

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

Biblical Interpretation 1—online

BI-505 (2 or 3 units, depending on program)
Spring 2010
Jan. 20–May 23

Prof. Jon Isaak
<jisaak@mbseminary.edu>
Office telephone: 559-452-1721
Office fax: 559-452-1752

Email for submitting assignments: <bi505@mbseminary.edu>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the student to the inductive method of reading, studying, and teaching the Bible. Special attention is given to the following exegetical topics: context, grammar, semantics, genre, contextualization, and appropriation. Students will do a series of exegetical and hermeneutical exercises applying a literary-historical-canonical method to the study of selected biblical texts. The pedagogical factors involved in leading a Bible Study will be discussed and practiced. The course is offered in a 2-unit format, fulfilling MFCC program requirements, and a 3-unit format for most other degree programs.

The course is offered in an online format where students interact each week with new material and process it individually and in asynchronous, threaded discussions. The time requirements are the same as for students taking the course on campus. You must have access to the internet, the seminary's webpage, and a theological library.

This course is recommended prior to all other NT and OT courses, except language courses.

COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

In the Christian tradition, the nature of the Bible is closely related to the notion of divine inspiration. Fundamentally, inspiration suggests that the biblical text has a special character. However, this uniqueness is not found at the literary level—as a literary product, the Bible is just like any other. Instead, the uniqueness is epistemological. Christians understand the Bible to be ultimately God's message to the People of God and to all of creation. The Christian confession is that Scripture gives unique witness to God's people-gathering interventions through the course of human history, culminating in Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the face of God is most clearly seen. For the Christian community, this confession implies that the Bible functions as the church's authoritative guide for life and practice. Thus, the Bible is the most valuable text ever produced. Troubling and comforting, the Bible remains worth listening to, worth asking questions of, and worth being shaped by. Given this special character, we believe that developing sound principles and practices of biblical interpretation should receive our primary attention.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through a variety of exegetical/hermeneutical activities, textbook readings, written assignments, and group discussions, students will interact personally and critically with the inductive method of Bible study. At the completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Master and explain (*knowledge objectives*):

- a) the four basic tasks of biblical exegesis/hermeneutics,
- b) the exegetical and hermeneutical guidelines for studying each of the nine literary genres represented in the Bible,
- c) the different kinds of language used in the Bible, and
- d) the different ways people learn—and the strategies for teaching that connect with a variety of learners.

2. Appreciate and appropriate (*values objectives*):

- a) a greater estimation for the artistry and significance of the biblical text as literature (human) and as Scripture (divine), and
- b) a deeper sensitivity to the challenge that God’s people in every generation have to discern together the always-present Word of God as revealed in the ancient prophetic and apostolic witness.

3. Coordinate and execute (*skills objectives*):

- a) *careful biblical exegesis*—establishing the parameters (beginning and end) of the textual unit (*pericope*), attending to the character of its genre and language, outlining its grammatical and logical structure, exploring the semantic range of its key words and the intertextual links—both internal and external, situating its message within the social, political, and historical contexts of its time, determining its central thrust, discerning the theological vision that drives it, appreciating the “symphonic effect” as its voice plays in concert with the other voices of the Christian Bible,
- b) *creative biblical hermeneutical reflection*—evaluating the temporal and cultural gap between the biblical world represented by the textual unit and our own, considering what effect it has had in other Christian communities over time and across cultures, developing imaginative analogies and metaphorical bridges that can place your contemporary faith community within the theological vision articulated by the biblical text, and suggesting practical ways to embody and appropriate that vision, and
- c) *effective teaching methods*—learning to “read” the teaching context in order to present biblical material in a way that is engaging, challenging, and thoughtful.

MBBS PROGRAM GOALS

This course contributes to the larger goals of the Seminary program in that it will help the student to:

1. Discern with greater precision the subject matter to which the biblical text gives witness, both its foreignness as well as its power to draw, to claim, and to transform life (MBBS desired outcome #1: *Demonstrate commitment to live as a disciple of Jesus in Christian community*; specifically outcomes 1.1 and 1.2; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).
2. Engage in the hermeneutical task of exploring ways that the symbolic world of the ancient text can inform, form, and reform the cultural norms which shape our faith communities (MBBS desired outcome #2: *Articulate commitment to a biblical theological Christian perspective*; specifically outcomes 2.1, 2.2, and 2.4; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).

3. Nurture healthy interpersonal relationships and effective communication patterns in the context of the learning community (MBBS desired outcome #3: *Interpret one's own and other cultural contexts of ministry using theological perspectives integrated with social scientific approaches*; specifically outcomes 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).

4. Develop and practice skills in sound biblical exegesis and interpretation for preaching, teaching, social advocacy, personal enrichment, and our life together (MBBS desired outcome #4: *Practice skills in pastoral and educational leadership*; specifically outcomes 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).

TEXTBOOKS

A contemporary translation of the Bible that aims at “dynamic equivalence” (e.g., *NRSV*, *TNIV*, *NIV*) is required. For comparison, it is often useful to consult more “formal equivalent” translations (e.g., *NASB*) as well as the more “functional equivalent” translations (e.g., *NLT*, *GNT*) or single-translator versions that are more paraphrastic (e.g., *Message*). This kind of comparative study can be facilitated by the use of either a “parallel” Bible (e.g., *The Precise Parallel New Testament* [Oxford, 1995], *The Contemporary Parallel New Testament* [Oxford, 1998]) or a Bible software program (e.g., *Bible Works*, *WordSearch*, *Logos*, *Quick Verse*, *PC Study Bible*, *Accordance* [for Mac]).

Reading the following textbooks is required. They are available for purchase through any bookseller and on one-day Reserve @ *Hiebert Library*. Be sure to check the publication year and get the right edition.

Ewert, D. (2000). *How to understand the Bible*. Scottdale, PA: Herald.

Fee, G. D. & Stuart, D. (2003). *How to read the Bible for all its worth*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

LeFever, M. (1996). *Creative teaching methods*. Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Ministry Resources.

Wald, O. (2002). *The joy of discovery in Bible study*, newly rev. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.

Besides the above textbooks, I have used numerous other resources in developing this course. The following items are listed to enable you to read further on the ideas I present, if interested.

Barr, J. (1961). *The semantics of biblical language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brueggemann, W. (1993). *Texts under negotiation: The Bible and postmodern imagination*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Caird, G. B. (1980). *The language and imagery of the Bible*. London: Gerald Duckworth.

Carson, D. A. (1984). *Exegetical fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

Dyck, E., ed. (1996). *The act of Bible reading*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

Hendricks, H. G. (1987). *Teaching to change lives*. Portland: Multnomah.

