



PBC
PERTH BIBLE COLLEGE

STUDY LEVEL **800 LEVEL**

UNIT CODE: **HE801**
UNIT TITLE: **Interpreting the Bible**

SEMESTER: **Trimester 2, 2024**

LECTURER: **Dr. Steve Young**

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UNIT OVERVIEW:	<p>This unit introduces interpretive approaches and practices for students of the Bible. Students will consider the aims and assumptions of biblical interpretation, become familiar with major resources for study of the Bible, interpret a variety of biblical texts in both testaments, and reflect upon the manner in which the varied contexts (e.g., social, cultural, theological) of the biblical world and of contemporary readers inform interpretation.</p>
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ACADEMIC DETAILS

Location in course:	This is a core introductory unit and is offered at Level 800 .
Workload	This unit carries 3 credit points. The contact hours for this unit are 2.5 hours/week for 12 weeks. Students are expected to study a further 7.5 hours/week.
Pre-Requisites	Nil.
Delivery	Delivery will be via lectures, class activities and discussion, assignments and online via Moodle.
Summary of Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsible use of the Bible – Naïve reading and theological reading 2. Asking questions and developing sensibilities; the model biblical reader 3. Bible commentaries and other tools to help with interpreting the Bible 4. The world behind the text – Original context and meaning; salvation history 5. The world in the text 6. Framing a text 7. Doing Things with Words 8. The world in front of the text – Developing meaning for today 9. Analysing current context – From Where Do We Read?
Learning outcomes	<p>On successful completion of this unit students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Employ foundational theological knowledge to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construct a theological framework for a responsible interpretation of the Bible. B. Describe a practical context to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically compare and contrast a naïve reading of the Bible with a theologically grounded approach to interpreting the Bible, with consideration of the varied contexts of both the biblical materials and contemporary readers. C. Develop and employ practical methods and actions to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage in close study of a variety of passages in the Bible prior to engaging in conversation with various scholarly resources. 2. Judiciously use critical tools and resources to study biblical texts of different literary genres. 3. Develop interpretations that engage contemporary concerns, and that encourage and challenge the church to remain faithful to its mission. D. Engage in critical personal reflection to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allow the text to challenge personal presuppositions, shape theological thinking, and construct meaning.
Requirements to complete	<p>To successfully complete this unit students must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. attend at least 80% of all classes (International Students, Provisional Students, Conditional Students and Students-at-risk), excluding approved absences; b. lodge all assessments that are required for this unit, and c. obtain a total grade of at least 50% in the unit.

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Assessment Type	When assessed	Weighting	Learning outcomes Assessed
Two Interpretive Assignments	Ongoing	35%	C1, C2, C3, D1
Bible Study Presentation (Context Analysis)	Week 10 (after Study Week B)	30%	A1, B1, C3, D1
Interpretive-Research Assignment	Week 13	35%	A1, C1, C2, C3, D1

LECTURE SYLLABUS

Week	Content	Focus Text	Reading
1	Introductory Matters / Where We Stand, Where We Are Going		Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 3-35 (chap 1); Green, <i>Hearing</i> , ch. 1
2	Approaching Biblical Study: Reading a Text		Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 37-65 (chapter 2); Green, <i>Hearing</i> , ch. 7
3	Approaching Biblical Study: Reading a Text (contd.) / Framing a Text	Luke 19:1-10	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 69-74 (chapter 3); Green, <i>Hearing</i> , chs. 2, 11
4	The Text in Context: Literary Genre	Acts 2:41-47	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 89-109 (chapter 5); Green, <i>Hearing</i> , ch. 8
5	The Text in Context: Literary Genre (contd.)	Psalms 24	Goldingay & Goldingay, "Sting in the Psalms"
6	STUDY WEEK A		
7	The Text in Context: Socio-Cultural Sensibilities	1 Cor. 11:17-34	DeSilva, "Cultural and Social World of the Early Church;" Green, <i>Hearing</i> , ch. 3
8	The Text in Context: Socio-Cultural Sensibilities (contd.)	Daniel 7:1-14	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 75-88 (chapter 4); Green, <i>Hearing</i> , chs. 4, 5
9	STUDY WEEK B		
10	The Text in Context: Jesus and Gospel Studies	John 9:1-41	Green, <i>Hearing</i> , ch. 6

