



201 — Hermeneutics
Virginia Beach Theological Seminary
Virginia Beach, VA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor:	Kyle C. Dunham, ThD	Term:	Fall 2013
Office:	757.479.3706 x321	Class Meeting Day:	Monday
Home:	757.227.4627	Class Meeting Hours:	6:00PM–9:00PM
E-Mail:	kyle.dunham@vbts.edu	Class Location:	Room 107
Website:	https://vbts.populiweb.com/	Online:	VBTS Populi
Office Hours:	Tuesday–Thursday, 2:00–3:00 PM		

I. WELCOME!

Welcome, students, to 201 Hermeneutics. This class will provide an opportunity to study together the interpretive methods necessary to a proper understanding and application of God’s Word. We will learn how to recognize and utilize the historical environment, literary context, and theological framework of the biblical books and pericopes to ensure accurate and faithful exposition. I look forward to our time together!

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This three credit-hour course is an introduction to biblical hermeneutics designed to equip the student with the basic principles commensurate to sound biblical interpretive method.

III. COURSE RATIONALE

If you’ve ever heard a preacher extolling that God loves a “hilarious” giver (from the Greek *ἰλαρός* [*hilaros*] in 2 Cor 9:7) and had misgivings about the interpretation, if you’ve ever listened to a Bible teacher reduce the narrative of David and Goliath to “facing the giants in your life” and chafed in your soul, or if you’ve ever observed a speaker transform biblical prophecy merely into an indictment of the degeneration and impending destruction of American society (all personal examples heard from the pew!), then this course is for you. If, on the other hand, you’ve been spared these or similar experiences yet want to ensure that you steer clear of such interpretive missteps, then this course also is for you.

With biblical illiteracy on the rise and an apparent dearth of expository preaching blighting our churches, there has perhaps never been a time so critical for gaining the proper principles and skills requisite to consistent and accurate biblical interpretation. The apostle Paul’s admonition to Timothy resonates in our day: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15 ESV). So that we too may be approved workers and accurate handlers of God’s Word, we will carefully and thoughtfully survey the basic principles needed to be faithful stewards of God’s revelation. Given that nearly forty different human authors composed Scripture by means of divine inspiration over a span of some 1,500 years, interpreting correctly the repository of biblical truth is not a task we take lightly. Join me on this journey as we labor to become wise and proficient interpreters of holy Scripture.

IV. LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. The student will understand the need for and utilize the benefits of skillful biblical interpretation.

2. The student will discern and properly apply the impact of historical setting for proper biblical interpretation.
3. The student will recognize and distinguish the various literary genres of the Bible with a view toward the legitimate use of context and discourse in interpretation.
4. The student will make use of the trajectory of biblical theology as an interpretive framework for Scripture.
5. The student will appraise the various principles of biblical interpretation with a view toward developing a consistent and sound hermeneutic.

V. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Richard D. Patterson. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.

VI. COURSE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

One week of class (or 3 classroom hours) may be missed without academic penalty. One point will be deducted from the final grade for each additional hour of class that is missed (outside of extenuating circumstances). Three class tardies will register as one hour of missed class. Failure to attend 70% of the course (roughly 30 hours of class) will result in failure of the course. Along with attendance, students are expected to participate in lecture discussions rising from the weekly reading assignments.

VII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The following categories comprise the course requirements.

1. **Course reading.** The student is expected to read **1,200 pages** by the end of the semester. This reading includes **800 pages from the course textbook**, divided into weekly assignments of 1–2 chapters as prescribed by the course schedule, and **400 pages of supplemental reading** from the course bibliography. The student will turn in a reading report using the template provided by the professor. The course reading is due **Monday, December 2**. The course reading accounts for 30% of the student's final grade.
2. **Weekly writing assignments.** The student will produce a weekly writing assignment based on the discussion questions found under the "Assignments" heading at the conclusion of each chapter. The student will select **two questions** each week and **will write a typed essay of not less than one paragraph and not more than one page** per question. The student may be called upon to present his or her findings to the class each week as a primer for class discussion regarding hermeneutical method. The student will be graded on the quality of writing and the perspicuity of insights using the grading scale found below. Weekly writing assignments account for 30% of the student's final grade.
3. **Weekly quizzes.** The student will take a **weekly quiz over the assigned course textbook reading**. The quizzes will be based largely on the "Study Questions" included at the end of each chapter. Quizzes will be considered late after they have been collected in class by the instructor. In the event a student misses a quiz, the instructor will leave a sealed copy of the quiz in the student's box. The student will take the quiz without helps, observing the honor code in the CBTS catalog. Quizzes that are late by more than one class period will receive a 10% late penalty. The weekly quizzes account for 30% of the student's final grade.
4. **Class participation.** To facilitate a healthy classroom learning environment, the student is expected to participate in the class discussions. Class participation accounts for 10% of the student's final grade.

