

Course Descriptions



Exegetical Methods

Sharpen your biblical interpretation and study skills and become more confident in your ability to rightly divide the Word of Truth through this course, which provides a basic overview of the principles and practices of biblical exegesis with special attention to the use of exegetical aids, such as dictionaries, lexicons, concordances, and critical commentaries. Assignments will focus on how exegetical decisions are made, and how we move from the exegesis of the text to our appropriation of it in life and ministry.

Learning Outcomes/Course Goals

Completion of this course should result in:

- a practiced study of several different methods in the process of interpretation
- exposure to and practice with a variety of lexical and grammatical resources
- a basic understanding of textual criticism and translations
- a clearer understanding of the interplay of the human and divine aspects of the biblical text.

Course Format

Weekly online video instruction coordinated with textbook reading and online forum reflections/discussions. Workload: approximately five to seven hours per week.

Required Reading

- Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8010-4640-7

Highly Recommended Resources

- Grenz, Stanley J., David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Patzia, Aruthur G., and Anthonie J. Petrotta. *Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

Recommended Reading/Resources

- Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996.
- Erickson, Richard J. *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Exegesis: Taking the Fear Out of Critical Method*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2005.
- Hayes, John H., and Carl R. Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.
- Stuart, Douglas. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 4th ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.
- 8-volume resource set of Dictionary of _____ (e.g., Jesus and the Gospels). Series published by InterVarsity Press from 1992–2012, with a large number of scholarly contributors and an editorial team for each volume.

Assignments

("Satisfactory" evaluation required for completion of the course)

1. Weekly online posts and participation in online forum related to video instruction, class notes, and textbook reading
2. Final essay (3–5 pages) that demonstrates the integration of course content with a contextual personal or ministry issue of biblical interpretation

Syllabus Overview

1. INTRODUCTION TO EXEGETICAL METHODS

Goals and approach for the course; the exegetical task defined

2. THE TEXT

Textual Criticism, Translations, and the Pericope (logical boundaries)

3. THE SURVEY

The significance of first impressions of the text; learning to interrogate the text; “active reading”

4. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

General and specific historical backgrounds; learning to read the text like a “local”

5. FORMAL ANALYSIS

Considering the type and configuration of the text – literary genre, form, structure, and movement

6. DETAILED ANALYSIS

Grammatical details of a biblical text – focusing on words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs; language tools

7. SOURCE ANALYSIS

Investigating ancient background source material; form/source/tradition/redaction criticism; the logic and value of sources analysis

8. SYNTHESIS

Reviewing discoveries; maintaining coherence with the central teaching; expansion, refinement, and correction of exegetical effort

9. REFLECTION

Seeking present and personal significance for transformation; avoiding eisegesis and anachronism; applications for doctrine, ethics, and affect.

10. EXEGETICAL FALLACIES

General types of exegetical errors; several common specific errors