Instructor and Contact Information:
Dr. Catherine McDowell; cmcdowell@gordonconwell.edu

Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays 6:00 – 9:30 pm on Sept 22, Oct 6, Oct 20, Nov 3, Nov 17, Dec 1, Dec 8

Office Hours
I am happy to meet with you in person, or speak by phone, Skype or Facetime. Email me to schedule an appointment.

Course Description
This course introduces students to the issues, tools, and methods involved in interpreting the Bible in English. It is designed for those who will not be taking Greek and Hebrew or other courses in OT and NT interpretation. Prerequisites: OT 500, NT 501 and CT 500 (formerly IS 502). If you have not passed these courses at GCTS or received an exemption from the registrar's office you cannot take NT/OT 517 for credit.

Relationship to the Mission of Gordon-Conwell
This course, which seeks to maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship (GCTS Missions Statement, Article 2), helps students to become knowledgeable of God’s word and competent in its interpretation (GCTS Missions Statement, Article 1). This will contribute to the students’ development of a vision for God’s redemptive work in the world and to formulate strategies that will lead to effective missions, evangelism, and discipleship (GCTS Missions Statement, Article 6). Being rooted in God’s word and knowing how to interpret and apply it is essential to these tasks.

Relation to Curriculum
NT/OT 517 is a required course for students in the MA-Christian Leadership, MA-Christian Counseling, MA-Christian Ministries, and the hybrid MAR degree programs. It introduces current hermeneutical issues as well as basic tools and methods designed to help students interpret the author’s intent. Special emphasis is then given to “living out the text”.

Course Learning Objectives
Students who successfully complete this course will

✓ be able to interpret the Scripture in its historical, literary, and theological contexts by the critical use of the English Bible, appropriate reference tools, and secondary sources.
✓ learn to apply Scripture in contemporary contexts.
✓ become trained in using quality library resources related to hermeneutics and biblical studies (both hard-copy and electronic) at the GCTS libraries and libraries located within
75-100 miles of their home.
✓ refine his or her skills in graduate level thinking, discussion, research and writing.

These objectives will be measured by the course requirements (assignments, reading, and participation), as listed below.

**Course Schedule**

*yellow highlight indicates weeks we have class*

**UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO HERMENEUTICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 8-14</td>
<td>Locating, Evaluating, and Using Local Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning to Read Intelligently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 15-21</td>
<td>The Need for Hermeneutics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Canon and Translations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Interpreter &amp; the Goal of Interpretation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNIT II: THE WORLD IN THE TEXT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 25-Oct 5</td>
<td>Logical &amp; Grammatical Analysis of the Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 6-12</td>
<td>Word, Phrase, and Concept Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 13-19</td>
<td>Literary Genres of the Bible, Part I (OT Narrative &amp; Law)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 20-26</td>
<td>Literary Genres of the Bible, Part 2 (Prophecy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 27-Nov 2</td>
<td>Literary Genres of the Bible, Part 3 (Wisdom and Poetry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov 3-Nov 9</td>
<td>Literary Genres of the Bible, Part 4 (Gospels, Parables &amp; Acts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNIT III: THE WORLD BEHIND AND AROUND THE TEXT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 17-23</td>
<td>Historical, Cultural &amp; Geographical Contexts;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Authorship, Audience, Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 24-30</td>
<td>Literary Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dec 1-Dec 7</td>
<td>Biblical-Theological Context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNIT VI: LIVING OUT THE TEXT

Week 14 Dec 8 – 14 A Transformed Life as a Living Gospel “Text”

Required Materials*


*PDFs of additional reading assignments are available in Sakai in the “Resources” folder.

Discussion/Interaction

Discussion and interaction are an important part of the course. They provide an opportunity for us to engage in thoughtful discussion on various topics related to interpretation, and for us to get to know each other a bit better. Please do come prepared. I recommend having some notes to remind you of what you have read and thought, but you will not be turning these in.

