



HE101 Biblical Hermeneutics & Interpretation

Dr Philip Satterthwaite | 3 CR

About the Course

'Inspired'; 'infallible'; 'authoritative'; 'the Word of God'. Many Christians in Singapore would be happy to describe the Bible in those terms. But the Bible has to be interpreted and applied by men and women who are usually far from inspired, and who are all too prone to error (though they may still claim the authority of Scripture for what

they say). The result can be that falsehood is propagated in God's name, and that the Bible is turned from being the saving and healing revelation of God into something harmful and even destructive. It is not enough to have a 'high' doctrine of Scripture: we must also interpret Scripture accurately.

Credits

3CR

Fees*

S\$450(Credit)

S\$240 (Audit)

Class Format

Online

* Alumni are entitled to 10% discount on audit course(s)

The main theme of this course is the interpretation and application of Scripture. It aims to help you reflect seriously on what is involved in reading, interpreting and applying the biblical text. During the course several necessary aspects of biblical interpretation (e.g., word studies, the relevance of the historical context) will be considered.

The course falls into two parts. Part I (Lectures 1–6), covered in three sessions, deals with general principles of biblical interpretation. It also considers the topics of word studies and Bible translations.

Part II (Lectures 7–14), also covered in three sessions, moves on to consider the different types of text found in the Bible: the NT letters, the Gospels and Acts; OT narrative, law, poetry, prophecy and wisdom. All of these texts have their own distinctive features, and care must be taken to interpret each of them in appropriate ways.

*The textbook for the course is J.S. Duvall & J.D. Hays, *Grasping God's Word. A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (3rd edition; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).*

As the subtitle of the text-book implies, there will be a 'hands-on' element to the teaching method followed in this course. The aim is to help students develop skills that will be useful to them in their own Bible study and Bible teaching

About the Lecturer

Dr Philip E. Satterthwaite has been Lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew at BGST since 1998. Before that he was Research Fellow in Hebrew & Aramaic at Tyndale House, Cambridge. His main research areas are the Old Testament Historical books and the Septuagint. In 2007 his book *Exploring the Old Testament 2: The Histories* (written with J.G. McConville) was published by SPCK/IVP. Philip has preached and taught in a number of churches in Singapore. He is a member of Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church. He is married to Eileen. Since 2011 he has been Principal of BGST.



Course Objectives

- i) To introduce students to some of the key issues in the interpretation and application of biblical texts.
- ii) To introduce students to the main genres (types of text) found in the Bible.
- iii) To give students practice in handling different biblical texts.

Course Outline

Please note: all the assignments for this course, apart from the final paper, are designed to complement the lectures, by giving you practice in the use of interpretative methods introduced during the lectures, and by exposing you to different types of biblical text. This is why we require the assignments to be submitted according to the deadlines specified below.

PART 1: Basic Issues in Hermeneutics

Section	Topic	Assignments	Deadlines
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture 1: Introduction to the Course; the Interpretative Journey (Duvall & Hays, pp. 39–49)• Lecture 2: How to Read the Book – Sentences, Paragraphs, Discourses (Duvall & Hays, pp. 51–112)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MCQs on Lectures 1 and 2• Questions on Lectures 1 and 2• One 1000-word assignment from Duvall & Hays pp. 105–112: <u>either</u> Assignment 5-1 (Neh. 1:1–11); <u>or</u> Assignment 5-2 (Mark 5:21–43); <u>or</u> Assignment 5-3 (Mark 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be submitted on the 1st day of third month

1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 3: The Historical-Cultural Context. What Do we Bring to the Text? The Literary Context (Duvall & Hays, pp. 113–62) Lecture 4: Word Studies; Bible Translations (Duvall & Hays, pp. 23–38, 163–87) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCQs on Lectures 3 and 4 Questions on Lectures 3 and 4 A 1000-word assignment from Duvall & Hays: <u>either</u> Assignment 6-2 on p. 136 (Haggai); <u>or</u> Assignment 8-1 on p. 162 (Acts 1:7–8 and 1 Cor. 11:27–32) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be submitted on the 1st day of fifth month
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 5: Who Controls the Meaning? Levels of Meaning (Duvall & Hays, pp. 189–224) Lecture 6: The Role of the Holy Spirit; Application (Duvall & Hays, pp. 225–47) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCQs on Lectures 5 and 6 Questions on Lectures 5 and 6 A 1000-word assignment from Duvall & Hays: <u>either</u> Assignment 11:1 on p. 223 (1 Kings 17) <u>or</u> Assignment 12-2 on p. 233 (lectio divina) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be submitted on the 1st day of seventh month

