



Grace Communion Seminary

BI501 Hermeneutics

Short Syllabus

Instructor: Michael Morrison, PhD

Course description

This course surveys various methods of analyzing the biblical text, gives a brief introduction to using biblical Greek, and discusses how to use various forms of analysis in exploring the original meaning and contemporary applications of biblical passages.

In order to do well in this course, students are expected to put in at least 12 hours of study each week.

Required textbooks

Please obtain these books before the class begins. To find the lowest prices on these books, you may find it helpful to use www.bookfinder.com.

Camery-Hoggatt, Jerry. *Reading the Good Book Well: A Guide to Biblical Interpretation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2007. 240 pages. ISBN: [0687642752](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0687642752). Cost: about \$24 (Amazon price); new book from third-party seller, about \$15. This is an easy-to-read introduction to biblical studies.

Deddo, Gary. *Scripture: God's Gift*. Glendora, CA: Grace Communion International, 2013. ISBN: 978-1301126286. 34 pages. Free at <http://bit.ly/1orqJTX>.

Green, Joel B., and Max Turner, *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000. 256 pages. [080284541X](https://www.amazon.com/dp/080284541X). Amazon price about \$20; new book from third-party seller \$15.

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr.

Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017. 576 pages. ISBN: [9780310524175](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9780310524175). New book: Amazon, \$30, third party seller \$24. Second edition is also OK.

Recommended books

Keener, Craig S. *The Bible in Its Context: How to Improve Your Study of the Scriptures*. Word document, available at <http://goo.gl/Z4O7mA>.

Morrison, Michael. *Inspiration, Authority, and Reliability of Scripture*. Grace Communion International, 2013. A collection of articles from the GCI website. PDF and e-book formats free at <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/152565>. Printed copies available at amazon.

———. *Exploring the Word of God: The Letter to the Hebrews*. A collection of articles from the GCI website. PDF and e-book formats free at <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/372012>.

Mounce, William D. *Greek for the Rest of Us: The Essentials of Biblical Greek*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

Richards, E. Randolph, and Brandon J. O'Brien. *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.

Student learning outcomes

Through this course, students will...

1. Describe three major areas of focus for a systematic study of the biblical text: the historical setting, the literary setting, and the setting of the reader.
2. Describe scholarly critical methods of study, including those focusing on the history behind the text, the literary composition of the text, and the role of the reader in grasping the meaning.
3. Describe the structure of biblical Greek, enough so that the student is able to use lexicons, concordances, and understand basic

grammatical terms used in exegetical commentaries.

4. Learn to analyze biblical texts using various Bible-study websites, with awareness of the limitations of the resources.
5. Analyze the philosophical foundations of hermeneutics, including the question of where “meaning” is to be sought.
6. With a sample passage from the book of Hebrews, demonstrate sound analysis of a text for use in a sermon.

Requirements and assignments

1. **Read the lectures.** Lectures will be posted each Monday for ten weeks. See the *Academic Catalog*, section VI, for study suggestions.
2. **Participate.** Part of the learning that occurs in a class comes through discussion and interaction with other students. In an online class, this is done through comments posted on a discussion forum. This counts for 10 percent of the final grade.
3. **Read the textbooks.** They total about 1100 pages, or about 100 pages each week, or 14-15 per day. Schedule time each day!
4. **Two quizzes.** These open-book quizzes will help you review some of the lectures. 10 percent of the grade.
5. **Website research assignment.** This project will help you become familiar with some websites useful in biblical studies. 5 percent.
6. **One 10-page paper, done in two parts.** This counts for 60 percent of the final grade. You will need about 50 hours to work on this – an average of 5 hours per week – some weeks more, some less.
 - 1) Part 1 – due at the end of the seventh week
 - a. Choose one of the passages from the book of Hebrews (see separate document for options and instructions).
 - b. Describe the original setting of the readers.
 - c. Identify the main point being made in that passage for the original readers, and why that point was needed in the

original setting.

- d. Outline the passage with 2–5 subpoints, with attention to the grammar of the passage.
- e. Describe the literary setting.

2) Part 2 – due at the end of the 12th week

- a. Verse by verse, explain how the words of the passage help support the point being made in the passage.
- b. Comment on how our own context affects the way we read this passage.
- c. Select one point from the passage that is appropriate in our own context, and outline a message designed to make that point to a contemporary audience.

3) For further details, see “Exegetical Assignment for BI501.”

- 7. **One final exam.** Must be proctored; see proctoring instructions in the *Academic Catalog*. This open-book exam will help you review the lectures and readings; it counts for 10 percent of the final grade. There will be 20 multiple-choice questions, and three short essays.

Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

| Assignment | Hours | Percentage of grade |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|
| Reading the syllabus and lectures | 20 | |
| Reading discussions and making responses | 5 | 10 |
| Taking quizzes | 3 | 15 |
| Website research project | 2 | 5 |
| Taking the final exam | 2 | 10 |
| Reading the textbooks | 55 | |
| Studying for quizzes and the final exam | 7 | |
| Writing research papers | 50 | 60 |
| Total – about 12 hours each week | 144 | 100 |

Weekly topics and assignments (tentative)

| Week | Topic | Assignments during the week |
|--------|--|---|
| Week 1 | Lecture 1A: Introduction to hermeneutics, and why study the Bible? 1B: How do we study the Bible? – a brief guide | Camery-Hoggatt, chapters 1-9 Discussion forum |
| Week 2 | 2A: Scholarly study methods that focus on history 2B: Scholarly methods that focus on the text 2C: Scholarly methods that focus on the readers | Camery-Hoggatt, chps. 10-18 Quiz 1 , on biblical criticisms |
| Week 3 | 3A: The purpose of sermons 3B: Method of study for sermon preparation | Klein et al., chapters 1-4 Discussion forum |
| Week 4 | 4A: Greek nouns, pronouns and adjectives 4B: Greek verbs, adverbs, conjunctions & prepositions | Klein et al., chapters 5 & 7 Quiz 2 , on Greek |
| Week 5 | 5A: Bible concordances B: Lexicons C: Dictionaries & encyclopedias D: Interlinear & literal versions E: Introductions & handbooks F: Commentaries | Klein et al., chapters 10-11 Discussion forum |
| Week 6 | Lecture 6: Bible study websites | Klein et al., chapters 8-9 Discussion forum |

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| Week 7 | 7A: Suggested strategy for using Bible study websites: Mark 8:31-38 as a case study Lecture appendices A-E show how much good scholarly material is available on the internet. 7B: Word studies, and mistakes to avoid | Klein et al., chapter 12 Deddo, all Research Paper , part 1 Due by end of week 7 |
| Week 8 | 8A: Horizons and spirals 8B: Philosophical issues: where is meaning to be found? | Green & Turner, chap. 4 Klein et al., chap. 6 Website research project |
| Week 9 | 9A: How do theology and biblical studies interact? 9B: Theological interpretation | Green & Turner, chps 1-3, 5-6 Discussion forum |
| Week 10 | 10A: Application: 1 Tim. 5 as an example of the challenge 10B: Finding applications | Green & Turner, chapters 7-11 Discussion forum |
| Week 11 | Final exam must be taken by the end of Tuesday, Nov. 20. | |
| | Final paper is due by the end of Sunday, December 2, 2018. | |