

## Hermeneutics – 2ON702

*Reformed Theological Seminary  
Spring 2010*

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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 Wednesday 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM, February 02 - May 12

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Mark D. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook* [ISBN 13: 978-0825427657]

Richard L. Pratt, *He Gave us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narratives* [ISBN 13: 9780875523798]

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

Scott R. Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [available from the professor]

### ASSIGNMENTS

**1. Reading Report (30 %)** Students will attach to their research paper a report stating 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 %)** Details forthcoming.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

My office hours are on Thursday afternoons from 2-4pm. Please email me to schedule an appointment. If this time is not convenient for you, we can try to schedule something else.

### **SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

I will provide a schedule of assignments and due dates on the first day of class.

## 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.

