

Syllabus for  
**BIB 306—Hermeneutics: Principles of Biblical Interpretation**  
3.0 Credit Hours  
Fall 2012

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the problems and methods of Biblical interpretation, including the factors of presuppositions, historical context, grammatical relationships, vocabulary, figurative language, and genre.

Course Prerequisites: None

II. COURSE GOALS

The purpose of this course is to enable the student to recognize any genre that might be encountered in reading the Bible and to bring to bear the poetics specific to the genre of the text under consideration.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE

A. Terminal Objectives

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the principles of literary analysis.
2. Discuss the genres encountered in the Bible and will know the observations of the poetics specific to that genre.
3. Use literature related to the field of hermeneutics.

B. Unit Objectives

As a result of successfully completing these units, the student will be able to do the following:

1. General Principles Unit
  - a. Discuss the importance of responsible hermeneutics for Christian discipleship.
  - b. Compare and evaluate various English translations of the Bible.
  - c. Describe the history of hermeneutics from Ezra to the present, specifically correlating the dominant philosophy of each period with the hermeneutic characteristic to it.
  - d. State and illustrate the importance of history and culture for understanding biblical content, and indicate the tools needed to study history and culture.
  - e. Define and be familiar with the technical jargon of hermeneutics.
  - f. Discuss the authority and inspiration of Scripture and indicate how one's attitude toward the subject influences interpretation.
  - g. Identify important figures of speech used in Scripture: simile, metaphor, personification, euphemism, hyperbole, irony, etc.
  - h. Discuss the role of the Spirit in hermeneutics.
  - i. Demonstrate the existence of different genres in the Bible by methods specified by instructor.
  - j. Discuss the basic steps of interpretation.

2. Law and Narrative Unit
  - a. Apply pertinent principles of interpretation to Old Testament laws and covenant.
  - b. Contrast the older methods of interpreting biblical narrative with the methods of literary analysis.
  - c. Identify the type-scenes and uses of convention in biblical narrative.
  - d. Apply pertinent principles of interpretation to historical narrative.
3. Genres of the New Testament Unit
  - a. Apply pertinent principles of interpretation to the various New Testament genres: the Gospels, historical narrative (Acts), epistles, and apocalyptic.
  - b. Describe parables and allegories, noting their similarities and differences.
  - c. Describe apocalyptic literature and its historical origins.
4. Poetry and Final Thoughts Unit
  - a. Identify why poetry is distinguished from narrative as the second major genre category.
  - b. Discuss the evolution of the understanding of parallelism in biblical poetry.
  - c. Identify the basic types of Hebrew poetic parallelism and state the importance of this phenomenon for interpreting poetic passages.
  - d. Apply pertinent principles of interpretation to the various Old Testament genres: psalms, wisdom literature, and prophecy.
  - e. Discuss the relevance of the Bible to issues of life today.
  - f. Distinguish between “meaning” and “significance” in the application of the Bible to modern life by methods specified by instructor.

#### IV. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

- A. Required Materials
  1. Textbooks
 

Green, Joel. *Seized by Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007. ISBN 9780687023554.

Marshall, I. H. et. al. *New Bible Dictionary*. 3rd Edition. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1996. ISBN 9780830814398.

Virkler, Henry A. and Karelynn Gerber Ayayo. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. ISBN 9780801031380.

The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments, New Revised Standard Version.
  2. Other: None
- B. Optional Materials
  1. Textbooks: None
  2. Other: None

#### V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. University Policies and Procedures
  1. Attendance at each class or laboratory is mandatory at Oral Roberts University.

- Excessive absences can reduce a student's grade or deny credit for the course.
2. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence are charged a late exam fee.
  3. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating involve both lying and stealing and are violations of ORU's Honor Code: "I will not cheat or plagiarize; I will do my own academic work and will not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments." Plagiarism is usually defined as copying someone else's ideas, words, or sentence structure and submitting them as one's own. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:
    - a. Submitting another's work as one's own or colluding with someone else and submitting that work as though it were his or hers;
    - b. Failing to meet group assignment or project requirements while claiming to have done so;
    - c. Failing to cite sources used in a paper;
    - d. Creating results for experiments, observations, interviews, or projects that were not done;
    - e. Receiving or giving unauthorized help on assignments.

