

**Syllabus for
Biblical Hermeneutics in Theological Perspective:
MISSIONAL HERMENEUTICS
BIB 790/890**

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I. Seminar Description

Catalogue Description: This is a seminar consisting largely of readings and responses to the readings that will focus on a variety of issues concerning the theological appropriation of the Bible as Christian scripture. Possible issues to be considered in the seminar include: the relation of Christian biblical theology to the discipline of systematic theology; the interaction of the church with its scripture; the significance of philosophical and theological hermeneutics (e.g., Gadamer, Ricoeur, Barth, ideological readings, etc.); important shifts in the Bible's interpretive context (pre-modern, modern, and postmodern), and the nature of biblical authority. Prerequisite: six hours of exegetical courses or permission.

Expanded Description for 2009: This semester's seminar will concentrate on the development, nature, and practice of a missional hermeneutic as a sub-genre of theological interpretation. For a portion of the seminar attention will be focused on reading portions of 1 & 2 Thessalonians through the lens of a missional hermeneutic.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course you will have:

1. Demonstrated a basic familiarity with the movement aimed at practicing a theological hermeneutics of Christian Scripture (class sessions and assignments due on 9/10, 17, 24).
2. Demonstrated a rudimentary understanding of the relationship of this movement to the emerging emphasis on missional hermeneutics (class session and assignment due on 10/1).
3. Demonstrated an understanding of how conceptions of sin and salvation relate to conceptions of the *missio Dei* (class session and assignment due on 10/8).
4. Demonstrated a familiarity with, and a critical evaluation of, recent attempts to articulate the nature of missional hermeneutics (class sessions and assignments due 10/15–11/12).
5. Demonstrated an ability to articulate a coherent, preliminary statement (informed by your course reading) of the nature of missional hermeneutics (class sessions and assignments due 10/1–12/17).
6. Demonstrated an ability to apply your emerging understanding of missional hermeneutics consistently on the interpretation of specific biblical texts (class sessions and assignments due 11/19–12/17).
7. Demonstrated an ability to work in a group designing and constructing an adult education course which consistently applies a missional hermeneutic to biblical texts (class session and assignment due on 12/17).

II. Textbooks Required to Purchase

Green, Joel B. *Seized By Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.

Treier, Daniel J. *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006.

III. Other Required Essays/Articles to be supplied through NTS Library or Online Sources

Barram, Michael. "The Bible, Mission, and Social Location: Toward a Missional Hermeneutic." *Interpretation* 61 (2007): 42-58 (ATLA).

_____. "A Response at AAR to Hunsberger's 'Proposals...' Essay" (<http://www.gocn.org/resources/articles/response-aar-hunsberger-s-proposals-essay>).

Biddle, Mark. "Sin." *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*. Baker, forthcoming (Moodle).

Brownson, James. "Speaking the Truth in Love: Elements of a Missional Hermeneutic." In *The Church between Gospel and culture*, ed. by George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder. Eerdmans, 1996 (library reserve).

_____. "A Response at SBL to Hunsberger's 'Proposals...' Essay" (<http://www.gocn.org/resources/articles/response-sbl-hunsbergers-proposals-essay>).

Chapman, Stephen B. and Lacey C. Warner. "Jonah and the Imitation of God: Rethinking Evangelism and the Old Testament." *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 2 (2008): 43-69 (Moodle/library reserve).

Gavrilyuk, Paul. "Scripture and the Regulei Fedei: Two Interlocking Components of the Canonical Heritage," in *Canonical Theism*, pp. 27-43 (library reserve).

Goheen, Michael W. "Continuing Steps Toward a Missional Hermeneutic." *Fideles: A Journal of Redeemer Pacific College* 3 (2008): 49-99 (Moodle/library reserve).

_____. "The Urgency of Reading the Bible as One Story." *Theology Today*, 64 (2008): 469-83 (ATLA).

Gorman, Michael and Richard Middleton. "Salvation." *New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*. Abingdon, forthcoming (library/Moodle).

Gorman, Michael. All blogs on missional hermeneutics at Crosstalk (<http://www.michaeljgorman.net/blog/>).

Guder, Darrell. "MISSIONAL HERMENEUTICS: THE MISSIONAL AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE - Interpreting Scripture as Missional Formation" (with response by Mary Schertz) *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 15 (2007): 106-24 (http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission_Focus_Vol_15.pdf).

_____. “MISSIONAL HERMENEUTICS: THE MISSIONAL VOCATION OF THE CONGREGATION - and How Scripture Shapes That Calling” (with “Response and Waterford Story” by Neil Amstutz) *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 15 (2007): 125-46 (http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications/publications/mf/Mission_Focus_Vol_15.pdf).

Hays, Richard. “Reading the Bible with Eyes of Faith: The Practice of Theological Exegesis.” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1 (2007): 5-22 (library/Moodle).

Hunsberger, George R. “Starting Points, Trajectories, and Outcomes in Proposals for a Missional Hermeneutic: Mapping the Conversation.” Presented at the AAR (Nov 1) and SBL (Nov 22) Meetings: Fall of 2008 (<http://www.gocn.org/resources/articles/proposals-missional-hermeneutic-mapping-conversation>).

Johnson, Andy. “Missional from First to Last: Paul’s Letters and the Missio Dei.” NPH (forthcoming/Moodle)

McCormick, K. Steve. “The Church after the Likeness of the Holy Trinity is the Church after the *Missio Dei*.” *Didache* 6 (http://didache.nts.edu/pdfs/GTIE_McCormick.pdf).