Week	Content	Focus Text	Reading
11	The Text: Doing Things with Words	Genesis 22:1-19	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , 109-37 (chapter 6); Green, <i>Hearing</i> , chs. 9, 10
12	The Text: Reading a Narrative	James 4:13-5:6	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , ch. 7; Green, <i>Hearing</i> , chs. 12, 17, 18
13	The Text and the Reader: From Where Do We Read? Feminist Interpretation	(no text)	Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , chs. 8-9; Green, <i>Hearing</i> , ch. 13 Helpful for final Report: Gorman, <i>Elements</i> , chapters 10-11 + appendices

ASSESSMENT ITEMS

<p>1. Interpretive Assignments on two selected texts, one from the OT and one from the NT, with an optional third. (Carries 35% of total grade).</p>	<p>Choose two class sessions for which to prepare in advance and submit to the lecturer (before class begins) an interpretive assignment on the scheduled weekly text. Of these two assignments, one must be written on an Old Testament Text and one on a New Testament text. Available texts with corresponding due dates are specified in the course schedule above (see 'Focus Text' column).</p> <p>Students who wish to do so <i>may</i> turn in a third assignment (on either testament), and only their two highest grades will be factored into the final grade.</p> <p>For detailed expectations on writing interpretive assignments see PDF entitled 'Some Comments on Interpretive Assignments' (available via Moodle).</p> <p>Sources: Students are not expected to consult secondary sources (though they must properly cite any they do), but to do their own close reading of the text.</p> <p>Word Count: 1,350 words (two pages single-spaced), for a total of 2,700 words combined for both assignments.</p> <p>Due date: First one must be submitted by Week 5; second one before end of trimester (allow time for feedback on the first one).</p>
<p>2. Bible Study Presentation (Context Analysis) (Carries 30% of total grade)</p>	<p>The purpose of this assignment is for you to critically compare and contrast a naïve reading of the Bible with a hermeneutically-grounded approach to interpreting the Bible, with consideration of the varied contexts of both the biblical materials and contemporary readers.</p> <p>Specific instructions: Write an introductory session for a group Bible study in which you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the importance of considering the genre of biblical texts;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the importance of considering the socio-cultural realities of the world out of which the biblical texts arose; Give at least one example of how reading a biblical text from the perspective of a (post-)modern understanding of its genre can lead to a <i>misreading</i> of the text; Give at least one example of how reading a biblical text from the perspective of a (post-)modern socio-cultural reality can lead to a <i>misreading</i> of the text; and Conclude by teaching your listeners about the importance of considering the genre and socio-cultural realities of biblical times (either OT or NT) when reading biblical texts (either OT or NT). <p>Sources: This assessment requires the standard number of references for this level of study, which is a minimum of 5 sources.</p> <p>Word Count: 1,500 words.</p> <p>Due date: Week 10 (after Study Week B).</p>
<p>3. Interpretive-Research Assignment on Romans 6:1-14, that evinces both a close personal reading of the text and a critical engagement with the range of appropriate secondary resources.</p> <p>(Carries 35% of total grade)</p>	<p>The interpretive-research assignment assesses foundational interpretive methodological knowledge, the analysis of the original and contemporary contexts in light of the text, and the practical use of basic interpretive ministry skills. Students should show evidence of research with critical considerations based on competing views between scholars. The assessment should include thoughts on how biblical texts speak into ministry contexts today.</p> <p>Specific Instructions: Like the shorter interpretive assignments turned in earlier in the trimester, this assignment should focus upon your own close reading of the text, in this case of Romans 6:1-14 (detailed expectations for interpretive assignments are available in the PDF entitled “Some Comments on Interpretive Assignments”). Unlike the earlier interpretive assignments, however, this final report should also incorporate research from secondary sources (articles/chapters, books, commentaries).</p> <p>IMPORTANT: use these secondary sources as resources to help you answer the questions we are using for the interpretive assignments, not to add material to your paper that is irrelevant to our set of questions.</p> <p>Sources: This assessment requires the standard number of references for this level of study, which is a minimum of 9 sources (including 2 journal articles).</p> <p>Word Count: 2,000 words.</p> <p>Due date: Friday of Week 13 (the last week of the trimester).</p>
<p>The deadline for assessments is 11:55pm uploaded via PBC Online on the day the class is scheduled in the trimester week indicated, unless specified otherwise.</p>	