Written Assignments

Turning in assignments: Save the file as follows, using your last name and the appropriate assignment number, and upload it into Sakai:

NTOT517_Assignment1_Smith.pdf

*pls save it as a pdf

Information and directions for each written assignment are located in Sakai under “Resources” > “Assignment Instructions”.

3
Due Dates:
All due dates for this course are given in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) and Eastern Standard Time (EST) for Charlotte, N.C. If you are in a different time zone, please make the necessary adjustments to the due dates for your own calendar. Due dates are listed in the syllabus and on the course calendar in Sakai under “Schedule”.

Tips for Success
• Use the spell check tool for all assignments before submission.

• There are 14 weeks in this course. Review the entire syllabus, noting due dates. At the end of each week familiarize yourself with the activities for the following week and create a study schedule to ensure that you use your time wisely.

• I recommend completing the assigned reading and viewing early in each module to allow time to reflect on the content and to complete written assignments.

Before You Begin Module 1
Before beginning the first module, review the syllabus thoroughly. Add due dates to your calendar. You might want to print a copy of the Course Schedule to keep near your computer or study space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Total Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Viewing/ Listening</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each week submit the % of assigned reading &amp; viewing/listening you have completed as follows: 100% submit 1 90% submit .9 80% submit .8 etc. Do not submit hundredths (i.e. do not submit .75, because Sakai will not accept hundredths. Round down to the nearest tenth.) Do not submit page numbers, explanations, etc. Submit only one number. The submission is due each Tuesday @ 6:00 pm.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth and well informed class discussion is expected, and is an important part of the course. Please come prepared.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 written assignments @ 15 points each</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>65 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Instructor Feedback
I will do my best to respond to questions or messages within 24-48 hours, excluding Sundays, and return graded assignments within two weeks of submission.

Late Work
*Late work is not accepted* except in the case of an emergency or extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances will be considered as appropriate. Questions about extensions should be directed to the registrar’s office. If you anticipate a problem, contact me as soon as possible.

Netiquette
Gordon-Conwell does not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in any course. Students should review the netiquette policy in the Student Handbook and this website: [http://www.albion.com/netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette).

Additional Seminary Policies
For additional seminary policies that may pertain to this course, please refer to the Syllabus Addendum.

UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO HERMENEUTICS

Week 1: Sept 8 – 14
Locating, Evaluating, and Using Local Libraries;
Learning to Read Intelligently

“The love of libraries, like most loves, must be learned.”
Alberto Manguel, The Library at Night

“...if we are disposed to go on learning and discovering, we must know how to
“make books teach us well.”
M. Adler, How to Read a Book, p. 15

“Cultural literacy is crucial for those who are not content simply to be carried along by cultural winds and waves (cf. Eph 4:14) but who want critically and constructively to engage culture for the sake of the gospel.”
K. Vanhoozer, Everyday Theology, p. 18

Module Overview
This module has two goals: 1. to familiarize students with local (local = 90 min drive) college, university, seminary, theological, and public libraries, their collections as they pertain to biblical and theological studies, and their lending and ILL policies and 2. to help students become intelligent readers of both texts and culture.

Objectives
Upon successful completion of this module, you will

● be familiar with libraries within a 90 min drive of your home that will be useful to you in this course, in your seminary studies generally, and in your life and ministry after graduation.
● know how to be a much more active and demanding reader of a text.
● begin to understand what your presuppositions, culture, values, etc. are and how they impact your understanding, interpretation, and application of scripture.
● begin to interpret culture theologically so that you may do a better job of “translating” the message of Scripture and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, living it out in your contemporary context

Assignment
Complete Assignment 1 (Week 1) on locating, evaluating, and using local libraries and upload it into Sakai as a .pdf. Instructions are in Sakai > Resources> Assignment Instructions. Due Monday @ 11 pm.

