



McMaster Divinity College

NT/OT 3YB3



This course begins online September 9, 2019.

Class meets in person during intensive Hybrid Week October 18-19

Course continues online until conclusion on December 11

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Course Description:

This course is a study of the most important principles and methodologies used in interpreting and applying the meaning of the biblical text. We will survey a wide variety of methods and approaches (both classical criticisms and newer postmodern and emerging reading strategies) to interpreting scripture and examine relevant theological and historical issues arising from biblical interpretation. Standard tools of biblical research will be learned and practiced. Chosen methods and approaches will be applied to a project in a student's area of specialization which will clearly outline the hermeneutical framework employed. Learning experiences will cover the various genres of biblical texts, understanding historical context of texts, defining the meaning of words, the role of the church's history of interpretation, and hermeneutical principles of interpretation.

Specializations: Biblical Studies and Pastoral Studies. Students with or without prior training in the biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) are eligible to take this course. Those with biblical languages will use them in their research.

Course Objectives



Knowing:

- To know key principles for biblical interpretation
- To know the variety of genres within biblical literature and how to approach interpreting different types of literature
- To know the variety of methods used to interpret the Bible
- To gain familiarity with the assumptions, methods and conclusions of modern critical scholarship

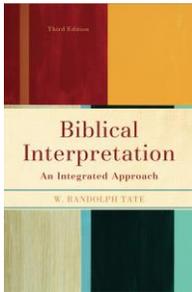
Being:

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of the whole Bible for the Church and society today
- To become a faithful and informed interpreter of scripture
- To grow closer to God through study of the Bible

Doing:

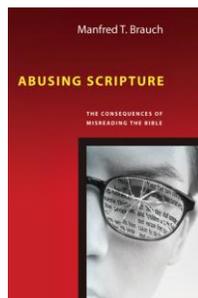
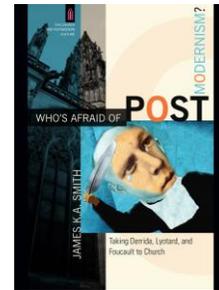
- To be able to employ various methods of biblical interpretation
- To identify common fallacies in popular biblical interpretation
- To complete in-depth study relevant to a student's chosen project

Required Texts:



1. W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* 3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

2. James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Post Modernism?* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.



3. Manfred Brauch. *Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book

service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Assignments and Schedule

1. Readings

Each week of the course has specific readings from the textbooks assigned. Each student must indicate via email to the instructor to what extent they have completed the assigned readings for that week.

2. Pre-class Discussions (Sept 9–Oct 14): Online

Due to this being a hybrid course, much of the class discussion will occur online on the Avenue to Learn course website. Students must actively participate in the online discussion and post minimum **two** discussion topics at the beginning of a week (Sun–Tues). Student posts must be in regard to the posted lectures / assigned readings that week. As well, to further the online discussion all students must respond to minimum **two posts** every week. Since initial posts will be online in the first part of the week, there will adequate time for all students to respond to posts in a timely manner. Instructions on how to participate in the online classroom will be sent to each student via email before the course begins.

Participation in online discussion is an assumed foundation for this course (like class attendance) if a student fails to participate every week their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

3. Review Assignment (15%) Due Nov 2, 2019

During the post-class Modules students will write a critical book review on James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Post Modernism?* (Baker Academic, 2006). The review must be no more than **7 pages** double-spaced. The papers should clearly summarize the contents of the book in your own words and include your own critical interaction, evaluation and reflections. See *Book Review Guidelines* on the course website.

In-Class Component (Oct 18–19): At McMaster Divinity College

The on-campus Modules will consist of some in-class lectures, Q&A, presentations, and student presentations. Attendance is mandatory.

4. Student Led discussion (20%)

As part of the on-campus modules, each student will lead the class in a 30-minute discussion of an assigned research topic. In preparation for the discussion the student will conduct independent research including the

textbooks and other sources.

*A 2–3 page report showing your research and discussion notes must be handed in following the seminar.

Post-Class Discussions (Oct 20–Dec 11): Online

In the post-class component students must continue to actively participate in the online discussion but now only need to post **one** discussion topic at the beginning of a week (Sun-Tues) and respond to **one other post** each week. Participation in online discussion is an assumed foundation for this course (like class attendance) if a student fails to participate every week their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

5. *Inductive Study (25%) Due Nov 23, 2019*

During the post-class Modules students will write an in-depth inductive study of a chosen biblical book. The paper must be no more than **7 pages** double-spaced. Please see the *Inductive Study Guidelines* on the course website for further directions.