Students should also have a *working* knowledge of PBC’s Assessment Policies (www.pbc.wa.edu.au and then *Student Portal/Useful Links/Policies & Procedures/ Assessment Policies*) to assist in completing this unit.

TEXTBOOKS

- DeSilva, DA 2018, "The Cultural and Social World of the Early Church: Purity, Honor, Patronage, and Kinship," in *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry Formation*, Second Edition, IVP Academic, pp. 82-116 (available via Moodle)
- Goldingay, KS & J Goldingay 2014-15, "The sting in the Psalms," *Theology* 117.6 (2014) 403-410; 118.1 (2015) 3-9 (in two parts) (available via Moodle).
- Gorman, MJ 2020, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*, Third Edition, Baker Academic (available via DTL2 in the PBC library databases).
- Green, JB, ed. 2010, *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, Second Edition, Eerdmans (available via DTL2 in the PBC library databases).

KEY REFERENCES

- DeSilva, DA 2022, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*, Second Edition, IVP Academic.
- Duvall, JS & JD Hays 2020, *Grasping God's Word*, Fourth Edition, Zondervan.
- Gorman, MJ, ed. 2017, *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*, Baker Academic.
- Green, JB 2007, *Seized by Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture*, Abingdon.
- Holgate, D & R Starr 2019, *SCM Study guide: Biblical Hermeneutics 2nd edition*, Hymns Ancient and Modern.
- Hopkins, DC 1994, "Life in Ancient Palestine," in vol. 1 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. LE Keck et al, Abingdon, pp. 213-27.
- Kaiser, WC., Jr. & M Silva 2007, *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. Revised and Expanded ed., Zondervan.
- Klein, WW, CL Blomberg & RL Hubbard 1993, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Thomas Nelson.
- Kroeger, CC & MJ Evans, eds. 2002, *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*, InterVarsity.
- Malcolm, MR 2018, *From Hermeneutics to Exegesis: The Trajectory of Biblical Interpretation*, B&H Academic.
- Malherbe, AJ 1995, "The Cultural Context of the New Testament: The Greco-Roman World," in vol. 8 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. LE Keck et al, Abingdon, pp. 12-26.
- Newsom, CA, SH Ringe & JE Lapsley, eds. 2012, *Women's Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated [Third] Edition, Westminster John Knox.
- Nickelsburg, GWE 1995, "The Jewish Context of the New Testament," in vol. 8 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. LE Keck et al, Abingdon, pp. 27-42.
- Porter, SE & JC Robinson 2020, *Active Hermeneutics: Seeking Understanding in an Age of Objectivism*, Francis and Taylor.
- Starling, DI 2016, *Hermeneutics as Apprenticeship: How the Bible Shapes Our Interpretive Habits and Practices*, Baker Academic.
- Tate, WR 2008, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, Third Edition, Baker.
- Van Oudtshoorn, A & D Smith 2019, *Handbook to Interpreting Colossians*, Snowgoose.
- Wolvaardt, B 1999, *How to Interpret the Bible: A Do it Yourself Manual*, Veritas College and St. Matthias Press.