



## Shaw University Divinity School (High Point CAPE)

NTS 502-30: THEORIES AND PRACTICE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS  
(Prerequisite NTS 501)

Spring 2009

Credits: 3 Hrs

Time: 11:00-1:30pm

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**Office Hours:** Tues 1:00pm – 5:30pm

Saturday 1:30-2:30pm

(Other times by appointment only)

### **DIVINITY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

Shaw University Divinity School provides Christian theological education dedicated to the preparation of clergy and laity for clinical, pastoral, and teaching/research ministry professions. The Divinity School is committed to the development of a research institute whose focus is leadership in the “practice of ministry” in the African American community, particularly in the African American church.

### **M.DIV MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Master of Divinity degree is to prepare persons for ordained ministry, for

chaplaincy, general pastoral and religious leadership responsibilities in congregations and other settings, and to prepare some students for admission to advanced programs oriented to theological research and teaching. The purpose is consistent with the mission of Shaw University Divinity School; the Master of Divinity program focuses on leadership in the “practice of ministry,” particularly in the African American church.

**MRE MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Master of Religious Education degree is to equip persons for competent leadership in Christian Education to serve congregational ministries and other religious institutions. This purpose is consistent with the mission of Shaw University Divinity School; the Master of Religious Education program focuses on leadership in the “practice of ministry,” particularly in the African American Church.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

MRE Program Goals	MDiv Program Goals
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. to equip students with the capacity for critical and constructive theological reflection regarding the content and processes of educational ministry;</li> <li>2. to help students understand the educational, social, and behavioral sciences that undergird educational practice, as well as the cultural contexts in which educational ministry occurs;</li> <li>3. to assist students with personal growth and spiritual maturity; and</li> <li>4. to provides skills in teaching and in design, administration, and assessment of educational programming.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. to provide students with an intellectual atmosphere and a comprehensive, discriminating understanding of our religious heritage;</li> <li>2. to enhance student training for Christian ministry, mindful of global, and diverse cross cultural, and non-American Christianities, and interaction with other faith traditions;</li> <li>3. to support students' development in the personal and spiritual capacities necessary for pastoral and religious leadership, advancing growth in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness;</li> <li>4. to expand programmatic activities, services, and academic programming to enhance student capacity for ministerial and public leadership.</li> </ol>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

(Prerequisite: NT 501 Survey of the New Testament)

An introduction to the basic principles and practices of biblical interpretation and exegesis. The focus of this course is learning the methods of interpretation of the books of the New Testament. In complementing the NT Survey class that introduced students to history of ancient Israel, this course will introduce the students to the critical methods employed in studying the text, with a primary emphasis on “genre analysis.”

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The main aim of the course is not to provide the student with answers to the long held “difficult questions of the Bible” (even though generally some of these questions will be addressed in class). Rather, the primary focus of the class is to equip the student to be able to resolve some of these questions by themselves through applying the principles and methods of interpretation that they will learn. Consequently, the following will be the SLOs:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:	Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (Assessment Tools)	Linkage to MDiv Program Learning Outcomes	Linkage to MRE Program Learning Outcomes
1. identify the different <i>genre</i> found in the NT.	Exam Questions, Reflection Papers	1, 2	2, 3
2. recognize the distinguishing features of each <i>genre</i> and how to read and interpret each of the <i>genres</i> .	Exam Questions, Reflection Papers	1, 2	2, 3
3. distinguish between the different “critical methodologies” that are used today in the interpretation of the NT	Exam Questions, Reflection Papers	1, 2	2, 3
4. identify the benefits and drawbacks of each of the different methods of NT interpretation (Mastery of the methods is not an anticipated outcome of the class, but instead, a good foundation of the fundamentals of the methodologies)	Exam Questions, Reflection Papers	1, 2,3	2, 3
5. know the different presuppositions that underlie the different interpretation methods applied to the NT	Exam Questions, Reflection Paper	1, 2, 3	2, 3
6. show a clear		4	1

understanding of the history and state of African and African-American interpretations of the NT	Exam Questions, Reflection Papers		
7. demonstrate ability to write an exegesis paper that reflects a good grasp of the background of the biblical text and its meaningful present application	Reflection Papers	1, 2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4