Lambert, D. (2004). *Teaching that makes a difference*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

McNabb, B. & Mabry, S. (1990). *Teaching the Bible creatively*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

- Osborne, G. R. (2006). *The hermeneutical spiral: A comprehensive introduction to biblical interpretation*, revised and expanded. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Schertz, M. & Yoder, P. (2001). *Seeing the text: Exegesis for students of Greek and Hebrew*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Shillington, V. G. (2002). *Reading the sacred text: An introduction to biblical studies*. London: T. & T. Clark.
- Wilhoit, J. & Ryken, L. (1988). *Effective Bible teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Yoder, P. (1982). *From word to life: A guide to the art of Bible study*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald.

COURSE FORMAT

While the format of the online course is asynchronous, it is assumed that students will process new material each week. Sunday will be the “anchor” day. The week’s new work (assignments, lessons, readings, etc.) will be posted to the respective “Folders” in the “File Storage” section of the class page on Sunday. The previous week’s work (postings, textbook questions, assignments, etc.) will be due in the appropriate “Folders” and/or “Forums” on the class page by the end of Sunday (midnight). However, when submitting assignments for grading, please use the following email account <bi505@mbseminary.edu>. On-time submissions are those sent by midnight on Sunday.

I plan to check in on the class page at least once a day. Please use the *Ask Me* Forum for any processing questions; you can be sure that if you are wondering about something, someone else will also be helped by our response to your question.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision)

Jan. 20 *Getting situated*

- read the email sent to all of the students registered for bi-505; it explains how to login to the class page and various orientation details; saved in the *Weekly Welcome Page* Folder
- skim through the syllabus posted in the *Public Files* folder and secure the course textbooks

-assignment

*compose several paragraphs (100 to 400 words) introducing yourself to your classmates and post it to the *Intro Posts* forum (start a new thread); talk about things like: who are you? where did you grow up? what is your educational background? what are your academic interests? what are your hobbies? what do find life giving at this time? who or what are the people, passions, and/or scriptural passages that have shaped you into the person you are today? what is your growth edge at this time?

*read the posts of your classmates as they become available

*after reading the syllabus, if there is something that does not make sense to you, post your query to the *Ask Me* Forum

*check through the questions (and me responses) in the *Ask Me* Forum to better situate yourself for the launch of the course in eleven days

Jan. 31 (Week #1) *Introduction to biblical studies for a missional church—part 1*

- study Matthew 6.24–34
- outline the concept of inductive Bible study and the basic procedures
- discuss the philosophical challenges of doing biblical studies in an increasingly postmodern world

-discuss the importance of the person of the teacher in communicating biblical content

-assignment:

*read Fee & Stuart chpts 1 and 2, Wald chpts 1 through 4, and Ewert pp 15–37

*respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention

*skim all Scripture text options (see learning activity #2 below) and post your top two selections to the *Textual Unit Selection* forum

*read the Parker Palmer interview posted in the *Pedagogical Notes* folder and post one comment and one follow-up question on the importance of the person of the teacher in the *Palmer interview* forum (100 words)

Feb. 7 (Week #2) *Introduction to biblical studies for a missional church—part 2*

-study Matthew 4.1–11

-explore the challenges of discerning a normative interpretive method (is there one?)

-locate the “meaning center” of a text (is it located with the author? text? or audience?)

-set out an epistemology of “inspiration”—clarity, sufficiency, authority—and the roles of teacher and community

-take note of your assigned textual unit group

-explore various learning styles

-assignment:

*skim the whole epistle in which your text is located (genre = Letter)

*read Fee & Stuart chpts 3 and 4 with Ewert pp 175–80, and Ewert pp 38–46

*respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention

*read the *Kolb learning behavior patterns* file and take the online *Paragon learning styles inventory* (both posted in the *Pedagogical Notes* folder) and read Paragon’s interpretation of your learning style; post your reaction to this assessment (surprises, questions, insights, follow-up) in a 100-word post to the *My learning style* forum

Feb. 14 (Week #3) *How to determine the parameters of a textual unit*

-define a textual unit or *pericope*

-list clues to watch for when determining the parameters of a textual unit

-practice establishing the textual units in Gen 12 and Amos 2

-review history and philosophy of pedagogy and how our perspective impacts our teaching

-assignment:

*skim Ruth 1–4 (genre = OT narrative)

*read Wald chpts 5 through 8, Fee & Stuart chpt 5 with Ewert pp 140–44, and Ewert pp 47–59

*respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention

*establish parameters of your *pericope* and make a list of observations (see Wald chpts 3–4); post your *pericope* demarcation with rationale to your specific *Textual Unit* forum

*view the U-Tube videos and complete worksheet on Philosophy and educational views posted to the *Pedagogical Notes* folder (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details)

Feb. 21 (Week #4) *How to make a structural outline*

- define literary structure
- list clues to watch for when determining the structure of a *pericope*
- outline the steps involved in making structural outline
- practice identifying “subsections” of the textual unit and giving them “functional” labels
- practice outlining the structure of Gen 12 and Amos 2
- discuss role of education in congregational life

-assignment:

- *skim Acts 1–9 (genre = Greco-Roman history)
- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 6 with Ewert pp 169–75, and Ewert pp 60–69
- *read LeFever chpts 1–3
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *prepare draft of structural outline with functional labels for your textual unit; post your list of labels with corresponding verses to your *Textual Unit* forum
- *post a 100-word statement to the *Role of education in congregational life* forum on what you think should be the role of education in congregational life (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details)

Feb. 28 (Week #5) *How to do a word study—part 1*

- give rationale for doing word studies
- outline the basic steps in doing a word study (see *Appendix A*)
- practice selecting and doing word-study research in Gen 12 and Amos 2
- explore the uniqueness in each stage of the human lifespan and the implications for teaching

-assignment:

- *skim Mark 1–16 (genre = Greco-Roman biography)
- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 7 with Ewert pp 154–62, and Ewert pp 70–84
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *complete final draft of *Text Profile*; email your assignment to <bi505@mbseminary.edu>
- *identify several key words for further study in your textual unit; post your word list and note preference to your *Textual Unit* forum; decide among yourselves which word you will study; each one should choose a different word
- *read *Teaching across the life span* posted in the *Pedagogical Notes* and post a 100-word statement to the *Pedagogy and life span* forum relating your key insight on how to take human development seriously in your thinking about congregational education (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details)

Mar. 7 (Week #6) *How to do a word study—part 2*

- review fallacies common to word-study research
- introduce the challenges of sorting out the manuscript tradition (textual variants)
- discuss the importance of the learning community in the context of teaching curriculum (only 3-unit students)

