D. Writing and Classroom Guidelines

Submissions
All written work is to be submitted in electronic format (MSWord or compatible program). Files should be sent as email attachments from your AU Gmail account. Alternatively, you may upload your papers to the Drive site connected to your AU gmail address. **Hard copies of assignments will not be accepted.**

Deadlines
- All papers are due on the deadlines assigned. The *Reflection and Critical Synthesis will not be accepted after 8:00 a.m., October 5th.* Failure to submit the papers by this deadline will result in a “0” grade for the assignments.
- A paper will also receive a deduction in mark of up to one letter grade if: A) it is not within the page limits; B) displays significant errors in grammar or organization of thought; or C) does not adhere to the correct documentation of sources, in whole or in part.
- Quotations may not be included in Reflection Paper and Reading Reports and should be used sparingly in all other written work.
- You are urged to review “Compositional Caveats” (appended to this syllabus) for reminders on good writing.

Extensions
will be approved only in the case of an unforeseen event that disrupts your personal or professional life, and only if you have no other Extensions outstanding. “Disrupting events” do not include circumstances that occur during the normal practice of ministry (e.g. death of a parishioner, problems arising from a building project, full Advent schedule).

Written work
- Written work is to be commensurate with doctoral conventions: descriptive and analytical, exhibiting clear organization of thought and giving proper attention to style and grammar.
- Correct documentation of sources must conform to the Doctor of Ministry Writing Handbook. Papers must be typed and doubled-spaced with one inch margins. Set the font at 12 point Times New Roman. Follow the seminary style guide carefully, including the use of inclusive language with reference to human beings.

Classroom Etiquette
We are all participating in a learning community and must act and behave accordingly. The practice of civility and the willingness to be kind and gracious to others (even when we disagree) is central to the process of learning. The way in which we interact with others must reflect the grace which has been extended to each of us.

Classroom conversations must reflect the principles articulated above. Everyone is welcome to share their perspective and/or opinions with others. However, none of us is the arbiter of ‘theological truth’ or the ‘gatekeeper’ to the Kingdom. Please remember that the seminary has students from a wide range of denominations and theological perspectives. As such, do not
expect others to arrive at the same conclusions as do you. Practice grace, patience, and respect towards those with whom you disagree.

D. Calculation of Grade and Connection to Learning Outcomes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Reports (4)</td>
<td>1b, 1c</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Synthesis</td>
<td>1a, 1b, 1c</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Paper</td>
<td>1a, 1b, 1c</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>10%</td>
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IV. Tentative Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
<th>Talking Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monday, October 5th 8:00am-12:00pm (4 hrs)</td>
<td>The Character of Scripture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00pm-6:00pm (5 hrs)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 6th 8:00am-12:00pm (4 hrs)</td>
<td>The Authority of Scripture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00pm-5:00pm (4 hrs)</td>
<td>The Interpretation of Scripture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scripture as Narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wednesday, October 7th 1:00pm-5:00pm (4 hrs)</td>
<td>Shifting Hermeneutics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:30pm-8:30pm (2 hrs)</td>
<td>Scripture and Preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thursday, October 8th 8:00am-12:00pm (4 hrs)</td>
<td>Scripture and Formation Hermeutics Lab</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1:00pm-4:00pm (3 hrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL: 30 Contact Hours</strong></td>
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V. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

- Keep up on the shifting terrain of contemporary hermeneutics by reading at least one new book on the subject each year
- Frequent blogs that frequently address hermeneutical issues, such as Peter Enns: Rethinking Biblical Christianity, Jesus Creed, The Bible and Culture, and The Biblical World
• Attend lectures by prominent biblical scholars

VI. Seminary Guidelines
A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy
Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary’s core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one’s own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one’s own capabilities to achieve one’s fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. For further details of Academic Integrity Policy, please see the Student Handbook.

B. Academic Support Services
If you need assistance with writing projects for your coursework, contact the ATS Academic Support Center. The center provides free sessions with a peer consultant who can help you with all of your concerns about academic support including writing, critical thinking, documentation, reading skills, study skills, test taking skills, time management. Contact the center if you have a question about how to complete your assignment, if you have documentation questions, or if you would like to have your paper evaluated for areas needing improvement. The ATS Academic Support Center can be reached at 419-289-5162 or by e-mail at atswc@ashland.edu. While DMin students have access to the writing center for papers within all of their courses, DMin students must hire an editor for the proposal and the dissertation, as the writing center will not edit proposals or dissertations.