**Required Texts:**

1. Bible - **Please bring a Bible to class each week.** I require that you have a study Bible in a recent translation for this class. Among the best are the New Interpreter's Bible Study Bible (New Revised Standard Version), HarperCollins Study Bible (NRSV), the New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV), and the Zondervan NIV Study Bible (New International Version). For the purposes of study in this course, please avoid using the Authorized Version (King James or New King James), any paraphrase (the Living Bible), or a paraphrase-like translation (Today's English Version, New Living Translation).
2. Brian K. Blount, Cain Hope Felder, Clarice J. Martin, Emerson B. Powery (Eds.) *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 2007)
3. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993)
4. Michael Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis; A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001)
5. Cain Hope Felder (ed.), *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) ISBN 0-8006-22501

**Recommended Texts:**

1. Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Gove, Ill: IVP, 1993).

2. John Pilch and Bruce Malina (eds.), *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993)
3. Joel B. Green (ed.), *Hearing the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995)
4. Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Manual for Students and Pastors* (Westminster/John Knox, 1983)
5. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002)
6. Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed; Atlanta: John Knox, 2001)
7. Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling the Biblical Waters: Race, Class and Family* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989) ISBN 0-88344-535-2
8. W. Randolph Tate, *Interpreting the Bible: A Handbook of Terms and Methods* (Peabody, Ma. Hendrickson Publishers, 2006)

### **Classroom Format:**

**Class attendance is mandatory.** Any reason for absence should be communicated to the teacher in advance, if possible. Any more than **3** unexcused absences will result in an F Grade in the class. **Persistent lateness** to class will also result in a significant reduction of the attendance grade.

The primary mode of instruction will be lecturing, accompanied by course documents provided by Professor, visual aids and other relevant resources. Students are encouraged to participate by preparing for class session in advance and being prepared to ask and/or answer relevant questions and making relevant comments at any point in the class. The professor does not mind being interrupted by questions.

Students will also be expected to make **ONE ORAL** presentation in class as part of their course requirement.

### **Specific Competencies**

This is a writing intensive class and the student is strongly encouraged to review **Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*** to familiarize him/herself with the footnoting styles, correct citation of sources and format of writing a research paper. The instructor also provides supplementary documents to aid student in this regard.

With the main objective of this course being to develop the skill of doing exegesis in the New Testament, by the end of the course students should:

1. become familiar with the diverse approaches for interpreting the NT
2. know the different Genre of the NT and what method of interpretation best fits each Genre
3. become familiar with the best books and resources for the work

4. be able to understand the significance of language in interpretation
5. develop mechanism that will aid in meaningful expositions of the text

### **Attendance**

The University's rule on absences will be observed in this course. During the semester, no student may have **unexcused absences** in excess of the number of times the course meets in a week (1). **Excused absences** will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. In order to get the most out of the course, students must keep excused absences to a minimum. It will be very difficult for a student to complete the course if he or she misses more than **three** class meetings. Persistent lateness to class will also affect your final grade.

Please see the instructor **before you miss a fourth class meeting.**

- *It is the responsibility of the student to turn in assignments on or before the due date, if he or she must be absent on the due date.*
- It is also the responsibility of the student to get class notes (e.g., taping) and any handouts from any missed class meeting.

### **Grading**

Class Participation & Attendance	5%
Response Paper # 1 (5pp)	20%
Response Paper # 2 (5pp)	20%
Response Paper # 3 (5pp)	20%
Oral Presentation (3pg Review - Stony)	10%
Exegetical Paper (12-15pp)	25% (Due Last day of class)

### **Grading Scale**

The following grading scale will be used for all assignments:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	below 60

I An incomplete is given only when extraordinary circumstances (extended illness, death in the family, etc.) prevent the student from completing all the assignments before the end of the semester. An **incomplete must be made up before the end of the following semester, or the grade will automatically change to F, and the course must be repeated.**

**Please note:** Any student who receives an incomplete, regardless of the reason, will **not** be able to receive an A in the course. The highest grade possible for a student who receives an incomplete will be B.