-assignment:

- *skim Luke 12.13–21; 15.11–32; 16.1–13; 18.9–14 (genre = Parable)

- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 8 with Ewert pp 163–69, and Ewert pp 85–98
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *continue work on your *Word-Study*
- *3-unit students complete a “treasure hunt” for Christian education curriculum; post your top two pics and tell in 100 words why you chose them to the *Curriculum resources—treasure hunt* forum (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details)

Mar. 14 (Week #7) *How to locate a text in its literary/historical context—part 1*

- explore the role of literary genre for interpretation
- outline the steps for locating a pericope in its literary context
- locate Gen 12 in its larger literary context
- discuss/share in groups your draft word study
- discuss how to teach the Bible creatively #1 (only 3-unit students)

-assignment:

- *skim Exod 19–24 (genre = Law)
- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 9, Wald chpts 9 through 12, and Ewert pp 187–207
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *complete final draft of *Word-Study*; email your assignment to <bi505@mbseminary.edu>
- *prepare a draft of a *Horizontal Chart* of your text’s larger literary context (see sample horizontal chart in *Handouts* folder; you’re welcome to manipulate it for your text)
- *3-unit students review presentation by Roger von Oech on how to be more creative posted in Pedagogical Notes folder; post a 100-word comment to the *Improving creativity* forum on one of the mental locks that is particularly challenging for you (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details)

Mar. 21 (Week #8) *How to locate a text in its literary/historical context—part 2*

- explore the role of a text’s socio-historical context for interpretation
- outline the steps for locating a *pericope* in its historical context
- locate Amos 2 in its historical context
- discuss how to teach the Bible creatively #2 (only 3-unit students)

-assignment:

- *skim Micah 1–7 (genre = Prophecy)
- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 10 with Ewert pp 150–53, and Ewert pp 125–39
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *begin library research on the historical setting of your text; go to a theological library and locate dictionary articles on your text (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, *The New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary*, and *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*) and journal articles (ATLA database); see file called *Access full-text articles from electronic database* posted to the *Handouts* folder
- *post to your *Textual Unit* forum a list of the dictionary and journal articles that you think may be useful in correct bibliographic format (Chicago or APA; see formatting samples posted to the *Handouts* folder); add one sentence to each entry stating, from your preliminary reading, why this article may have potential for your project

*3-unit students read both *The fine art of questioning* and the *Cone of learning* (both posted to the *Pedagogical Notes* folder) and post a 100-word report to *Sampling of Creative Bible Studies* forum, indicating the most creative Bible Study you've witnessed (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details)

Mar. 28 (Week #9) *How to bridge the temporal gap from then to now—part 1*

- explore the problem/promise of the temporal gap between then and now
- outline steps for bridging the temporal gap
- develop imaginative analogies and bridges in order to access a text's theological idea
- practice determining the underlying theological idea in 1 Cor 14
- explore the use of technology for teaching (only 3-unit students)

-assignment:

- *skim Psalms 3, 138, 8, 135, 2, 36, 11 (genre = Poem/Hymn)
- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 11 with Ewert pp 148–49, and Ewert pp 99–124
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *complete final draft of *Literary/Historical Context*; email your assignment to <bi505@mbseminary.edu>
- *make preliminary attempt to articulate your textual unit's underlying theology and various strategies that show potential for bridging the temporal gap; post your initial thoughts to your *Textual Unit* forum (100 words)
- *3-unit students view the video *Technology and teaching*, the pdf *TechandChurch*, and the podcast by Shane Hipps, *Spirituality of the Cell phone*, all posted in *Pedagogical Notes* folder and post a 100-word reaction to the *Technology* forum (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details)

Apr. 4 (Week #10) *How to bridge the temporal gap from then to now—part 2*

- determine the “modes of discourse” in which the text speaks (i.e., rule, principle, paradigm, and symbolic world) and decide how it will function for contemporary appropriation
- determine what role (if any) other sources of authority (e.g., tradition, reason, and experience) play in the text's application
- experiment with alternative ways of teaching (only 3-unit students)

-assignment:

- *skim Song of Songs 1–8 (genre = Wisdom)
- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 12 with Ewert pp 144–48, and Ewert pp 208–23
- *read LeFever chpts 4–14 (only 3-unit students)
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *post to your *Textual Unit* forum a list of the commentaries you have consulted that show promise for interpretation in correct bibliographic format (Chicago or APA); add one sentence to each entry stating, from your preliminary reading, why this commentary may have potential for your project
- *prepare draft of Theological/Hermeneutical Reflections on your text
- *3-unit students begin working on the *Exegetical Brief* (FORMAL) for your upcoming Bible study on yet a different pericope (see template and sample in *Pedagogical Notes* folder); see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details

Apr. 11 (Week #11) *How to design scenarios for living the text*

- examine the particular challenges of thinking theologically in the emerging postmodern context
- explore the missional church's task of proclaiming the biblical text as "counter drama" in which we hear old material freshly voiced that continues to challenge the cultural status-quo
- design scenarios for pragmatic implementation and actualization (i.e., "walk on the bridge")
- design a lesson using a lesson plan (only 3-unit students)

-assignment:

- *skim Rev 4–15 (genre = Apocalyptic)
- *read Fee & Stuart chpt 13 with Ewert pp 180–86, and Wald chpts 13 and 14
- *respond to textbook study questions posted to the *Textbook Questions* folder; make notes for yourself; if you have a question about one of the textbook questions, use the *Ask Me* forum to bring it to my attention
- *identify several pragmatic implementation scenarios for your text; post your findings for discussion to your *Textual Unit* forum (100 words)
- *complete final draft of the *Theological/Hermeneutical Reflections*; email your assignment to <bi505@mbseminary.edu>
- *3-unit students listen to *Learning from urban legends* and *Teaching that sticks* (both in the Pedagogical notes folder) and begin sketching out a *Lesson Plan* for the Bible Study you plan to lead (see *Lesson Plan* worksheet in the *Pedagogical Notes* folder); secure a venue to lead your Bible Study; review the evaluation form in the *Pedagogical Notes* folder; see *Weekly Welcome Page* for details

Apr. 18–May 9 (Weeks #12–15) *Three weeks for last assignments*

- *choose another biblical text from a different genre (see *Learning Activities* below) and complete second exegetical paper; see sample paper posted to *Handouts* folder (due May 23, 2010)
- *prepare for the online exam on textbook readings by reviewing your notes to the *Textbook study questions* (see the *Learning Activities* below)
- *3-unit students prepare, teach, and collect evaluations for a Bible Study on another biblical text from yet a different genre (see *Learning Activities* below); Bible Study portfolio due May 23, 2010

May 16 (Week #16) *Exam on course readings and exegetical method*

- do online exam on course readings (Bible, Fee & Stuart, Wald, Ewert, LeFever) and demonstrate skill in exegetical methods (see *Weekly Welcome Page* for login details)

-assignment:

- *complete exegetical paper; email your paper to <bi505@mbseminary.edu>; due May 23, 2010
- *complete Bible Study portfolio; email your portfolio to <bi505@mbseminary.edu> or fax it to 559-452-1752; due May 23, 2010

May 23 *Second exegetical paper due AND Bible Study Portfolio due for 3-unit students*

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS/EXPECTATIONS

The assignments are designed to promote the course and degree objectives listed above. The expectations for each assignment are listed below as well as what students can expect from me.

