

BSG 5510 Fundamentals of Biblical Interpretation
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY—DETROIT
Summer, 2020

July 23-25 and August 6-8 (Thursdays & Fridays 6-9pm/Saturdays 8:30am-4:30pm)

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734/649.6017 (for class nights 4-6:30 pm)

I. Course Description -- BSG5510 Fundamentals of Biblical Interpretation (2 credit hrs)

Mental health professionals will often encounter clients operating from within a Christian worldview. This course seeks to provide these professionals with some historical-grammatical tools for interpretation. It also offers a framework for examining how an individual's interpretations of discrete Scriptures position her or him for greater or diminished mental and relational health. In particular, the course seeks to equip future counselors to help disentangle interpretations of Scripture that perpetuate dysfunction and to help construct interpretations that are both sound and healthful.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

This course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes and requirements of the traditional semester course format.

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1a. Discuss what interpreters bring to the text in terms of social location, theological commitments, and community of reading, and how these factors shape their interpretations of a text.

1b. Critically engage the text's language, genre, literary forms, and narrative and/or argumentative development.

1c. Apply information about the historical and socio-cultural context pertinent to understanding the text.

2-6. Not assessed in this course.

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks and Other Materials

Edwards, Dennis R. *What Is the Bible and How Do We Understand It?* Harrisonburg, VA: Herald, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1-5138-0564-1.

Wimberly, Edward P. *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1994. ISBN 0-687-00251-6

Witherington, Ben III. *Reading and Understanding the Bible.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0-19-934057-6.

Reading Packet (copies of these articles/essays available from Dr. Hunt):

Ballaban, Steven. "The Use of Traumatic Biblical Narratives in Spiritual Recovery from Trauma. Theory and Case Study." *Journal Pastoral Care and Counseling* Vol. 68, no. 4 (2014): 1-11.

Burrus, Virginia. "The Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Jerome." *Harvard Theological Review* 84.3 (1991): 229-48.

Camacho, Daniel José. "Moses Speaks Spanglish." *The Revealer*, November 7, 2019.

- Crenshaw Kimberlé. “Intersectionality.” YouTube <https://youtu.be/JRci2V8PxW4>
- Garzon, Fernando. “Interventions that Apply Scripture in Psychotherapy.” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* Vol. 33, no. 2 (2005): 113-121.
- Mehlman, Elizabeth and Laura J. Hunt. “Paul’s Rule in 1 Corinthians 7:17–24: Contemporary Limitations and Challenges for Existing Identities in Christ” *Canadian-American Theological Review* 8, no. 2 (2019): 103–18.
- Walker-Barnes, Chanequa. “The Burden of the Strong Black Woman.” *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* Vol. 19, no. 1 (2009): 1-21.

B. Attendance

According to the *Student Handbook*, attendance at all class sessions is expected, unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than six class hours will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade, audit or withdraw from the class, or be penalized otherwise at the discretion of the professor.

C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning

Interaction with Assigned Readings: Students will interact with assigned readings in weekly discussion boards, as stipulated below. (30% of final grade; SLO 1a, b, c)

Case Study: Students will choose a case study and will (1) identify the presenting problem, (2) ascertain the personal mythology/narrative and its influence, (3) identify the preferred story, and (4) select a biblical narrative to assist in setting goals for the purpose of re-authoring the personal narrative to achieve the preferred story. The Case Study will be 5-7 double spaced, typewritten pages. Students will email the final Case Study to professor on Monday, August 24 by midnight. (40% of final grade; SLO 1a, b)

Class Engagement: Students will participate in Zoom, and in small group projects (1 per Th–Sat session) informed by their knowledge of the required readings. Students will also watch weekly videos and respond to emails. (30% of total grade; SLO 1a, b, c).

D. Calculation of Grade and Connection with Learning Outcomes

<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Percent of Final Grade</i>
Class engagement	1a, b, c	30%
Case Study	1a, b	40%
Four Summary Papers	1a, b, c	30%

IV. Course Schedule

Reading assignments: Read the following according to the schedule below.

Edwards, *What Is the Bible and How Do We Understand It?*, Witherington, *Reading and Understanding the Bible*, Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*, and watch the video and read the articles in the Reading Packet (posted on Blackboard). Each week on the

discussion board answer each question and respond to at least 2 posts *per chapter heading* from other students. Late posts will not receive any points.

Note: Response posts should further the conversation. They might agree with the original post and then add some further thought. Or they might agree with only some portion of the original post and then add a differing opinion. Posts that simply say, “I agree” or “Good point!” will not get any points.

Also, be aware that your thoughts come from your specific point of view, and that is it important, in order to hear the Bible better, that we consider the points of view of others. So, word your posts respectfully and with humility. Thanks!

Weekly videos: There will be weekly videos to introduce you to the topic for the week. These will be posted on Blackboard.

