Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
NT 502: Interpreting the New Testament
Instructor: Mark A. Jennings

Fall 2011
Office: AC 153
Email: mjennings1@gordonconwell.edu
Phone: 781-812-0166 (home)

Course Description

The intent of this course is to better prepare and equip future ministers and teachers in the interpretation of the Greek New Testament. The course is (somewhat artificially) divided into two parts. Part 1 covers the “science” of exegesis, comprising the various means/approaches necessary for understanding the Greek New Testament text (e.g., textual criticism, lexical study, grammatical analysis, historical background, etc.). Part 2 (the “art” of exegesis) comprises two components. The first centers are the various lenses that can be used to view the text (historical background, narrative criticism, rhetorical criticism, etc.). The second component centers on hermeneutical aspect of interpretation, such as what it means to read the text in faithful obedience and the role of theology, canon, and church in interpretation. This course is designed to expose students to the rigors of intentional, deliberate investigation of the Greek New Testament, as well as the creative, artistic nature of interpretation. Throughout the entire process this course will emphasize the necessity of an appropriate posture of prayer and thanksgiving when approaching the perilous, and wondrous self-revelation of God occurring in Scripture.

The format of this course will include some lecture, substantial class discussion/presentation, and multiple writing assignments.

Objectives

At the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. Appreciate the need for exegesis and hermeneutics when teaching the New Testament.
2. Employ various methods for exegesing the Greek New Testament, being able to identify the strengths and shortcomings of each method. (Art 1 and 2 of GCTS Mission)
3. Adequately interpret any text of the Greek New Testament without solely relying upon secondary sources by bringing established methods into conversation with each other to best understand the authorial intent. (Art 1 and 2 of GCTS Mission)
4. Read critically and use judiciously secondary sources when interpreting the Greek New Testament. (Art 1 and 2 of GCTS Mission)
5. Consider and articulate the difference between interpreting Scripture and interpreting any other Ancient text. (Art 1 and 2 of GCTS Mission)
6. Speak thoughtfully regarding the nature of Scripture as God’s revelation and understand the role exegesis plays in worship and devotion. (i.e., avoid the error of
seeing exegesis as the goal itself and merely viewing Scripture as a “thing to be mined for content”). (Art 1, 2, and 3 of GCTS Mission)

**Texts**

**Required:**


Greek New Testament (NA27 preferred)

**Recommended:**


**Requirements**
1. Be prepared each day to discuss the reading for that day. The class discussions and lectures will be based on the assumption that the material has been read and considered.

2. Attendance at every class is expected. Failure to attend class will impact your class participation grade. (Besides, who wants to miss class?)

3. There will be some “non graded assignments” throughout the term. The success of these assignments is directly related to the level of attention given to them.

4. Complete and submit all graded assignments.
   a. Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, 1 in margins, 12 pt font.)
   b. AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE AT THE START OF CLASS AND IS CONSIDERED LATE AFTERWARDS. EACH STUDENT IS ALLOWED TO SUBMIT ONE “LATE” ASSIGNMENT (THIS EXCEPTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THE BOOK REVIEW OR THE EXEGESIS PAPER).
      i. This “one late assignment” will receive a two-grade penalty.
      ii. Any subsequent late assignments will receive a “zero” grade and will not be evaluated.
      iii. The student will be asked to “step outside” during the portion of class in which the “late assignment” is discussed.
      iv. The “late assignment” must be submitted within two class periods of the original due date.
         1. After this extended deadline – the assignment will receive an automatic “zero.” For purposes of counting late assignment due date– Reading Week classes will count as a class period.
   c. Textual Criticism Assignment ~ Analysis of Gal 1:11
      i. Answer the following question: Was the UBS4 and NA27 correct in their preference of γάρ? Be sure to provide the strengths and weakness of the various options, explain your conclusion, and describe how one’s preference impacts the interpretation of the epistle.
      ii. For this assignment, do not consult any secondary sources or commentaries. You may use charts found in Blomberg or also Ciampa’s charts at http://www.viceregency.com/TextCritCharts.pdf.
      iii. Your answer is to be no more than two pages. Fonts such SIL Apparatus are available online, but other options are possible. Please feel free to use numbers for the major uncials.
   d. Word Study Assignment ~ Analysis of κόσμος in John 3:16
      i. Answer the following question? Who comprises “the world” in John 3:16? First and foremost your work should examine the use of κόσμος in the Johannine writings. You may also include information from broader investigations, including the NT, LXX, other Greek writings, etc.?
ii. After you establish the range of possible meanings, identify and explain the “best three” meanings then argue for which one is preferred. Finally, briefly comment on the theological implications for each of the “best three” choices.

iii. Do not consult any commentaries. You may consult a “Lexicon” after doing your own work, but your answer should reflect your own efforts. (A Note: Do not simply trust a Lexicon – you should always investigate their reference and see if it fits the context).

iv. Your answer is to be no more than two pages. Do not quote entire passages unless absolutely necessary, citations and brief notes are sufficient.