I expect that each student will:

1. Prepare for and participate in each of the weekly assignments. Consult the *Course Schedule* (above) for the biblical texts and textbook readings to be read and the exercises to be completed (as well as the assignment due dates). Be prepared to contribute to the online discussion with your discoveries, evaluation, and reflection by posting as instructed each week. This is an important part of the learning experience. After all the assignments have been graded, your final score will be adjusted down 2% for each week that I feel your postings were inadequate.

Keep up with the weekly Bible readings. On the final exam you will be asked whether you completed the weekly Bible readings. These readings are coordinated with the treatments of the nine biblical genres by Fee & Stuart and Ewert.

Compile a set of textbook study notes. Each week several questions on the assigned reading will be uploaded to the *Textbook Questions Folder*. The questions aim to guide your reading and check your mastery of the key points presented by the textbooks. I suggest that you save these questions to your computer and note your answers in the space provided as you read the textbook selections each week. These pages should become good study notes. They will help you prepare for the final exam. Be sure you can answer each of the textbook study questions; the multiple-choice section of the final exam is based on these questions.

2. Begin the exegetical process on a selected biblical text (see choices below) by making a three-page Text Profile. **Page #1** is devoted to *Observations*. List observations resulting from a close reading of the unit in several different translations. Include in your observations a note regarding your rationale for delimiting the parameters of your textual unit as you have (i.e., where it begins and where it ends). **Page #2** is for the *Structural Outline*. Make a structural outline showing the flow of the argument of the textual unit. Attach functional labels to the left of each sub-section that indicate just what each sub-section is doing (e.g., the label “assertion” indicates that the sub-section “asserts” something). **Page #3** is designated for *Questions*. List questions that probe for meaning, significance, and implications. These questions are the first steps toward interpretation and appropriation. The three pages combine to make a “chart” or “profile.” Note: The *Text Profile* is not a “finished product,” but rather a “working draft” that provides a “space” where everything can be seen at once and from where further reflection can continue (see samples in the *Exegetical Notes*).

Choose two of the following text fragments and rank them as to your 1st and 2nd choice. In the interests of equity and pedagogy, I have selected texts from Paul’s epistles that are all somewhat controversial and theologically challenging. During our class sessions we will bring balance to our exegetical work by treating OT texts.

Later in the course, you will have a chance to work on another biblical genre (non-epistle) for your final paper as well as a third genre (yet different) for your Bible Study (3-unit people only).

On the basis of your choices from the Pauline Letters, I will assign you to study groups where you will share, listen, challenge, and help each other work through the same text.

1 Thess 4.15	1 Cor 7.26	1 Cor 11.10	1 Cor 14.22
Col 3.18–19	Rom 1.26–27	Rom 11.29	Rom 14.3 1 Tim 2.12

The above text selections are NOT textual units. Each one is merely an isolated fragment of a verse or two, which must still be located within its larger textual unit. Your task is to establish the beginning and end of the textual unit. Remember, you cannot automatically use the chapter/verse divisions or paragraph breaks in your English version. While often helpful, these are decisions made by the translators/editors and must be tested. The reasons for the divisions are not always clear or defensible. You must be able to defend the parameters of your textual unit, even if you decide to go along with the paragraph division in your English version.

3. Prepare a Word-study of a key word in your textual unit. Select a word that is potentially significant for understanding the thrust of the unit (e.g., a word that is repeated, translated differently in various English versions, theologically important, ambiguous, or debated). You may need to begin researching several words before settling on the most promising one. Consult a concordance that has a mechanism (like Strong's or GK numbering system) to identify every occurrence of the underlying Hebrew/Greek word. You can do this in three ways: (1) Paper resources (e.g., *The Word Study Concordance* 1978 [BS 2305.W53 REF] or *The Hebrew-English Concordance of the OT* 1998 [BS 1121.K65 REF]), (2) Computer Bible Software programs with search engines (e.g., *WordSearch* by NavPress, *Scholar's Library* by Logos, *PC Study Bible* by BibleSoft, *QuickVerse* by Parsons, *Pradis* by Zondervan, *Accordance* [for Mac], or *BibleWorks* by Hermenutika), or (3) Internet Bible Study websites (e.g., <http://www.biblestudytools.com/>). Carefully examine and classify every occurrence of the Greek word in the NT. Write up your findings following the template given in *Appendix A*. Suggested length is 2 pages (see sample in *Exegetical Notes* and template in *Appendix A*).

4. Compile a study of the literary and the historical context of your textual unit. Do library research that is devoted to placing or to locating your textual unit within its larger context—both on a literary level and on a historical level. This assignment has two parts.

Part #1: The literary context. Below, I have provided a larger literary context for each isolated text fragment. 1 Thess 4.15 within the larger context of 1Thess 4.1—5.28; 1Cor 7.26 within the larger context of 1Cor 7.1—9.27; 1Cor 11.10 within the larger context of 1Cor 11.2—14.40; 1Cor 14.22 within the larger context of 1Cor 11.2—14.40; Col 3.18–19 within the larger context of Col 3.1—4.18; Rom 1.26–27 within the larger context of Rom 1.18—3.31; Rom 11.29 within the larger context of Rom 9.1—11.36; Rom 14.3 within the larger context of Rom 12.1—14.23; 1 Tim 2.12 within the larger context of 1 Tim 2.1—6.2.

Your task is to determine how your textual unit (which you established in your first assignment) relates to the other blocks of text in the larger literary context that we have provided. Begin by establishing the beginning and the end of each of the other textual units within the larger literary context. Remember, you cannot automatically use the chapter/verse divisions or paragraph breaks in your English version. You must be able to justify the delimitation of each textual unit, even if you decide to go along with the divisions provided in your English version.