Read
Adler and van Doren p. 3-20, 31-136
Vanhoozer, Everyday Theology, p. 7-60 (in Sakai)

Watch
http://apologetics.com/blog/swelbaum/interview-dr-kevin-vanhoozer/

Note: I don’t fully agree with Vanhoozer’s final comments on method. While I appreciate his comments about reading scripture theologically, and while no method is foolproof, in this course we will learn a method of
Be prepared to discuss the following (both a and b) at the Sept 22 class meeting:

In *Everyday Theology* Vanhoozer states:

“Cultural texts project worlds of meaning that invite us in and encourage us to make our home there. The world of a cultural text - say, for example, the world projected by *Friends*, *Survivor*, or *Desperate Housewives*, unfolds a possible way of living together, a possible way of being human. But we can go further. These culturally created worlds present themselves accompanied by the whisper of their creators: “And behold, it is very good.” *There’s the rub.* Should we accept the invitation? Should we appropriate the projected cultural world, enter in, and pitch our tent? It is a truism in Christian mission that we must go and address people where they live. Quite so. My point is that ‘they’ *(and we)* frequently *live in cleverly devised mythical worlds created by media and marketing moguls.*” (p. 27, my emphasis).

a. Find an advertisement online or in a magazine (bring a hard copy to class), or think of a popular TV show or cultural trend with which your classmates would be familiar. What does the ad, show, or trend want you to believe or do, and into what is it trying to make you? What values does it promote, and how does it promote them? According to this ad, show, or trend, what is “the gospel” *(the good news)* and how does one achieve “the good life”?

b. What are the most important cultural values promoted in the country or region *(of the world, of the country)* where you grew up? What were the most important values *(good or bad)* promoted by your parents and family? How do these values impact your understanding of and application of Scripture? Further, how might your personality, life experience, and church tradition affect your interpretation of scripture?

*We all read and interpret scripture through a series of lenses, some of which are helpful, and some of which distort the gospel. Throughout this course, pray and ask God to reveal to you which lenses you need to discard, and which lenses you should keep.*

**Week 2: Sept 15 – 21**

**The Need for Hermeneutics**

**Module Overview**

This module is an introduction to biblical interpretation. Pray for God to give you a sense of excitement at learning how to interpret his word, and to open your mind that you may understand the scripture, the written revelation of God himself. Interpretation is demanding work, but it is well worth the reward of understanding God’s word, knowing Him through it and, as a result, living a transformed life.

**Module Objectives**
Upon successful completion of this module, you will
● understand the need for and the rewards of skilled biblical interpretation, as well as the challenges we face.
● gain an overview of biblical interpretation.
● be introduced to the OT and NT canon and the major English translations.
● understand further how one’s own presuppositions about the nature of scripture and the task of interpretation shape his or her work.

Read
KBH Chpts. 1, 4-6
Schultz p. 7-38

View/Listen to
Dr. Robert Stein
https://www.biblicaltraining.org/introduction/hermeneutics-0 (39 min)
https://www.biblicaltraining.org/introduction/hermeneutics-1 (38 min)

Dr. Dan Wallace on “Why So Many Versions?”
http://www.biblicaltraining.org/why-so-many-versions/history-english-bible (37 min)

Be prepared to discuss the following at the Sept 22 class meeting:

1. Some of the common Evangelical approaches to scripture unintentionally promote a reader-centered method of interpreting the Bible. List a couple of examples. How does this distort the meaning of the text?

2. “How should we evaluate conflicting claims regarding the accuracy of Bruce Wilkinson’s interpretation and application of the prayer of Jabez? What role should the record sales of his book and the positive testimonies of individuals who have prayed this prayer play in such a debate?” (Schultz, p. 23 #1)

THE FULL SYLLABUS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN SAKAI BY AUG 10 TO STUDENTS WHO ARE REGISTERED FOR THE COURSE
Syllabus Addendum

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 end date for the semester as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required in this case. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized end date for the semester must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the stated date. 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
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. 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 (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

Returned Work
Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self-addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.

Virtual Writing Center

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.