C. Students with Disabilities
Ashland University makes every effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who have a specific physical, psychiatric or learning disability and require accommodations are encouraged to inform their instructors of their needs early in the semester so that learning needs can be appropriately met. It is the student’s responsibility to document the disability with Disability Services in The Center for Academic Support on the 7th floor of the Ashland University Library, (419) 289-5904.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-88</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>68-70</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>65-67</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
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**D. ATS Grading Scale**

Mournet's Interpretation of the ATS Grading Scale (I am indebted to my colleague Dr. Hawk for this list)*

**A** Signifies work that exhibits a depth of research, thought and/or critical thinking, and that often stimulates my thinking. I say to myself, “This is good stuff!”

**B** Signifies work that exhibits thoughtful integration, a direct and careful engagement with the assignment, and sound critical thinking. I experience a deep sense of satisfaction that learning has taken place.

**C** Signifies a minimal engagement with the assignment, characterized by a perfunctory or hackneyed response and shallow critical reflection. I yawn.

**D** Signifies gaps in thinking or a deficient response to the readings or written work. I reach for my Tums.

**F** Signifies failure to address core components of the reading or written work. I turn on TV-Land to watch Green Acres and restore my cheery disposition.

**VI. Select Bibliography**

Appendix: Compositional Caveats (From Dr. Hawk and redacted by Dr. Colijn)

1. Each paper should present a thesis: an argument or perspective on the topic that will be developed in the paper. At some point (usually early on), the thesis should be articulated in a statement that clearly and succinctly defines the topic and your approach to it.

2. Your thesis should be developed in an organized and coherent fashion. Paragraphs should follow in logical order, with transitional sentences to guide your reader. To achieve coherence, you may find it helpful to make an outline of the paper before writing it.

3. Each paragraph should develop a single idea, introduced by a topic sentence.

4. Generally, paragraphs should comprise three or more sentences. Fewer sentences rarely allow the opportunity to develop an idea. Paragraphs, however, usually should not be longer than one page.

5. Your analysis and perspective should provide the primary focus and organization of the paper. Do not let secondary sources draw most of your conclusions for you. Use secondary sources to support and supplement your own research.

6. Support all assertions, conclusions, and assessments with relevant information. Give examples. Your position is stronger if you draw support from the biblical text rather than from secondary sources alone.

7. Be sure to spell out the implications of your observations. Draw explicit conclusions. Explain the significance of your findings. Always ask yourself, “So what?”
8. Information of a general nature should be synthesized from a number of sources and presented in your own words. Information unique to a particular source must be documented.

9. Use quotations sparingly – only when the information or perspective is unique, definitive, or presented in a distinctive and particularly helpful fashion.

10. Make sure all quotations are explained and integrated into the paper so that your reader can appreciate their relevance.

11. Present most information from secondary sources in your own words. Paraphrasing shows that you understand the material. Be sure to recast the information completely; changing a word here or there is not a paraphrase but an inaccurate and unacknowledged quotation.

12. Document both quotations and paraphrases from secondary sources. Follow the Writing Handbook carefully. If more than one of your paragraphs refers to the same source, document each paragraph.

13. Use good scholarly sources, those which not only give conclusions but define the issues, offer relevant supporting material, and/or survey scholarship on the topic. Don’t neglect journal articles (through the ATLA Serials database through the online library links).


15. Use active voice whenever possible. Referring to yourself in the first person (as “I”) is permissible as long as you do so sparingly and don’t put yourself in the foreground.

16. Use complete sentences. Sentence fragments are rarely effective in formal writing.

17. Don’t join independent clauses with a comma; use a semicolon, as in this sentence.

18. When beginning a sentence, a modifier must refer to the subject of the sentence, as in this example.

19. The pronoun “they” is still considered a plural pronoun in most formal writing. For inclusive language, use a plural noun with “they” or use a singular noun with “he or she.”

20. Proofread your paper carefully! If you have difficulty doing this, find an editor.