Identify the thrust of each textual unit and give it a title. Then attach functional labels to the left of each sub-section nested within each textual unit. Record your decisions by setting out the

larger literary context in a horizontal chart, complete with all the textual units identified and subdivided (see *Exegetical Notes* and sample in *Handouts* folder). In order to fit it all on one page, you may omit the actual text and instead insert brief summaries of the content of each subsection. Be sure to include your assessment of the Characteristics and Lessons that emerge when the unit is viewed within its larger literary context.

Part #2: The historical context. Go to a theological library and consult the articles in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD)* 1992 (BS 440.A54 REF), *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (NIDB)* 2006 (BS 440.N443 REF), and *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (DPHL)* 1993 (BS 2650.2.D53 REF) that address the Epistle in which your text is found. If you cannot locate these volumes in the theological library near you, ask me about making substitutions. Summarize the essential elements of the historical context. Make note of good quotes. Copy them exactly. Note the page numbers and the author's name (see end of dictionary article). These will be needed for citing correctly. Then use *American Theological Library Association (ATLA)* on-line database from the Hiebert Library to locate five recent journal articles on your textual unit (see document called *Access full-text articles from electronic database* posted to the *Handouts* folder). Note the bibliographic information and be sure to select ones that are available in the collection at the theological library (or choose those articles that are available as full-text pdf files). Read three articles that appear to relate most to the text's historical context (you may need to go back to the ATLA to get more titles, if the ones you've chosen prove to be inadequate). Summarize and assess the author's argument. Make note of good quotes. Copy them exactly. Note the page numbers.

Organize your research discoveries and write a short report describing the historical context of your text. Be sure to give evidence of consulting two of the three dictionaries listed above (*ABD*, *NIDB*, and *DPHL*) and three journal articles by citing them appropriately in your paper. Suggested length is 2 pages (see sample in *Exegetical Notes*).

5. Write a theological/hermeneutical reflection that wrestles with the contemporary appropriation of your textual unit. Up to this point, the exercises and activities have been geared to reading the text "closely" or describing what the text "says." This is the Descriptive Task (i.e., defining the textual unit, establishing the text, analyzing the structure of the text, and exegeting the text). It is now time to begin the "constructive" stage—what the text "means" in the context where it is being appropriated. This includes three tasks—the Synthetic, the Hermeneutical, and the Pragmatic tasks.

In this activity, you will address both Synthetic Task and the Hermeneutical Task. Begin by identifying the theme, principle, or idea that drives your textual unit and try to put it one sentence. Be especially aware as to how the voice of your text plays in concert with other related voices in the Christian Bible. Consult at least the two commentaries noted in the *Exegetical Notes* (they are on *Reserve* at the *Hiebert Library*), in order to test your thinking with the larger community. If you cannot access these commentaries in the theological library near you, ask me about substitutions. Organize your findings and write a short report (no more than a page) using proper citation form. This concludes the Synthetic Task.

Begin the shift to the Hermeneutical Task by assessing the cultural/world-view gap between the biblical world and your own time. Determine what kind of hermeneutical translation is necessary

in order for your faith community to be “gripped” by the text and the theological message to which it gives witness. Decide on the text’s “mode of discourse” (e.g., rule, principle, paradigm, or symbolic world) and decide how it will function for contemporary appropriation. Give your rationale. Discern the role of other sources of authority (e.g., tradition, reason, experience) in sorting out the text’s contemporary significance. Finally, explore imaginative analogies and metaphorical bridges that could place your contemporary faith community within the theological vision articulated by the text. Organize your reflections and write a short report (no more than a page) using proper citation form. Thus, both the Theological and Hermeneutical reflections combine to make a two-page assignment (see sample in *Exegetical Notes*).

Note: the Hermeneutical task is not to be confused with *Application* or the *Pragmatic* task, which is still to be completed. In Hermeneutical step we are “constructing the bridge” from the ancient text to our world. In the Pragmatic Task (or Application) we plan how to “walk over the bridge.”

6. Write an exegetical/hermeneutical paper on another textual unit from a biblical genre other than “letters.” This assignment provides an opportunity to bring together all of the exegetical and hermeneutical skills learned through the semester and apply them to a text of your choice—one that you have not worked on before. Choose a genre other than “letters” and proceed as follows: begin your paper with an introduction to the issues raised by your textual unit. Be sure to clearly state the problem or question you are going to address. Often, situating your exegesis within a vocational, social, ministerial, or personal context of significance to you provides a good introduction. Then work through the four basic tasks of biblical exegesis as outlined in *Appendix B*. Be sure to note when you are transitioning from one task to another.

Organize your paper roughly as follows (assuming line spacing of 1.5): Introduction (1 page), Descriptive Task (8 pages), Synthetic Task (2 pages), Hermeneutical Task (2 pages), Pragmatic Task (2 pages), and Conclusion (½ page). In the Conclusion, briefly summarize your findings, referring to the context described in your Introduction.

Note: To earn a grade in the “A” range, (among other things) papers will give evidence of three things: 1) a well-conceived and executed paper with clear evidence of having addressed each of the four exegetical tasks, 2) extensive research with citations from Dictionaries, monographs, commentaries, and academic journals (use ATLA to locate these resources), and 3) a well-formatted paper using appropriate academic form with sources correctly cited. I will be grading you on the overall impact of the paper. See the Evaluation Rubric (*Appendix D*) for grading criteria.

I will post a sample student paper to the *Handouts* folder, so that you can see how one person successfully completed the assignment. Expected length is 15 pages (at 1.5 lines spacing) with a word count of about 6000.

This final paper will become part of your Performance Assessment Catalogue (PAC).

7. Prepare, teach, and collect evaluations for a Bible Study on another biblical text from yet a different genre (3-unit students only).

Plan and teach a Bible study on a biblical genre that you have not used in any of your previous assignments. Students are responsible to find their own location to teach the lesson. It should be a formal classroom setting like a Sunday school class or small-group Bible study.

The Bible Study portfolio should include the following items:

- *A one-page context fact sheet, which includes: the target group being taught—age, educational level, etc.; the setting—college, church, Sunday School class, small group, etc.; the room set-up, technological requirements, size of group, etc.; the details—length of session, etc.
- *A four-page “exegetical brief,” using the FORMAL template (*Appendix C*); a digital template is posted to the *Pedagogical Notes* folder with two samples; download and fill in as you do your preparatory research on the *pericope* to be taught (the FORMAL template is another version of the four-task exegetical method that we have been using in this class)
- *A two-page lesson plan, including lesson goals, teaching objectives, introductory question/activity, processing questions, activities, exercises, concluding question/activity, etc. (see *Lesson plan* worksheet in *Pedagogical Notes* folder)
- *A copy of any handouts used for the actual teaching session
- *Three evaluations from participants (use the *Evaluation forms* posted to the *Pedagogical Notes* folder)
- *A one-page self-reflection interacting with your teaching experience and the evaluations from the participants; what did you learn? what worked well? where is there room for improvement? what are your next steps?