	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: due May 18	Edwards , Introduction and Chapter 1	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 2: due May 25	Edwards , Chapter 2–3	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 3: due June 1	Edwards , Chapter 4–6	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 4: due June 8	Witherington , Invitation and Chapters 1–3	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 5: due June 15	Witherington , Chapters 4–6	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 6: due June 22	Witherington , Chapters 7–8	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 7: due June 29	Witherington , Chapters 9–11	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 8: due July 6	Witherington , Chapters 12–14	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 9: due July 13	Witherington , Chapters 15– Epilogue	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 10: due July 20	Wimberly , Chapters 1–3	Watch weekly video Discussion Board
Week 11: July 23–25	Zoom Meetings	Exegetical Group Project (due 4:30pm July 25)
Week 12: due Aug 3	Wimberly , Chapters 4–6	Watch weekly video

		Discussion Board
Week 13: Aug 6–8	Reading Packet before Zoom Meetings	Case Study Group Project (due 4:30pm Aug 8)
Week 14		
Week 15: due Aug 24		Case Study (Individual)

July 23-24, Thursday & Friday, 6-9 pm; Saturday, July 25, 8:30am-4:30pm

Please set aside this time for Zoom meetings and an exegetical group project. This will allow you to apply the information you have absorbed in your reading to a specific passage of Scripture. Group project will be due at 4:30pm July 25.

August 6-7, Thursday & Friday, 6-9 pm ; Saturday, August 8, 8:30am-4:30pm

Please set aside this time for Zoom meetings and a case study group project. This will allow you to apply the information you have absorbed in your reading and to practice the skills required for your (individual) final project. Group project will be due at 4:30pm Aug 8.

Monday, August 24, by midnight

Case Study should be submitted to Blackboard no later than midnight

**All papers should be double spaced, with one inch margins on all sides, number at the bottom center of the page, Times Roman 12 pt font, and proof read for grammar and typographical errors.*

V. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

Students should engage other resources on the topic, including those mentioned in the bibliographies of required readings.

Students should continue to consider the significance and impact of stories on our lives and how stories we construct out of life's experiences can and should be reauthored if they keep us from living our best lives; that stories in Scripture can be a powerful resource but they also require critical reflection.

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. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the *Student Handbook*.

B. Seminary Writing Consultation Service

The Seminary Writing Consultation Service can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing assignments in your graduate Seminary classes. Masters and doctoral qualified Consultants can advise you online or in person.

To schedule an appointment, visit [Writing Center Online](#) and select “Online and Graduate” from the schedule menu.

C. Accessibility Resources and Accommodations

It is Ashland University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please contact the Student Accessibility Center at [419-289-5904](tel:419-289-5904), or send an email to dservices@ashland.edu. The Student Accessibility Center office and the course instructor will work together in order to establish accommodations and to meet your learning needs.

D. ATS Grading Scale

Grade	Quality	Percent	Description
A	4.0	97-100	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.
A-	3.7	92-96	
B+	3.3	89-91	
B	3.0	86-88	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.
B-	2.7	83-85	
C+	2.3	80-82	
C	2.0	77-79	Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.
C-	1.7	74-76	
D+	1.3	71-73	
D	1.0	68-70	Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.
D-	0.7	65-67	
F	0.0	Below 65	Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.

VII. Selected Bibliography or References

Please refer to the works mentioned in Chapter 15 (pp. 202-212) in *Reading and Understanding the Bible*, as well as the “For Further Reading” sections at the end of every chapter.

- Alexander, David, and Pat Alexander, eds. *Zondervan Handbook to the Bible*. 5th edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 20017. (An introduction to the backgrounds and themes of the Bible.)
- Allen, Ronald J. and Clark M. Williamson. *Preaching the Gospels without Blaming the Jews: A Lectionary Commentary*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Allen, Ronald J. and Clark M. Williamson. *Preaching the Letters without Dismissing the Law: A Lectionary Commentary*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Day, Linda and Carolyn Pressler, eds. *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World: An Introduction to Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- Junior, Nyasha. *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015.
- Marble, Kristen Bennett. *The Scriptures of Jesus and the Early Church: A Fresh Engagement of the Old Testament*. Indianapolis: Light and Life, 2017. (An examination of the ways that we, as NT believers, can approach interpreting and preaching the OT.)
- McKnight, Scot. *The Blue Parakeet*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. (An engaging discussion of the issues of biblical interpretation.)
- Smith, Mitzi J. *Insights from African American Interpretation*. Reading the Bible in the 21st Century Insights. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2017.
- St. Clair, Raquel A. *Call and Consequences: A Womanist Reading of Mark*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008. (Important study that distinguishes between two different kinds of suffering.)
- Wald, Oletta. *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*. Newly Revised. Minneapolis. Augsburg Fortress. 2002.