For the inductive study, students will chose from one of the following books:

- Jonah
- Ruth
- Malachi
- Colossians
- 1 Peter

6. *Major Assignment (40%) Due Nov 30. Approximately 8,000 words.*

All major assignment papers must follow the MDC Style Guide. Papers should be double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font (footnotes should be 10pt). The major assignment will be based upon the research represented in your annotated bibliography and draw on (and explicitly cite) all 12 sources within the paper as evidenced in the footnotes etc. See *Paper Evaluation Rubric* below.

i. Major Assignment for Biblical Studies Specializations:

There are **two** (2) options for Biblical Studies: Choose only **one** (1) of the following:

a. Research paper: 12-15 pages. This is especially recommended if you are planning to go on to a research degree or write a thesis in OT (or if you have a particular topic in mind that you wish to write on). The topic of this research must be approved by the professor. In this paper the student will apply an exegetical methodology to a biblical text.

b. Exegetical Paper: 12-15 pages. In this option you will choose one passage from the OT or NT and write an exegesis paper. The chosen text should be between 10-20 verses. This paper will:

- Take into account the genre of the chosen text
- Take into account the historical context of the chosen text
- Provide a close reading of the text, noting key words, phrases, and literary features
- Identify different interpretive options and consider the validity of each and argue for the chosen interpretation.
- Elucidate the theological message of the chosen text
- Explain the applicability of the text for today for believers

Suggested passages for the exegesis paper:

- Isa 7:1-17
- John 14:1-6
- Job 42:1-6
- 1 Tim 2:11-15

ii. Major Assignment for Pastoral Studies Specializations:

There are three (3) options for Pastoral Studies Specializations. Choose only **one** (1) of the following:

a. Exegetical Paper: 12-15 pages. This assignment is the same as described above for biblical studies specializations.

b. Sermon (oral presentation). 20-25 minute video-taped sermon submitted on CD/DVD/USB drive or uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo. This sermon will be based on an exegesis of a biblical text of between 10-20 verses. Beginning with the biblical text this sermon will:

- Take into account the genre of the chosen text
- Take into account the historical context of the chosen text
- Provide a close reading of the text, noting key words, phrases, and literary features
- Identify different interpretive options and consider the validity of each and argue for the chosen interpretation.
- Elucidate the theological message of the chosen text
- Explain the applicability of the text for today for believers

The sermon will be delivered orally but include a written manuscript with an outline. The manuscript may be a combination of sentence, bullets/point form, paragraphs (it need not be a complete essay of the words you preach). This manuscript should be grammatically correct and include appropriate citation of sources employed.

c. Sermon (written). 12 pages double-spaced. This assignment is the same as the previous assignment (oral presentation of a sermon) but instead of an oral presentation it will be written, but with an aim to oral delivery. The sermon must be written as it would be spoken and must *not* be in point form etc. but be a full written manuscript. It is expected it will conform to MDC style guide and be grammatically correct and acknowledge its sources appropriately.

Style for Submission of Written Work

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All assignments must be in electronic format only (PDF format) —no hardcopies— and **emailed** to pevans@mcmaster.ca. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment (e.g., evans.researchpaper.pdf). To avoid late marks papers must be received by 11:59pm of the calendar day on which they are due.

Policy Concerning Late Papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 calendar days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. Late assignments receive no critical feedback. All assignments must be received by Dec 11, 2019 in order to avoid a failing grade in the class.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~

<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

Disclaimer: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes

and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Week	Due date:	Tate Reading	Brauch Reading	Smith Reading
1	September 14	Introduction and Historical research pp. 1-20	Ch. 1	
2	September 21	Importance of Languages pp. 21-37	Ch. 2	
3	September 28	Historical and Ideological backgrounds pp. 38-88	Ch. 3	Ch. 1
4	October 5	Bible as Literature pp. 89-101	Ch. 4	Ch. 2
5	October 12	OT as Literature pp. 102-137	Ch. 5	Ch. 3
6	NO READINGS - FACE -TO- FACE MEETINGS			
7	October 26	NT as Literature pp. 138-185	Ch. 6	Ch. 4
8	November 2	Reading pp. 189-218	Ch. 7	Ch. 5
9	November 9	Readers pp. 219-227	Ch. 8	
10	November 16	Methods pp. 228-244	Appendices A&B	
11	November 23	Integration pp. 245-265	Appendix C	
12	November 30	Appendices 1-2 pp. 273-297	Appendix D	
13	December 11	Appendices 3-4 pp. 298-342	Appendix E	

Select Bibliography

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