8. Take an online exam to gauge your grasp of the course readings and mastery of the exegetical method. The exam includes three parts:

Part A: Bible readings (10% of the exam). I will ask you to indicate how much of the assigned Bible readings you have completed.

Part B: Textbook readings (69% of the exam). I have prepared a series of 50 multiple-choice questions designed to test your mastery of the content developed in Fee & Stuart, Wald, Ewert, and LeFever. All questions are drawn from the study questions.

Part C: Exegetical sketch (21% of the exam). I will provide you with two biblical texts that you have not worked through in class. Each text will be photo-copied page from a study Bible with one verse highlighted. Your task will be to write an exegetical sketch on one of these biblical texts, by defining the parameters of the textual unit that includes the highlighted verse and by addressing the four tasks—descriptive, synthetic, hermeneutical, and pragmatic. I want to see something written for each of these tasks. Of course, there is time only to sketch things out and list things that you feel would be worth pursuing (and why) in the library or elsewhere. The following paragraph (taken from the third course objective) will appear on the exam to remind you of the key features of the exegetical method we have learned (a literary-historical-canonical method).

The student should be able to perform and execute:

a) *careful biblical exegesis*—establishing the parameters (beginning and end) of the textual unit (*pericope*), attending to the character of its genre and language, outlining its grammatical and logical structure, exploring the semantic range of its key words and the intertextual links—both internal and external, situating its message within the social, political, and historical contexts of its time, determining its central thrust, discerning the theological vision that drives it, appreciating the “symphonic effect” as its voice plays in concert with the other voices of the Christian Bible,

b) *creative biblical hermeneutical reflection*—evaluating the temporal and cultural gap between the biblical world represented by the textual unit and our own, considering what effect it has had in other Christian communities over time and across cultures, developing imaginative analogies and metaphorical bridges that can place your contemporary faith community within the theological vision articulated by the biblical text, and suggesting practical ways to embody and appropriate that vision.

It is only fair and right that you have equally high expectations of me as well. My commitment to you is that I will endeavor to:

1. Join you in our mutual aim of encountering more deeply the disturbing and inspiring presence of God to which Scripture gives witness. While I function as “supervisor” in guiding your reading and writing, I am committed to participate with you as a “co-journeyer” in our common quest to bring/nourish life and healing in a broken world—which is the mission of God.
2. Foster a learning community atmosphere during our sessions where ideas can be discussed and explored freely without fear of ridicule or attack. Many people have thought deeply on the subject of biblical interpretation. While each of these “visions” or “constructions” is not equally valid or defensible, each deserves to be heard and explored within the evaluative process.
3. Provide careful and helpful feedback. I believe that it is pedagogically most helpful to have constructive criticism throughout the learning process. Therefore, I commit to work with you on your writing projects so that you can test, clarify, and expand your ideas. I plan to check the class web page at least once a day so that response time is not delayed. While the online format creates some pedagogical challenges, I remain committed to making it work. In addition, I aim to give useful feedback on the papers that you turn in and to do so in a timely fashion.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DUE DATES

Sunday	Feb. 7	Text selection due
Sunday	Mar. 7	Text Profile due
Sunday	Mar. 21	Word Study due
Sunday	Apr. 4	Literary/Historical Context due
Sunday	Apr. 18	Theological/Hermeneutical Reflections due
Sunday	May 16	Exam on course readings
Sunday	May 23	Exegetical/Hermeneutical Paper due
Sunday	May 23	Bible Study Portfolio due (3 unit students only)

SUMMARY OF GRADING SCHEME (2 units)

Text Profile	10%	} 100%
Word-Study	10%	
Literary/Historical Context	10%	
Theological/Hermeneutical Reflections	10%	
Exam	30%	
Second Exegetical/Hermeneutical Paper	30%	

SUMMARY OF GRADING SCHEME (3 units)

Text Profile	7%	} 100%
Word-Study	7%	
Literary/Historical Context	7%	
Theological/Hermeneutical Reflections	7%	
Exam	24%	
Second Exegetical/Hermeneutical Paper	24%	
Bible Study Portfolio	24%	

NOTES

1. Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <https://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, accommodations for disabilities, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to me or the Registrar.

2. Evaluation. The first four assignments (i.e., Text Profile, Word-Study, Literary/Historical Context, and Theological/Hermeneutical Reflections) will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Work that does not meet expectations is considered “incomplete” and will be returned for reworking until it is acceptable. The second exegetical paper will be assessed according to the expectations noted in *Appendix D*.

All assignments must be completed in order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.

Please note that “student work will be evaluated by two standards: a) by what is considered the appropriate level of graduate performance, and b) by comparison with work submitted in a given class” (<https://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

The letter grade conversions follow the MBBS Grading Template: A (100–94%), A- (93–90%), B+ (89–87%), B (86–83%), B- (82–80%), C+ (79–77%), C (76–73%), C- (72–70%), and F (69–0%) (<https://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

The performance expectations are as follows: “A ‘B’ grade is the baseline. A ‘B’ grade means the student is doing satisfactory work. The ‘B+’ or higher grade indicates that the student has exceeded the baseline performance standard. The ‘C’ grade indicates that the student has not achieved the baseline level” (<https://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

3. Credit/No Credit. Students who apply and are approved to take the course on a “Credit/No Credit” basis and expect to earn a “pass” must complete each assignment as described above, earn an overall average of $\geq 70\%$, and have no missed weeks of posting.

4. Due dates. Students are expected to submit written assignments on time (by midnight Sunday). Late credit/no credit assignments will be graded down $\frac{1}{2}$ a point (out of the points allotted) for each day (or part thereof) after the Sunday due date. Late exegetical/hermeneutical papers will be graded down 2% for each day (or part thereof) after the Sunday due date. The late penalty may

not apply to students who have a documented emergency, which prevents them from submitting the assignment on the due date. Check with me to see if alternative arrangements can be made.

5. Participation: Students are expected to participate in weekly postings as assigned. In this sequential, skill-building course, each week is important. After all the assignments have been graded, your final score will be adjusted down 2% for each week that I feel your postings were inadequate.