Rae, Murray. “Texts in Context: Scripture in the Divine Economy.” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1 (2007): 23-46 (library/Moodle).

IV. Helpful Websites

<http://www.gocn.org/> (Gospel and Our Culture Network)

<http://jrwoodward.net/2008/11/a-primer-on-todays-missional-church/>

<http://realmealministries.org/WordPress/>
<http://www.redcliffe.org/standard.asp?id=5687&cachefixer=cf164641038776248>

<http://www.andrewperriman.com/>

V. Requirements

1. Regular Seminar Attendance, Preparation, and Participation: You must regularly attend and actively participate in the seminar discussion. You will be evaluated based on the quality of your contributions to the discussion. If you have an unexcused absence for the day, you will receive a zero for your participation grade that day. This will constitute 15% of your grade for the course.

Basis for Evaluation: I will also take the following factors into account in evaluating your participation: (1) ability to demonstrate a breadth and depth of understanding of the material engaged; (2) ability to engage this material **in a critical way**; (3) ability to exhibit how the material is related to a larger theological and ecclesial context. If you demonstrate a **consistent** ability to do these things in these papers and your seminar participation, you can expect to receive a B. If you demonstrate consistent ability to do them **incisively and with excellence**, you can expect to receive an A. If you demonstrate an ability to do these things **often, but not consistently**, you can expect to receive a C. (Hence, I assume that a C means “average,” or “satisfactory” work. It does **not** mean “bad” or “unsatisfactory.”) If you **seldom** demonstrate an ability to do these things, you can expect to receive a D.

2. Reactions to Readings: You will write a 500-750 word reaction to each day's assigned readings (see Class and Reading Schedule below). Usually the purpose of these papers is to identify key issues and offer an initial response to them. In that case you should conclude your paper by proposing 3-4 questions designed to help guide seminar discussion. However, there will be a number of times when I will give you more specific guidance on the nature of these papers. In those cases I will give that guidance in the session before the paper is due. There are eleven sessions in which these papers will be due. You must do 10 of the 11 but you cannot skip the ones due on 10/1 or 12/10. The papers will constitute 50% of your grade for the course (5% per paper). In addition to evaluating these papers based on their correct use of English, I will evaluate them using the Basis for Evaluation given immediately above under Requirement 1. They are due at class time, and you should bring two copies of your paper to each class (one for you and one for me). Given that these papers are intended to enhance seminar discussion, **I will not accept them late.**

3. Final Group Project: The final assignment for this course is a group project. The task is to design a congregational adult education course on the Thessalonian Correspondence using a missional hermeneutic. The project groups (size determined by size of the seminar) will prepare this course with the following components:

- a. A preliminary 500-750 word description of the nature of a missional hermeneutic. **Note Carefully:** The following sections of this project should be developed and articulated in a way that is consistent with your preliminary description.
- b. A description of the congregation in which the course will be taught.
- c. A statement of the educational goals of the course.
- d. An outline of the course contents, including its calendar (it may range from six to twelve weeks), with a description of the content and learning goals of each session.
- e. A description of any materials to be used by the participants.
- f. A detailed lesson plan for four sessions of the course (probably the longest part of the paper).
- g. A description of the means of evaluation to be used to assess the effectiveness of the course.
- h. A bibliography of all materials used by the project team in preparing the course.

The paper should be written using correct English and clearly divided using the outline above. It should not exceed 20 pages. It will be due on December 17 at the time the registrar sets for the beginning of the final exam. In addition, your group will prepare a PowerPoint presentation for that session in which you summarize your paper and present your project orally. You should choose only one of your detailed lesson plans to present in that PowerPoint presentation. Each of your group members should take part in the oral presentation. You should not simply read long sections of your paper or the PowerPoint presentation. The latter is simply to be a guide for your group and your audience as you present your project to the class. The whole project will constitute 35% of your grade for the course (25% for the written presentation and 10% for the PowerPoint/Oral presentation). Given the nature of this assignment, I will not accept it late.

VI. Class and Reading Schedule

Date	Class Topic	Assigned Reading
09/10	Introduction to Seminar	
09/17	Theological Hermeneutics	Trier; Hays
09/24	Theological Hermeneutics	Green; Rae
10/01	Missional Hermeneutics as Theological Hermeneutics: The Creeds as Missional	Gavrilyuk; McCormick
10/08	Sin, Salvation, and the <i>missio Dei</i>	Biddle; Gorman/Middleton
10/15	Recent Articulations of Missional Hermeneutics	Wright, <i>Mission of God</i> , Part 1; Goheen (both articles)
10/29	Recent Articulations of Missional Hermeneutics	Guder (both articles); Barram (“The Bible”); Brownson (“Speaking”)
11/05	Recent Articulations of Missional Hermeneutics	Hunsberger; Brownson (“A Response”); Barram (“A Response”); Gorman (all blog entries)
11/12	Recent Articulations of Missional Hermeneutics in Practice	Wright, Part 2; Chapman & Warner; Johnson
11/19	Developing and Applying a Missional Hermeneutic	Wright, Part 3; Missional Interpretation of 1 Thess 1–3
12/03	Developing and Applying a Missional Hermeneutic	Wright, Part 4; Missional Interpretation of 1 Thess 4–5
12/10	Developing and Applying a Missional Hermeneutic	Missional Interpretation of 2 Thessalonians
12/17	Developing and Applying a Missional Hermeneutic	Final Group Project on the Thessalonian Correspondance