e. **Sentence Diagram Assignment ~ Analysis of Phil 2:1-4**
   i. Using the phrasing method taught in class (and also in Blomberg), diagram Phil 2:1-4.
   ii. Provide a brief (about 1 paragraph) statement regarding information gleaned from this method. How might the results of this diagram direct and inform your exegesis.
   iii. This assignment should be typed (if at all possible).

f. **The Use of the OT in the NT ~ Analysis of Gal 3:6-14.**
   i. For this assignment you are to analyze the presence and function of the Old Testament in Gal 3:6-14. Paul employs the following texts: Gen 15:6 (Gal 3:6); 12:3/18:18 (Gal 3:8); Deut 27:26 (Gal 3:10); Hab 2:4 (Gal 3:11); Lev 18:5 (Gal 3:12); and Deut 21:23 (Gal 3:13).
   ii. In your analysis you are to comment on the following:
      1. What role do the texts play (if any) in the structure of the passage?
      2. How does Paul build and establish an argument with these texts?
      3. Does Paul change or alter the text he employs? If so, why?
      4. Does Paul use the text in a manner consistent with its original intent (in other words, would a 1st century Jewish interpreter think Paul was playing “fast and loose” with the text)?
      5. Why do you think Paul chose these particular texts in the first place? How do they serve the message of Galatians?
      6. Any other comments?
   iii. You are not to use any commentaries or other secondary sources in doing your analysis. You may use any other primary sources that you choose.
   iv. Your analysis should be no more than three pages.

g. **Semantic Structure Assignment ~ Gal 2:15-21**
   i. Using the methods described in class, do a Semantric Structure Analysis of Gal 2:15-21.
   ii. Identify the main idea of the passage based upon your analysis.
iii. Describe (in one paragraph) how this project would inform your exegesis of the passage.

5. Write an Exegesis Paper of 2500-3500 words (strictly enforced) on a passage in which you systematically analyze a complete passage of the Greek text from Galatians or Philippians.
   b. This paper should employ all relevant exegetical methods developed in “Interpreting the New Testament” (original text, section boundaries, historical background, literary background, grammar, syntax, semantic/discourse analysis, narrative criticism, etc.). Part of your evaluation not only will be how you employed your method, but which methods you chose to use. Please note – not every method will provide the same level of insight to every passage, and some may be hardly useful to a particular passage.
   c. This is a “methods paper” – meaning I am more interested in how you work on the passage yourself than in how you process the work of others.
      i. This paper should reflect knowledge of the scholarly secondary literature (commentaries, peer-reviewed articles and chapters, etc.), but the weight of your paper should be directed towards your findings and not simply a restatement of the conclusions of others.
      ii. Be sure to read your sources carefully and cite his/her opinion, not simply an opinion they are discussing. This is especially true for commentaries where multiple opinions are discussed.
      iii. Try to cite the best representatives of certain arguments. (For example, if Harry, Hermione, and Ron all cite Severus regarding a certain view – then it makes the most sense for you to follow suit and use Severus as the best representative for that point.)
      iv. NOTE: DO NOT PLAGARIZE! ALL ACTS OF PLAGARISM WILL BE FULLY PURSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GCTS POLICIES. NO EXCUSES.
      v. Limit your use of direct quotations. A good rule of thumb regarding quotations – only use them if the author said something much better, and more completely, then anyone else (including yourself).
   d. You are to follow SBL format. (Format is taken very seriously – attention to form often indicates that the paper was taken seriously. A poorly written and poorly formatted paper will substantively harm a good idea.) Also – since you will give the full bibliographic information the first time you cite a text in the footnotes, you do not need to provide a bibliography.
   e. The paper is to be double-spaced, 12-pt font, with 1 in. margins.
   f. Your paper is to divided into the following structural elements:
      i. Translation: This should be in accurate and idiomatic English. It should be a “functional/dynamic equivalent” translation (in other words, not a paraphrase or something overly formal). Consider it to be a translation that would be useful for teaching and preaching in a church setting with newcomers, new believers, visitors, and old salts of the
faith. It should reflect and anticipate the various exegetical decisions you made on your passage. (THE TRANSLATION WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE TOTAL WORD COUNT OF THE PAPER.)

ii. **Commentary:** This section should include the following:

1. **Introduction.** No more than two pages introducing the passage, the relationship of the passage to the broader context, and identify the major issues to be discussed.

2. **Body.** Use a verse-by-verse approach (some flexibility if the versification overly disrupts your argument). Here is where you will exhibit your exegesis, interact with representative secondary sources, etc. Be sure to discuss the following:
   a. Briefly explain the introductory issues (especially the occasion) of the book in which your passage is found.
   b. Establish the coherence and boundaries of the passage.
   c. Explain the role of your passage within the framework of the argument of the book and/or section in which it is found.
   d. Establish the original text. The discussion of significant textual issues should be reserved for footnotes to the text within the commentary section of the paper. Especially important textual issues may merit some
      i. Any charts used should be supplied in an appendix.
   e. Discuss complex, unusual or particularly important features of the grammar of the passage (any diagrams should be attached as appendices).
   f. Explain important aspects of the historical and literary context.
   g. Explain important or unusual words and concepts including scriptural and/or cultural backgrounds that inform them.
   h. Discuss rhetorical features of the passage.