By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means. Penalties for any of the above infractions may result in disciplinary action including failing the assignment or failing the course or expulsion from the University, as determined by department and University guidelines.
  4. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.
  5. Students are to be in compliance with University, school, and departmental policies regarding Whole Person Assessment requirements. Students should consult the Whole Person Assessment handbooks for requirements regarding general education and the students' majors.
    - a. The penalty for not submitting electronically or for incorrectly submitting a Whole Person Assessment artifact is a zero for that assignment.
    - b. By submitting an assignment, the student gives permission for the assignment to be assessed electronically.

B. Department Policies and Procedures

Note: Attendance policy is enforced. Excessive absences affect the student's grade. See syllabus attendance policy.

1. Completion of a Course
  - a. All assignments are due on the dates established in the course calendar, which is published in the syllabus or assigned in class. **Any assignments turned in after the scheduled due date are penalized five percent (5%) of the original value per day including weekends, breaks, and holidays.**
  - b. **No work** is accepted after the final date of regular classes.

2. Incompletes
  - a. An incomplete is given only after the student establishes with the instructor and the department chair by written petition that his or her work is incomplete for good cause (i.e., lengthy illness, death in the family). **Incompletes are rarely granted.** Only those absences that are incurred within the time period of the extenuating circumstances prompting an incomplete are excused. The student is still accountable for any other absences and is penalized for them according to the attendance policy.
  - b. A Petition for Incomplete Grade with all supporting documentation must be submitted for approval at least one week prior to the end of normal classes. The submitting of a petition does not automatically ensure the granting of an incomplete. The petition must be approved by the appropriate academic committee of the Undergraduate Theology Department.
3. Examinations and Other Assignments
  - a. Early examinations **are not** allowed.
  - b. Late examinations are administered only when extenuating circumstances are present (such as a death in the family the week before exams, sudden and major illness the week of exams that is documented by a physician). In fairness to all students, some persons should not have more time to prepare for an examination than others. **The granting of a late examination request is rare.**
  - c. A Petition for Late Examination without penalty must be signed by the professor and the chair. Proper documentation must accompany the petition and must be submitted to the Undergraduate Theology Department. The student must schedule the makeup exam with the professor of the course. The exam must be taken no later than five (5) calendar days after the approval of the petition. **Grade penalties may be applied as indicated by the Academic Affairs Committee.**
  - d. **All** exams are given as scheduled. It is the student's responsibility when purchasing airline tickets, for example, to take this schedule into consideration. **Not being present for the final examination automatically results in failure of the course.**
  - e. These requirements apply to all quizzes, tests, and examinations administered by the Undergraduate Theology Department.
4. Attendance
  - a. The Official Attendance Policy for the Undergraduate Theology Department is as follows for the three-semester hour class:
    - (1) If the class meets three times a week, the missing of 6 class sessions results in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 12 class sessions automatically results in a grade of "F."
    - (2) If a class meets twice a week, the missing of 4 class sessions results in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 8 sessions automatically results in a grade of "F."
    - (3) If the class meets once a week, then missing 2 class sessions results in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 4 class sessions automatically results in a grade of "F."
  - b. **The absences allowed prior to grade reduction are designed to allow**

**for emergencies and illnesses, for example, and are not designed for indiscriminate use.** Many students incorrectly assume that they may use these allowable absences as unexcused "cuts" from class. Any illnesses, emergencies, and trips are included in exempt. Administrative excuses are granted only when a student is on official University business and has received approval in advance from the University administration.

- c. Students are expected to be prompt for classes. **Two tardies equal one absence.**

C. Course Policies and Procedures

1. Evaluation Procedures

a.	Unit 1 Exam	20%
b.	Unit 2 Exam	25%
c.	Unit 3 Exam	25%
d.	Final Exam	20%
e.	2 Written Assignments	10%
f.	Whole Person Assessment compliance	<u>0%</u> (noncompliance: 0% for the assignment)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

2. Grading

The final grade is given on the basis of the percentage of the total points possible:

90+=A; 80+=B; 70+=C; 60+=D; 59 and below=F.