6. Formatting specifications. Chicago or APA citation format is acceptable. Choose one and follow it consistently. I have posted sample guide sheets for each formatting style to the *Handouts* folder. More detailed treatments are available from *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Hendrickson, 1999) and *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses*, 11th ed. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).

7. Course evaluations. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.

APPENDIX A: WORD-STUDY TEMPLATE

Note: *The following guidelines are an adaptation of a document produced by Prof. Allen Guenther and they are reproduced here with permission from the author.*

1. WORD IDENTIFICATION

a) *Give the English transliteration of the Hebrew/Greek word and cite the textual unit in which it is found. Note the Strong's or GK (Goodrick/Kohlenberger) number attached to the word.*

b) *Parse the word (as completely as you can) giving its grammatical characteristics (e.g., part of speech, root, tense/aspect, voice, mood, person, number, etc.).*

c) *Note implications (if any) for the meaning in this context drawn from the parsing data.*

2. FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION

a) *Indicate the number of times the word occurs in Scripture. Count all the occurrences of the root word. Make note of any cognates (verbs, nouns, adjectives). Are there any patterns? Comment.*

b) *Note the distribution of the word in Scripture. Are there specific genres where the word appears more/less often? Comment.*

3. MEANING

a) *Prepare a "working draft" listing each occurrence along with its meaning. Work your way through the list by reading each occurrence in its biblical context. Infer the meaning of the word as it is used in each particular context. Do not automatically copy the translation from one English version. Compare various translations and decide on the word or phrase that best captures the meaning of the Hebrew/Greek word in English. Are there distinct groupings of meaning emerging?*

b) *Rearrange your working draft list by grouping the meanings into similar usage categories. Select several representative examples for each category from your exhaustive list.*

c) *Organize the meaning categories with representative examples* for presentation in the final draft form of your word-study. Sometimes the semantic field of a word can be arranged using categories that can be plotted at various points on a continuum from literal to figurative. Sometimes other arrangements are more suitable. Determine which presentation form is best for your semantic analysis.

d) *Summarize in a few sentences various meanings of the word within Scripture.*

4. MEANING IN CONTEXT

a) *Select the most appropriate meaning for the textual unit you are studying.* Be careful to consider both the immediate and larger literary contexts.

b) *Justify your decision using the contextual clues* (literary and historical) as well as the grammatical clues noted above in the parsing of the word.

5. VERIFICATION

a) *Compare your decision with the one taken in other translations.* Check those that are more literal as well as those that are more paraphrastic. Note agreements and disagreements. Comment

b) *Compare your decision with the one taken by the standard lexicons.* Note agreements and disagreements. Comment.

APPENDIX B: EXEGETICAL/HERMENEUTICAL TEMPLATE

Note: *The following guidelines are an adaptation of those we have learned from some of our mentors, Profs. Elmer Martens, Allen Guenther, Tim Geddert, Brevard Childs, and Richard Hays.*

A Literary-Historical-Canonical Method

1. THE DESCRIPTIVE TASK: READING THE TEXT CAREFULLY

a) *Define the parameters of the textual unit or pericope (i.e., the text) under consideration.*

*Read the text in its larger context (this may mean reading several chapters or the whole book).

*Identify the type(s)/genre(s) of literature represented in the text (e.g., narrative, discourse, exhortation, poetry, apocalyptic, gospel, law, wisdom, etc.).

*Identify the beginning and end of the text to be exegeted (clues: shifts in grammar, genre, scene, and theme; certain literary conventions; etc.).

b) *Establish the text.*

*Read the text in multiple translations or translate from the original language (parse key words and analyze syntax).

*If possible, assess manuscript variants (if any) and decide on the “best” reading (give rationale).

*Decide on a “working translation” that best coheres with the meaning of the text as it is emerging in your interpretation (give rationale).

c) *Analyze the structure of the text.*

*Identify and label the major subdivisions using literary and grammatical clues in the text (i.e., use functional labels like: introduction, rationale, assertion, illustration, instruction, warning, conclusion, etc.).

*Outline the text, using indentation and spacing (etc.) to graphically show relationships at the “paragraph level” and, if possible, at the “sentence level” (i.e., grammatical and semantic diagramming).

d) *Restate the message of the text.*

*Determine the meanings of key words and phrases (use Strong's numbers, if necessary, along with concordances, lexicons, and theological wordbooks to find the meaning of the underlying Hebrew or Greek word in your text).

*Determine the relationship of the parts to the whole—explore the internal relations between the parts (e.g., rhetorical features and patterns of persuasion).

*Locate the text in its historical, literary, and social context (use Bible dictionaries, commentaries, monographs, journal articles, etc.).

*State the central issue, message, or thrust of the text, in a sentence.

2. THE SYNTHETIC TASK: PLACING THE TEXT IN CANONICAL CONTEXT

a) *Explore the theology of the text.*

*Compare with parallel canonical texts (i.e., other related texts in the Christian Bible) and note differences and similarities that come through the echoes, allusions, and inter-textual links.

*Discern the coherent theological message that holds together, but does not reduce, the canonical tensions.

*State the underlying theological vision that drives the text, in a sentence.

b) *Test your theological interpretation with others.*

*Consult commentaries, monographs, journal articles, dictionary articles, etc. (use ATLA's "scripture search" feature to find publications on your text).

*Discuss your findings and interpretation with others in your faith community.

*Examine alternative interpretations and make revisions and modifications, as needed.

3. THE HERMENEUTICAL TASK: RELATING THE TEXT TO THE PRESENT

a) *Evaluate the temporal/cultural gap between the textual world and the contemporary world.*

*Research the effect the text has had in other Christian communities over time and across cultures.

*Explore ways to "bridge the gap" so that the text's contemporary effect, while differing, could still bear a "familial resemblance" to its effect in other faith communities.

b) *Articulate the on-going message of the text.*

*Decide on the text's "mode of discourse" (e.g., rule, principle, paradigm, or symbolic world) and how it will function for contemporary appropriation. Give rationale.

*Discern the role (if any) of other sources of authority (e.g., tradition, reason, experience, etc.) and how they will contribute to "building a bridge that spans the gap."

*Construct imaginative analogies and metaphors that could place your contemporary faith community within the theological vision expressed by the text. (Note: The aim here is not to make the text relevant to us, but to be "drawn into" the text so that it reshapes the norms of our present faith community.)