PART 2: The Different Biblical Genres

Section	Topic	Assignments	Deadlines
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 7: New Testament Letters (Duvall & Hays, pp. 251–68) Lecture 8: Gospels and Acts (Duvall & Hays, pp. 269–307) Lecture 9: Revelation (Duvall & Hays, pp. pp. 309–30) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCQs on Lectures 7–9 Questions on Lectures 7–9 A 1000-word assignment from Duvall & Hays: <u>either</u> Assignment 14-1 on p. 268 (Flow of Thought); <u>or</u> Assignment 15-2 on p. 290 (Interpreting a Parable); <u>or</u> Assignment 16-1 on p. 307 (Interpretative Journey and Acts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be submitted on the 1st day of ninth month
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 10: Old Testament Narrative (Duvall & Hays, pp. 331–54) Lecture 11: Law (Duvall & Hays, pp. 355–72) Lecture 12: Old Testament Poetry (Duvall & Hays, pp. 373–96) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCQs on Lectures 10–12 Questions on Lectures 10–12 A 1000-word assignment from Duvall & Hays: <u>either</u> Assignment 18-2 on p. 353 (Genesis 22); <u>or</u> Assignment 18-3 on p. 354 (Deut. 17 and 1 Kings 1–11); <u>or</u> Assignment 19-2 on p. 371 (Lev. 23:22); <u>or</u> Assignment 19-5 on p. 372 (Lev. 23:3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be submitted on the 1st day of eleventh month
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 13: Prophets (Duvall & Hays, pp. 397–419) Lecture 14: Old Testament Wisdom (Duvall & Hays, pp. 421–42) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCQs on Lectures 13–14 Questions on Lectures 13–14 A 1000-word assignment from Duvall & Hays: <u>either</u> Assignment 20-3 on p. 396 (Psalm 1); <u>or</u> Assignment 21-1 on p. 417 (Mic. 6:6–8); <u>or</u> Assignment 22-2 on p. 442 (Job. 38:18–21) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be submitted on the 1st day of thirteenth month

Course Requirements

The grade point for HE 101 will be based on the following:

1. Short responses to the recorded lectures: six multiple-choice assignments and six short-question assignments. Details of these assignments are pp. 3–4 of this Synopsis. ***(In total these twelve short responses are worth 12% of the final Grade Point.)***
2. Six 1000-word practical assignments taken from Duvall & Hays. Details of these assignments are pp. 3–4 of this Synopsis. ***(In total these six assignments are worth 48% of the final Grade Point.)***
3. Either an exegesis paper on a biblical text, or a review essay. Details of this assignment are given below.
(This assignment is worth 40% of the final Grade Point.)

Exegesis Paper/Essay

Exegesis paper

If you write an exegesis paper, you must write it on one of the following biblical texts: Exodus 22:1–15; Deuteronomy 12:1–28; 1 Samuel 26; 1 Kings 12; Jeremiah 22:10–19; Hosea 14; Psalm 67; Proverbs 26:1–12; Ecclesiastes 5:10–20; Matthew 8:23–34; Luke 1:67–80; Ephesians 4:1–6; 1 Peter 1:1–9; Revelation 4–5

Instructions for completing the exegetical paper are given on pp. 455–57 of Duvall & Hays.

Essay

Write a review (3000–3500 words) of one of the following:

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| R.J. Bauckham | <i>The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically</i> (2 nd ed.; London: SPCK, 2010) |
| J.K. Brown | <i>Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics</i> (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) |
| M.S. Northcott | <i>A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming</i> (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007) |
| C. Smith | <i>The Bible Made Impossible. Why Biblicism is not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture</i> (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011) |
| C.J.H. Wright | <i>The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative</i> (Nottingham/Downers Grove, 2006) |

You should spend **half** the review setting out the book's arguments, and showing how the arguments fit together, and **half** giving your own response. You should pay particular attention where appropriate to the way in which the author interprets biblical texts

COURSE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

1. For **style and formatting** of assignments, please refer to the section on “General Formatting for all Assignments” available on the BGST Online Student Manual.
2. ALL assignments are to be submitted by uploading via Moodle. Alternatively, assignments can be sent via email to assignments@bgst.edu.sg without the need to cc. the lecturer (unless requested by the lecturer).
3. Students must submit all their assignments **6 months** after the course registration date

Students are advised that BGST **strongly discourages plagiarism**. For more information on this point (what plagiarism is, how BGST penalises it), please consult the BGST ‘Guidelines for Academic Papers’.

Your Course Tutor (Credit Students Only)

- You will be appointed a course tutor (who will also be your grader) upon course registration.
- Please feel free to interact with your tutor using BGST’s Moodle online learning system if you have any questions related to the course content, or your assignments.

Course Bibliography

Further Reading

- J.T. Billings *The Word of God for the People of God: an entryway to the theological interpretation of scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010)
- J.K. Brown *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007)
- D.B. Deppe *All Roads Lead to the Text. Eight Methods of Inquiry into the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011)
- G.D. Fee
& D. Stuart *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009)
- J. Goldingay *Key Questions about Biblical Interpretation: Old Testament Answers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011)
- I.H. Marshall *Beyond the Bible. Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004)
- S.E. Porter
& J.C. Robinson *Hermeneutics. An Introduction to Interpretive Theory* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011)
- E.R. Richards
& B.J. O’Brien *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes. Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understanding the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012)
- C. Smith *The Bible Made Impossible. Why Biblicism is not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011)
- R.H. Stein *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker,

- 1994)
W.R. Tate
Hendrickson, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (3rd ed.; Peabody, MA;
2008)
- K.J. Vanhoozer *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998)
- K.J. Vanhoozer *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002)
- M. Volf *Captive to the Word of God. Engaging the Scriptures for Contemporary Theological Reflection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010)