All written assignments should conform to the guidelines in the Divinity School's "Guidelines

for Written Assignments,” available in the Divinity School Office/Library. The following criteria will be used in evaluating all written assignments.

**A** Indicates the student has significantly exceeded the minimum expectations for the assignment. The student has consulted the relevant scholars and has consistently entered into dialogue with these scholars, offering his/her critique of the relevant sources. All the required parts of the assignment are present, and the written presentation is consistently above average, with no errors in spelling or grammar.

**B** Indicates the student has exceeded the minimum expectations for the assignment. The student has consulted relevant scholars and has entered into dialogue with most of them, offering his/her critique of the sources. All the required parts of the assignment are present, and the written presentation is above average, with no errors in spelling or grammar.

**C** Indicates the student has met the minimum expectations for the assignment. The student has consulted relevant scholars and has represented their views well, at least occasionally offering a critique of the sources. The required parts of the assignment are present, and the written presentation is acceptable, with minimal errors in spelling or grammar.

**D** Indicates the student has not met the minimum expectations for the assignment in one or more of the following ways: significant critical scholarship is not consulted; significant segments of the assignment are missing or inadequate; or the written presentation is inadequate in grammar, spelling, or format.

**F** Indicates the work is not acceptable for graduate-level study.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Response Papers: 3 @ 20% (=60%)** - Unless otherwise stated, they are to be typed, double spaced, approx. 5 pages.

Due at the beginning of the class, on the due date.

The Response papers will be patterned after the previous lesson in which the professor would have gone through the subject in class, with examples. The students are to apply the method studied in class to an assigned text. Instructions will be given in the class prior to the expected date of the Response paper.

Unless a convincing explanation is provided, late papers will lose a whole percentage point of a grade with every late day, and **will NOT be acceptable 7 days after the due date.**

### **Oral Presentation: 10%**

Students will select or be assigned a chapter from the book *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* by Cain Hope Felder (ed.), and prepare a **3 page review paper**

(See review instructions on B/B) that will be presented orally in class (appr. 15 mins) on the assigned date(s). The response paper should evaluate both the pros and the cons of the article and the student should give his/her evaluation of the article. The student should plan to make copies of the review available to the class and to the professor during the presentation.

### **Exegetical Paper: 25%**

Students will select a text from the New Testament in consultation with the professor, to do a **10-15 page exegetical paper** on (See also **Gorman, *Elements*, ch.2** on choosing a passage). This will be done within first two class sessions. Choose carefully since this is the text you will work on the rest of the semester.

**Format:** The final exegetical paper format is outlined in **Michael Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis***. (Ex. II - “Long Exegetical Paper”). A minimum of **5 scholarly sources** (journals, textbooks, etc ) will be expected to be cited for this assignment. While scholarly websites do exist, such sites as *Wikipedia* do NOT count as scholarly sources for this class. Also such commentaries as *Matthew Henry’s* do not count for this for this class. If you are uncertain that a source is of a scholarly nature consult the professor before using it. You can also check on the “Electronic Resources” on the Shaw University Library website.

Paper styles (footnotes, citations, references, etc) will follow the Chicago style as outlined in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* and will be evaluated on this basis also.

### **HONOR PLEDGE**

The University policy on plagiarism will apply to all assignments in this course. All assignments will be submitted with the following honor pledge:

***I affirm that the contents of this assignment are my own writing. Nothing in this paper is copied from a textbook, copied from other books, downloaded from the internet, or copied from any other source. I understand that if I violate this affirmation, I will receive a failing grade on this assignment and possibly in the class.***

The university policy on plagiarism further states that repeated violations may/will result in a failing grade the particular assignment and/or class, depending on the professor’s discretion. Further violation may result in suspension and/or expulsion from the university (**Read article on “Plagiarism Explained” in B/b**).