4. THE PRAGMATIC TASK: LIVING THE TEXT

a) *Appropriate the message of text in ways that resonate with its theological vision (i.e., "walk over the bridge that spans the gap between the textual world and our own").*

b) *Identify spheres of life and particular circumstances where the theological truth(s) of the text (i.e., its subject matter) could be embodied and actualized.* (Note: While advocating for changed "actions" is good, these may be a sham or at most superficial, unless transformation is rooted at a deeper level—in a changed "way of seeing" ourselves, others, and God.)

c) *Develop and test pragmatic applications in your life and in your faith community so that the theological message of the text is proclaimed in an invitational and clear way.*

d) *Surround the whole process, from reading the text to its application, in prayer.*

APPENDIX C: WRITING AN EXEGETICAL BRIEF—FORMAL

Note: *The following guidelines are an adaptation of Prof. Elmer A. Martens's FORMAL method.*

F = find the unit and identify the genre

O = outline the structure with functional labels

R³ = research key words, relate parts internally, relate parts externally

M = make a summary of the thrust or theme or theology of the text in a sentence

A = articulate a constructive form of the text's theology for today

L = live the text's theology in practical ways

F = find the unit and identify the genre

-where does the textual unit begin and end? rationale?

-what is the genre of the text? what questions are reasonable?

O = outline the structure with functional labels

-divide the text into its main building blocks; attach functional labels; number the parts

R³ = research key words, relate parts internally, relate parts externally

-key words

-which words appear theologically or conceptually significant?

-go to <http://www.biblestudytools.com/Lexicons/> (or another lexicon) and look up the usage of the word in the NT; determine which nuance is in view in this text; explore significance

-internal relations

-make note of any patterns, word plays, repetitions within the text; analyze

-consult Bible dictionaries, journal articles (ATLA), and commentaries

-external relations

-make note of any patterns, echoes, allusions, to other OT texts and NT texts; assess

-what historical, social, anthropological, and/or political issues could clarify the textual message?

-consult Bible dictionaries, journal articles (ATLA), and commentaries

M = make a summary of the thrust or theme or theology of the text in a sentence

A = articulate a constructive form of the text's theology for today

-is this text speaking as a rule, principle, paradigm, or symbolic world?

-who benefits from this text's voice? who does not? why? how?

-and how do we negotiate this textual voice with our experience, reason, and/or tradition?

L = live the text's theology in practical ways

-design a several scenarios that demonstrate ways in which the message of this text (as negotiated through the cultural context) can be embodied or appropriated today

Works cited: list the sources you used in correct bibliographic form

APPENDIX D: EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR EXEGETICAL/HERMENEUTICAL PAPER

Category	%	Poor (“C” range)	Satisfactory (“B” range)	Excellent (“A” range)
Statement of purpose (10 points) a) clear question or problem or thesis b) key issues in the text addressed	10	Question not clearly identified Some or all key issues ignored	Question statement is identifiable Paper moves from statement of problem through the exegetical steps to conclusion Key issues identified and treated	Question statement is framed with innovation, creativity, and insight Paper moves from statement of problem through the exegetical steps to conclusion Key issues identified and discussed with awareness of the strength of various arguments
Analysis of the text (20 points) a) demarcation of textual unit b) structural outline shows function of parts in relation to whole c) discussion of key words	20	Demarcation of textual unit, structural outline, and word studies are inadequate Does not discern well the issues to be addressed	Basic ability to demarcate textual unit Good structural outline Appropriate word studies Keeps focus on the textual unit Demonstrates awareness of grammatical issues and possibilities	Above average ability demonstrated in demarcation, structural analysis, word studies, and focus Textual variants/problems assessed, understood, and cogently presented Demonstrates ability to evaluate grammatical possibilities and argue for choices made in context
Assessment of literary issues (20 points) a) genre b) literary context c) rhetorical features d) relation to inner biblical context and place of passage in overarching biblical context: immediate, book, cannon e) statement of text’s theological vision	20	Does not demonstrate awareness of the text’s internal literary structure or of related texts	Aware of related texts Places text in overarching framework of immediate chapter, book, and related writings in the canon Some awareness of text’s rhetorical and persuasive features Understands the legitimate contribution of other passages to interpretation and theological vision	Strong grasp of related texts and ability to evaluation connections Places text in the overarching framework of the canon Understands and makes use of the stylistic and theological tendencies of the writer Superior grasp of text’s internal literary structure, theological vision, and contribution
Concern for historical, cultural, and social context (15 points)	15	Inadequate or no awareness of the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which the text was written	Shows basic awareness of the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which the text was written	Superior awareness of the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which the text was written
Hermeneutical reflection (10 points) a) evaluate the gap between textual and contemporary world b) articulate the ongoing message of the text	10	Little awareness or sensitivity to the temporal and cultural gap Inadequate attempt to articulate the ongoing message of the text	Basic awareness of the temporal and culture differences between then and now Good attempt to bridge the gap in order to hear the text’s message today	Superior sensitivity to the temporal and cultural differences between then and now Exceptionally clear articulation of a way to bridge the gap in order to hear the text’s message today
Application or “so what factor” (10 points) a) identifies concrete ways to embody the text and theological concepts b) solid conclusion	10	Inadequately identifies theological implications of text Few if any concrete suggestions Weak or nonexistent conclusion	Clearly identifies theological implication of the text Makes concrete suggestions for appropriating the text’s message Adequate conclusion	Identifies the theological implications of the text with particular insight and persuasiveness Real insight into concrete ways the significance of the text can shape contemporary life Convincing conclusion
Bibliography (5 points) a) solid academic sources b) adequate number c) critique of sources used in body of paper	5	Meets less than 70% of assignment’s bibliographic expectations Proper citation format not used	Meets 70% or greater of assignment’s bibliographic expectations Good citation format; some errors in form	Meets 90% or greater of assignment’s bibliographic expectations Proper citation format; hardly any errors in form
English Grammar (5 points) a) grammar b) word choice c) punctuation d) spelling	5	Many grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors	Few grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors Proper use of words	None or very few grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors Word choices “sparkle”
Writing Style (5 points) a) evidence of thoughtful logic; moves from introduction, through a main discussion, and to a conclusion b) appropriate summaries c) good “flow” d) appropriate length and citation format e) appropriate use of endnotes or footnotes	5	Meets less than 70% of assignment’s expectations for writing style Introduction, discussion, and conclusion is rambling, disjointed, and poorly worded Style is distracting and confusing	Meets 70% or greater of assignment’s expectations for writing style Use of clear language Clear introduction, developed discussion, and coherent conclusion Style is readable and understandable	Meets 90% or greater of assignment’s expectations for writing style Clear introduction, developed discussion, and coherent conclusion Lively style and exceptional articulation Smooth transitions from section to section Significance made explicit in each section

Sub Total = _____ / 100

Minus 2% for each day late

Total = _____