VIII. COURSE GRADING PROCEDURES

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Course reading: | 30% of total grade |
| 2. Weekly writing assignments: | 30% of total grade |
| 3. Weekly quizzes: | 30% of total grade |
| 4. Class participation: | 10% of total grade |

The following grading scale and criteria is used in the evaluation of all course work (see the VBTS Catalog:

- 96-100 (4.0 / A) Outstanding work: superior achievement of course objectives
 - 94-95 (3.7 / A-)
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- 92-93 (3.3 / B+) Good work: commendable achievement of course objectives
 - 89-91 (3.0 / B)
 - 87-88 (2.7 / B-)
-
- 85-86 (2.3 / C+) Acceptable work: satisfactory achievement of course objectives
 - 81-84 (2.0 / C)
 - 79-80 (1.7 / C-)
-
- 77-78 (1.3 / D+) Minimal work: marginal achievement of course objectives
 - 72-76 (1.0 / D)
 - 70-71 (0.7 / D-)
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- 0-69 (0.0 / F) Failure: unacceptable work

IX. COURSE SUPPORT

Course materials can be accessed at www.vbts.edu under the "Populi" icon and course link.

If you have questions about this course, either in general or specific, as to how assignments should be completed or anything of a course nature, please contact me by e-mail: kyle.dunham@vbts.edu or by phone (see contact information details above).

If you need support for anything related to using Populi or experience any log-in problems, please contact the iSchool administrator by calling the office at (757) 479-3706 or e-mail via info@vbts.edu.

X. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due	Quiz
1	8/26	Introduction, syllabus, and The Hermeneutical Triad: History, Literature, and Theology			
2	9/2	Historical-Cultural Backgrounds	K&P, Chapter 1	Two assignment questions, Chapter 1	Chapter 1
3	9/9	The OT and NT Canon	K&P, Chapter 2	Two assignment questions, Chapter 2	Chapter 2
4	9/16	OT and NT Historical Narrative	K&P, Chapters 3 and 4	Two assignment questions, Chapters 3 and 4	Chapters 3 and 4
5	9/23	Poetry and Wisdom	K&P, Chapters 5 and 8	Two assignment questions, Chapters 5 and 8	Chapters 5 and 8
6	9/30	Prophecy	K&P, Chapter 6	Two assignment questions, Chapter 6	Chapter 6
7	10/7	Parables	K&P, Chapter 7	Two assignment questions, Chapter 7	Chapter 7
8	10/14	The Epistles	K&P, Chapter 9	Two assignment questions, Chapter 9	Chapter 9
9	10/21	Apocalyptic	K&P, Chapter 10	Two assignment questions, Chapter 10	Chapter 10
10	10/28	The Importance of Context	K&P, Chapter 11	Two assignment questions, Chapter 11	Chapter 11
11	11/4	The Meaning of Words	K&P, Chapter 12	Two assignment questions, Chapter 12	Chapter 12
12	11/11	Interpreting Figurative Language	K&P, Chapter 13	Two assignment questions, Chapters 13	Chapter 13
13	11/18	<i>No Class -- National ETS Meeting</i>			
14	11/25	<i>No Class -- Thanksgiving Break</i>			
15	12/2	Biblical Theology	K&P, Chapters 14 and 16; Reading Report Due	Two assignment questions, Chapter 14	Chapter 14
16	12/9	Hermeneutics and Beyond: Course Wrap-Up	K&P, Chapter 15	Two assignment questions, Chapter 15	Chapter 15

XI. SELECTED COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Geisler, Norman L., and William C. Roach. *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.
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