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

Jan 17            **No Class (MLK Weekend)**

**Read:** Syllabus, “Plagiarism Explained” article, and M. Adler, “How to Read a Difficult book” (B/b)

- Jan 24 Class Overview and Introduction  
**Read:** Stephen Breck Reid, “Endangered Reading: The African-American Scholar Between Text and People.” (B/b)
- Jan 31 Introduction to Critical Methods: Cursory Intro to “Form,” “Source,” “Redaction,” “Social Science,” and “Literary Criticism” of the NT  
**Read:** Soulen and Soulen or Tate
- Feb 7 Presuppositions and their role in interpretation  
Genre Analysis
- Feb 14 Interpreting Gospels: Biblical Interpretation “Then” and “Now”  
Allegory (Inner meaning) vs Literal - (*Ex: Parable of the prodigal - Augustine, etc*) Fee and Stuart, *HTRBFAIW*,
- Feb 21 Narrative Exegesis (Acts and Narrative Plot)  
Due: (**Response Paper #1**- Textual Analysis - Matt 14:23-36,)
- Feb 28 Word Studies and Word meaning - *James Barr* (Cf. Fee, *Handbook for Students*, sect II:4)  
Relativity of Language: Synchronic vs Diachronic -  
Sentence flow - Interpretation of Epistles as a unique genre (*Ex: Philemon. Assn: Phil2:1-12*)
- Mar 7 Worldviews, Postmodern values and Interpretation – (*Ex: Luke 16:1-13*)
- March 14 Meaning - In front of, behind or in the Text? Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*  
Reader Response interpretation  
Due: (**Response Paper #2** – Sentence Flow: Interpreting Epistles Philippians 2:1-12 What is the main point?)
- March 27 **Last Day to Withdraw from class with “W”**
- March 28 Role of the Holy Spirit in Interpretation  
**Read:** Gasque & LaSor, *Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation*, (B/b)
- April 4 Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature  
**Read:** Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 1-22 (B/b)
- April 11 **SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS**
- April 18 Emerging Strategies of Reading the New Testament  
**Read:** Global Perspective – African, Asian, African-American, Latino, etc  
Levison and Pope-Levison, “Global Perspective,” in Joel Green, *Hearing* (ch.16) B/b

Due: (**Response Paper #3-** Apocalyptic Literature – Revelation 20:1-6)

April 25 Emerging Strategies of Reading the NT (Cont.)  
Feminist Interpretation  
**Read:** S. Schneiders, “Feminist Hermeneutics,” in Green, *Hearing* (ch 17) B/b

(Due: **Exegetical Papers for Graduating Students**)  
(Text Analysis and Exegetical Essay on John 13:1-17)

May 2 NT and Pastoral Preaching  
**Read:** Fee and Stuart, *Appendix “A”*, Green, *Hearing* (ch. 20) (B/b)  
Due: **Final Exegetical Papers** - Text Analysis and Exegetical Essay on John 13:1-17

May 9 **Commencement**

### Required Readings:

Students will be expected to read through the selected chapters of **Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All its Worth*** before the assigned class day as follows:

Jan	24 -	Introduction, Appendix, Ch. 1
Jan	31 -	Ch. 2
Feb	7 -	Ch. 7
Feb	14 -	Ch. 6
Feb	21 -	Ch. 5
Feb	28 -	Ch. 3
March	7 -	Ch. 4
March	14 -	Ch. 10
March	21 -	Ch. 11
March	28 -	Ch. 6
April	4 -	Ch. 13
April	18 -	Ch. 8

Class Notes - R. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991 (rev. 1997). Introduction

Integrity demands that any hermeneutic remain tentative.

Hermeneutics has been traditionally described as the study of the locus of meaning and the principles of interpretation.

**Author-centered** locus of meaning (world behind the text) - up to 1940s

**Text-centered** locus of meaning (world in the text)- 1950s New Criticism and structuralism.

**Reader-centered** locus of meaning (world in front of the text)-

Though viewed as mutually exclusive, Tate argues for integration of the three.

In oral discourse use of gestures, signals, body language, voice inflection, etc are useful in determining meaning. But these are absent in a written text. Thus there has to be use of **literary devices** to try and capture the author's intended meaning as accurately as possible. The literary devices are the woof and warp by which the text communicate with the reader or audience. We have to assume the author has a particular audience in mind i.e. one that understands his language and world.