3. Whole Person Assessment Requirements

- a. Take-home essay Unit 3 Exam  
The take-home essay component of the Unit 3 exam serves as the Whole Person Assessment artifact for this course. A hard copy is submitted to the professor for grading and a copy is submitted electronically for assessment. The electronic submission is as follows: Portfolio—Theology Department, Outcome—Scriptural Knowledge, Rubric—Hermeneutics Essay, Assessor—Jeffrey Lamp.
- b. Whole Person Assessment compliance (0% for the assignment for noncompliance). To be “compliant” the student must correctly submit the research paper electronically as an artifact for assessment. To be “noncompliant” the student has either not submitted or incorrectly submitted the research paper electronically. Noncompliance results in a one letter grade reduction of the final grade for the course.
- d. [It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that he/she is in compliance. Compliance is verified by checking for the assessment results in one’s e-portfolio. If there is a problem you may receive notification by the professor/assessor through one’s **ORU Group Wise email address.**]

## VI. COURSE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
	<b>Unit 1: General Principles</b> Introduction: The Need to Interpret	Virkler 1, 2, 6 Green 4, 5
Aug 17	The Interpreter and the Goal	
20	The Spirit and the Bible	
22	The History of Hermeneutics	
27	<b>Comparison of Judges 4 &amp; 5 assignment</b>	
29	Use of Backgrounds in Interpretation	
Sept 5	Figures of Speech	
10	Basic Steps in Interpretation	
12	<i>Review</i>	
17	<b>EXAM ONE</b>	
	<b>Unit 2: Law and Narrative</b>	Virkler 3, 4, 5
19	Law and Covenant	
24	Example: Genesis 38	
26	Example: Judges 3:12-30	
Oct 1	Example: 1 Samuel 21	
3	Example: 2 Samuel 11-12	
8	<i>Review</i>	
10	<b>EXAM TWO</b>	
	<b>Unit 3: New Testament</b>	Virkler 8
22	Gospels	
24	Gospels and Acts	
29	Epistles	
31	Apocalyptic and Revelation	
Nov 5	<b>Analysis of parables in Luke 10-16 assignment</b>	
7	<i>Review</i>	
12	<b>EXAM THREE</b>	
	<b>Unit 4: Poetry and Final Thoughts</b>	Virkler 7 Green 1, 2, 3
14	Parallelism	
19	Wisdom	
26	Psalms	
28	Prophecy	
Dec 3	Reading the Bible as Scripture	
5	<i>Review</i>	
TBA	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	

**Course Inventory for ORU's Student Learning Outcomes**  
**BIB 306—Hermeneutics: Principles of Biblical Interpretation**  
**Fall 2012**

This course contributes to the ORU student learning outcomes as indicated below:

**Significant Contribution** – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

**Moderate Contribution** – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

**Minimal Contribution** – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

**No Contribution** – Does not address the outcome.

The Student Learning Glossary at <http://ir.oru.edu/doc/glossary.pdf> defines each outcome and each of the proficiencies/capacities.

<b>OUTCOMES &amp; Proficiencies/Capacities</b>	<b>Significant Contribution</b>	<b>Moderate Contribution</b>	<b>Minimal Contribution</b>	<b>No Contribution</b>
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<b>1</b>	<b>Outcome #1 – Spiritually Alive</b> Proficiencies/Capacities				
1A	Biblical knowledge	X			
1B	Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit	X			
1C	Evangelistic capability			X	
1D	Ethical behavior		X		

<b>2</b>	<b>Outcome #2 – Intellectually Alert</b> Proficiencies/Capacities				
2A	Critical thinking	X			
2B	Information literacy	X			
2C	Global & historical perspectives		X		
2D	Aesthetic appreciation	X			
2E	Intellectual creativity	X			

<b>3</b>	<b>Outcome #3 – Physically Disciplined</b> Proficiencies/Capacities				
3A	Healthy lifestyle				X
3B	Physically disciplined lifestyle				X

<b>4</b>	<b>Outcome #4 – Socially Adept</b> Proficiencies/Capacities				
4A	Communication skills	X			
4B	Interpersonal skills	X			
4C	Appreciation of cultural & linguistic differences	X			
4D	Responsible citizenship			X	
4E	Leadership capacity			X	

(Revised 3/12/12)