

## BST 305 Principles of Biblical Interpretation

**Purpose:** The purpose of this course is to help students develop an understanding of principles and techniques important to the study, interpretation, and application of the Scriptures.

**Recommended Textbook:** The recommended textbook for this course is *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. The authors are Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. Paperback, 304 pages. ©2014, Zondervan. ISBN-13: 9780310517825. We also suggest that students have a copy of *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* by the same authors.

### Meet Your Professor

Dr. David Watson is the Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Associate Professor of New Testament at United Seminary in Ohio. David is an ordained elder in the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. He has worked in the local church and in a United Methodist campus ministry. He currently serves on the Miami Valley District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the West Ohio Inclusive Body of Christ Ministry Team for Persons with Disabilities. As Academic Dean, Dr. Watson oversees the academic program of the school and is a member of United Seminary's Executive Staff.



We are pleased to have Dr. Watson lead the Principles of Biblical Interpretation course. Dr. Watson says, "I believe that the New Testament is the definitive revelation of the love of God made present in Jesus Christ. As such it is deeply relevant for our lives in the twenty-first century.

Yet the works of the New Testament have been influenced by the social and historical situations of the communities that produced them. They therefore bear the marks of first-century composition. Striking a balance between understanding these works as ancient texts and as present-day sacred scripture is a difficult but important process. To the greatest extent possible, we must hear the texts on their own terms while being open to the ways in which God works through these texts to lead us in the Christian life."

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this study, students should be able to:

1. Recognize literary structural elements in a Biblical text.
2. Apply principles of detailed observation to a verse, a paragraph, and to longer units of text.
3. Determine word meanings within texts, and demonstrate the proper use of concordances.
4. Explain the role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical interpretation.
5. Describe the history of our English Bible and explain the differences in modern translations.
6. Discuss the issue of "reader response" versus "authorial intent" approaches to biblical interpretation.
7. Discuss the role of context and historical / cultural background in determining meaning.
8. Interpret and apply texts from the various genre categories found in the Bible.

**Structure:** This course is divided into three sections. Each section has several Areas of Study which correspond to the chapters of the recommended textbook

### BST 305.1 Foundations of Biblical Interpretation

First Area of Study: Introduction: The Need to Interpret

Second Area of Study: The Basic Tool: A Good Translation

Third Area of Study: The Epistles: Learning to Think Contextually

Fourth Area of Study: The Epistles: The Hermeneutical Questions

## **BST 305.2 Concepts in Biblical Interpretation Part I**

First Area of Study: The Old Testament Narratives: Their Proper Use

Second Area of Study: Acts: The Question of Historical Precedent

Third Area of Study: The Gospels: One Story, Many Dimensions

Fourth Area of Study: The Parables: Do You Get the Point?

## **BST 305.3 Concepts in Biblical Interpretation Part II**

First Area of Study: The Law(s): Covenant Stipulations for Israel

Second Area of Study: The Prophets: Enforcing the Covenant in Israel

Third Area of Study: The Psalms: Israel's Prayers and Ours

Fourth Area of Study: Wisdom: Then and Now

Fifth Area of Study: The Revelation: Images of Judgment and Hope

## **Earning Academic Credit**

Academic credit is earned at Myrtle Beach Wesleyan College and Pilgrim Theological Seminary by passing subject specific proficiency examinations and sometimes through papers or projects. Because adult students learn in many different ways, our emphasis is not so much on how a person has learned something but on the student's ability to demonstrate his or her knowledge. The successful completion of an examination requires a minimum score of 70%.

Less than 70% = Incomplete 71-80% = C, 81-90% = B, 91-100% = A

A record of a completed course is added to a student's academic record only when an examination has been successfully completed and all course requirements have been met. Incomplete grades are not placed on a transcript.

To ensure academic integrity, we require that all exams be taken at an authorized MBCC or Pilgrim Seminary Testing Center or, when necessary, be proctored by an adult unrelated to the student. A proctor must be a person of high moral character and be willing to oversee the taking of a series of exams. Paper exams are provided for incarcerated students.

Incarcerated students are reminded that in most prisons one must have permission to take college or seminary correspondence courses. We will provide a form for students to have completed by an appropriate prison official verifying that the student has permission to participate in the college or seminary program.

Please remember that individual proctors must be approved in advance.

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal and academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or cheating on exams will not be tolerated. Should a student be found in violation of the academic integrity policy, he or she will be prohibited from taking additional courses and his or her entire academic record will carry a permanent notation of dismissal for academic dishonesty.

## **How to Take This Course**

There are four basic steps to follow in taking this course. First, thoroughly read one chapter of the textbook and review the chapter outline. Second, listen to the lectures, if they are available to you. Third, prepare a written response to each learning objective. Copy the learning objective first, then write your response. You must complete this written work before you will be permitted to take the exam. Fourth, take the practice quiz. If you do well on the quiz, move on to the next lesson.