Thus the subjective intention, the biblical text and discourse meaning overlap.

Consequently the **three meanings converge**: author's, text's, and reader's creating the locus of meaning which is the product of the interplay of all three worlds.

Interpretation is impaired when any of the three is given preeminence at the expense of neglecting the other two.

But any hermeneutics must make allowance for a certain subjectivity, incompleteness, and open-endedness.

**The text itself would legitimate, deny, clarify, or modify the assumptions that the reader brings** to it, since the text places parameters of what is plausible and what is not (p.257).

Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1976), 79, states that "the logic of validation allows us to move between the two limits of dogmatism and skepticism."

Role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation.

Daniel P. Fuller, "The Holy Spirit's Role in Biblical Interpretation" in, *Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation* (Gasque and Lasor, ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 189-98.

1 Cor 2:12-14.

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

*Dechomai* ("accept some requested offering willingly and with pleasure" rather than *lambano* ("simply to receive something") is used.

Consequently the HS role in biblical interpretation is not to give the interpreter cognition of what the Bible says which would involve dispensing additional information but is simply to change the heart of the interpreter so that he loves the message conveyed by the historico-grammatical data.

**HS does not give meaning of the text.** The interpreter has to expend as much time and energy doing the exegesis and applying hard work to understanding the text.

And because the Bible's view of reality clashes with the way people wants to see things, apart from the work of the Holy spirit, its message will therefore be regarded as foolishness.

If *a priori* you are convinced (via the persuasion of the Holy Spirit) that in Scripture lies the Truth of God and the way to salvation for all mankind then you will surely put enough effort to fully understand it and to study it with all your effort.

Only then will we, not simply want to get to the most reliable interpretation of Scripture, but **allow the Scripture to shape our own perception of reality.**

Human ego (product of sin) is probably the most destructive force for the biblical interpreter when the desire for an interpretation is to boost our own satisfaction and ends.

Jan Veenhof, "The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics" in *The Challenge of Evangelical Theology: Essays in Approach and Method* (ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron; Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1987) 105-22.

Pre-Enlightenment interpretation was divided between *hermeneutica sacra* and *hermeneutica profana*.

In **Orthodoxy** lies the conviction that no understanding is possible without the Holy Spirit.

But according to Pietism the distinction is that the HS is not primarily connected with the Word but with the understanding man. Only a reborn Christian is able to understand the Scripture truly.

With the **Enlightenment** the distinction of the *sacra* and *profana* aspect of hermeneutic were seen not to hold and thus the Bible was to be read as any other book, for which reason the Holy Spirit was not needed. It was not a denial of the work of the Holy Spirit but the giving of another role. Natural understanding was deemed as the true correct understanding and the supernatural living understanding.

You can have the "correct" method and still misunderstand the Bible. "God reveals Himself in the way of our seeking and finding, in which process God has the permanent initiative." (P.115)

John 16:13

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

But what is this that He must talk about? Is it not about the things that have happened in Palestine? About Jesus of Nazareth? For the Spirit does not bear witness to himself but to whoever sent Him. To understand the work of Jesus is the role of the guidance to Truth. For Jesus is "the Way the Truth and the Life."

The **Work of the Spirit cannot be described in terms of an addition** as if the Spirit will give us a new substance. To bring us to a assurance and conviction that in Scripture is God's saving Truth. Paul in 1 Cor 2:10-16 explains that the whole revelation of God in Christ mediated through the Spirit can only be accepted in its true nature only by spiritual people.

It is **not towards an "objective" interpretation** that the Spirit leads us but towards a **relationship** that in turn shapes our understanding and our life in general.

"The Spirit opens Scripture for us and opens u for the Scripture" (p.119)

But our knowledge is finite, limited by sin, etc.

The **Spirit does not suppress our humanity**, but rather employs it in his own work.

Do we change our understanding? Paul and John Mark - first upset later realized Mark's importance. See also David McKinley, John Owen's View of Illumination: An Alternative to the Fuller-Erickson Dialogue" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (Jan-Mar 1997) 93-104.