

Hermeneutics – 2ON702

*Reformed Theological Seminary
Summer 2009*

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores a wide range of subjects related to responsible interpretation of the Bible. Particular passages of Scripture are the focus of discussions and practical exercises (3 hours).

CLASS MEETINGS

This class meets Mon to Fri 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, June 22 - June 26.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Revised and Expanded Edition [ISBN 13: 9780830828265]

→ Students will read the Introduction as well as chapters 1-5, 6-14 of this book

Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* [ISBN 13: 9780851112985]

→ Students will read this book in its entirety

Andreas J. Köstenberger, Richard D. Patterson, and Scott R. Swain, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*

→ Students will read three chapters from this book which will be made available by the professor on IQ Web

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading Report (30 %) Students will attach to their research paper (see below) a report concerning the percentage of the assigned reading that they have read with reasonable care by the due date of the research paper.

2. Skills Development Exercises [SDEs] (40 %) The skills required for faithful biblical interpretation are to a significant degree more “caught” than “taught.” Consequently, certain assignments will be devoted to the development of interpretive skills. These assignments will have *homework, library, and classroom* components. Class participation is a vital aspect of this assignment.

3. Research Paper (30 %) See below.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Monday, June 22

Tuesday, June 23

SDE # 1: Genesis 22:1-19

Wednesday, June 24

SDE # 2: Psalm 113

Thursday, June 25

SDE # 3: Matthew 11:25-30

Friday, June 26

SDE # 4: Revelation 3:14-22

OFFICE HOURS

Due to the unusual structure of a summer class, I will not have any regular office hours during this course. However, I am generally available during class breaks to discuss any questions related to the course. Also, please feel free to send me an email at: sswain@rts.edu.

Research Paper Format for Hermeneutics

I. Due Dates and Grading

A. Due date: TBA

B. *Grading*: The paper will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. *Conformity* (15 %): Does the paper follow the directions provided on this outline?
2. *Hermeneutical analysis* (30 %): Does the paper display an appropriate degree of skill and depth in its *literary, historical, and theological* analysis of the text in question?
3. *Quality and cogency of exposition* (40 %): Does the paper present a *cogent thesis* and *accompanying arguments* regarding the meaning of the text in question? Does the paper exhibit the *quality of research* required by the assignment?
4. *Clarity* (15 %): Is the prose section of the paper written in clear, readable English?

II. Part One of Paper

A. In the first part of the research paper, you will submit the results of a *full hermeneutical analysis* on one of the SDE texts assigned over the course of this semester.

B. In your analysis, you should consult and cite *at least* the following resources (see the bibliography provided by me on IQ Web for getting started on this):

1. At least 5 commentaries on your biblical text (at least one of which should be a *critical* commentary and not more than one of which may be an *expositional* commentary).
2. At least 2 dictionaries that addresses the historical and cultural background of your text.

3. At least 2 dictionaries that addresses the theological dimensions of your text (e.g., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, etc.).
4. At least 1 dictionary devoted to the specific *canonical* or *authorial* corpus in which your text is found (e.g., Pentateuch, Pauline literature, etc.).
5. At least 1 Hebrew or Greek lexicon, depending on the original language of your text (*note*: not all students are taking biblical languages; do your best here; seek help from other students).

III. Part Two of Paper

- A. Based upon the results of your hermeneutical analysis in the first part of the research paper, the second part of the research paper will provide a *prose exposition* of your text.
- B. This part of your paper should be structured according to the following pattern:
 1. An opening paragraph which states *the main point* of your text. This paragraph will contain a *thesis statement* that you will defend in the course of expounding your text (*example* of a thesis statement: In Genesis 22:1-19, God tests Abraham's faith and through that test reveals himself to be "the Lord who provides.").
 2. The body of your paper will be structured according to the literary outline of your text which you discovered in your hermeneutical analysis.
 3. As you work through each verse in your text (following your literary outline), you will bring in the *most relevant results* of your hermeneutical analysis. Note: *relevance* is determined by the degree to which the results of your hermeneutical analysis *support the claims of your opening paragraph/thesis statement*.
 4. A short concluding paragraph will round out this section of the paper.
- C. This part of your paper should be between 10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font, according to Turabian format. Footnote your research when relevant.
- D. Attach at the end of your paper a complete bibliography of works consulted during the course of your research.