Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte

OT/NT 517: Interpreting the Bible

Syllabus (Learning Covenant) for Summer 2014

Course Instructor: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.
Class Meetings/times    Friday (6:30 – 9:30 p.m.); Saturdays (8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m)
                        Friday, Saturday-June 13-14, July 18, 19, August 15-16,
Location: Room 140
Syllabus Date: May 2014

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the issues and tools involved in Biblical interpretation. It is designed for students who will not be taking Greek or Hebrew or other courses in OT and NT interpretation.

II. COURSE RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM

OT/NT 517 is a required course for students in the MA – Christian Leadership program or the MA – Christian Counseling degree program. It introduces the basic issues and necessary tools and approaches to the Biblical text that are necessary for the proper use of Scripture in Christian life and ministry.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce the student to the basic issues in interpreting the Bible.

It will also introduce the student to the various literary forms (genre) in the Bible and how each is to be interpreted.
It will help the student in the work of applying Scriptural texts to contemporary contexts by applying sound principles of hermeneutics to each question.

IV. COURSE TEXTBOOKS


V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class time: Attendance is required. Please bring to class your Bible. Be prepared to discuss the topic assigned for that day by reading the section in the Kaiser/Silva textbook that corresponds to the announced topic for that weekend class.

Assignments: In advance of the first class in June 13-14, please read the entirety of Richard Schultz’s book and be prepared to share your own examples of misinterpreting the Bible along with the examples Richard raises. Also, please read Chapters 1-3 in the Kaiser/Silva book, pp 1-65. Record in writing the books and pages read and hand this report in at the first class.

In addition to this assignment, for each of the other two sessions read the Kaiser/Siva book with the sections that match the course outline and hand in the written report of the same with the exact number of pages at the beginning of each class.

A ten page course paper (due on September 12, 2014) on the topic: “The Case for a Single Literal Meaning of Biblical Texts Unless there is an Internal Biblical Clue to take the text Differently.” This paper must be submitted on time on a double-spaced, 12 pt. font) to the Charlotte Office to be e-mailed to my home.

Grading: Will use the total point system.
300 points for completing all required reading (100 for each session).

200 points for the 10 page paper.

100 points for class attendance and participation in the class discussions.

Grading Scale:

- 90-100 Excellent work – A
- 80-89 (Good work) - B
- 70-79 (Satisfactory work) – C
- 60-69 (Inferior work) - D
- 0-59 (Failing work) - F

VI. COURSE ADMINISTRATION

Due Dates and Late Penalties

A signed statement recording the exact number of pages and the books used will be expected from each student at the beginning of each of the three weekend sessions. These will be required in order to earn 100 points (total 300) for meeting that requirement in that month.

In the case of unexpected and unavoidable circumstances that prevent the student from completing that work each month, the student will be allowed one addition week’s extension to recover those 100 points and the report e-mailed to me one week late (Kerithfarm@aol.com).

All final dates for completion (Sept 12, 2014) must be met as defined in the student handbook and worked out with the campus dean.

VII. Course Outline

Weekend I (June 13-14)

The Search for Meaning: Initial Directions
Definition of Hermeneutics
The Meaning of Meaning
Using and Abusing Language
How do the Parts fit the Whole Bible
Must we go “Beyond” the Bible to be Relevant Today?
Did the NT Use the OT accurately?
Why Get Entangled with History in Interpretation?
Meaning in Literary Genres
  Narratives

**Weekend ii (July 18-19)**
Continuation of Genres
  Poetry and Wisdom
  Gospels
  Epistles
  Prophecy
A Short History of Interpretation
Contemporary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation

**Weekend III (August 15-16, 2014)**
Preparing to Use the Bible in Teaching and Preaching
  Contextual Analysis
  Syntactical Analysis
  Verbal Analysis
Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades

Grades are posted on line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

Returned Work

Work submitted through Sakai will be returned via Sakai since no hard copies will be turned in. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with any hard copy work submitted if you wish to have it returned.