3. **Summary.** No more than one or two paragraphs summarizing the argument of the passage.

iii. **Theological Reflection.** No more than one page identifying the main theological point and the relevance of the passage to the life of the believer and the practice of the church. This section ideally would be the beginnings of a message you would deliver on this text (which is why we do exegesis!). This is not a summary. I take this page very seriously.

iv. **Appendix.** Include here any relevant diagrams. The paper MUST HAVE a syntactical diagram of the text and a sentence structure analysis of the entire unit. These appendix should naturally coincide with the exegetical and translational decisions. (THE APPENDIX WILL NOT BE INCLUDED AS PART OF THE PAPER’S WORD COUNT).
   1. I only want to see diagrams. Do you use the “Appendix” as an opportunity to show me how much you know on a topic that you just could not “fit-in” the paper.
v. LATE PAPERS WILL RECEIVE A ZERO. ANY STUDENT WHO DOES NOT SUBMIT AN EXEGESIS PAPER WILL FAIL THE COURSE.

6. You are to write a Book Review of Webster’s Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch. The review should be:
   a. Between 750-1000 words (strictly enforced).
   b. Put the full bibliographic citation at the top.
   c. The review is a critical exposition of the text. The reviewer should tell the reader what the book says including: main argument of the book, main contribution to the field, scope of the work, author’s method and approach, weaknesses, strengths, implications, etc.
      i. N.B. Treat the author as you would want to be treated. Before you can adequately critique the book, you need to demonstrate you adequately understand the argument. When you criticize – use courtesy.
      ii. Try to avoid the criticism of “He should have talked about…” unless it is a glaring oversight. After all – one has to make decisions about what to include. Sometime the author is forced to cut based on the publisher’s demands. It is to easy to criticize for not discussing something, it is much more challenging to criticize what was actually said. The former can be done by perusing the table of contents and index while the latter requires reading the book.
   d. The review should enable a reader to decide whether or not to read the book.
   e. Feel free to read critical reviews of similar books to get a better sense of form and function, but under no circumstances are you to consult other reviews (of any sort) of Webster’s book.
   f. LATE REVIEWS WILL RECEIVE A ZERO.

Grade Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual Criticism</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Study</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Diagram</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic Structure</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT in the NT</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exegesis Paper</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>12/14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final semester letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A 93% and up       C 73.3%
A- 90              C- 70
B+ 86.6%           D+ 66.6%
A Brief Note on Intellectual Property Rights

No audio or video recordings are allowed. Furthermore no publication (audio, video, written) or live transmission of classroom proceedings will be permitted. Any requests for such privileges must be made in writing and must receive written approval from the instructor.

A Brief Note Regarding Internet Usage

Please do not access the internet (email, apps, websites, etc.) during class. This can be extremely distracting to all parties – and quite frankly it is unbecoming to do so. Exceptions may be made on occasion.

A Final Note

A elderly Christian woman, a real saint of the faith, upon hearing of my higher degrees in Biblical Studies, said to me, “Oh, goodness my dear ~ you seminary grads always want to tell me that my Bible doesn’t really say what we’ve all thought it did.” Her remark spoke volumes.

Too often the exegete relies too heavily upon his/her intellect, accepts too easily the supposed undeniable soundness of method, and assumes too arrogantly that those who came before somehow have not seen or considered what he/she sees and considers. Let us walk in full humility, knowing that we stand upon the shoulders those who have come before us, realizing that the Holy Spirit informs and illumines His word in all those who belong to Him. Let us be ever mindful that we who attempt to explain and proclaim the Revelation of God given in His Word, that we stand in a position of great responsibility and daunting peril. Therefore, let each of us, and all those summoned to interpret the Scripture of God, do so in a posture of prayer, seeking Him and the grace of His Revelation, letting our gentleness be evident to all that Christ is near.
**Course Schedule** (subject to instructor’s revision at any time)
- Unless otherwise indicated, all readings are found in the required reading or on CAMS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Course Introduction; The Science and Art of New Testament Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>Textual Criticism</td>
<td>B: 1; Intro to GNT; Ciampa’s textual criticism docs at <a href="http://www.viceregency.com">www.viceregency.com</a> (charts and worksheets); “Reference Chart,” “Witnesses,” “Issues in Ehrman...,” “Key Questions...,” Schnabel article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>Finish Text Crit, Translation and Translations;</td>
<td>B: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>Finish Grammar; Outlining</td>
<td>B: cpt 8; “Nicholl Sentence Diagramming”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Finish Outlining; Semantic Structure Analysis</td>
<td>Beekman and Callow, “SSA Quick Reference Guide,” OTHER ESSAYS TBD; WORD STUDY ASSIGNMENT DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>Finish Semantic Structure Analysis; Literary Context</td>
<td>B: cpt 4, Read Galatians, Philippians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>Synoptic Problem; Form Criticism, Redactive Criticism, Narrative Criticism</td>
<td>Stein “Synoptic Problem,” Stein Studying Synoptic, cpt 9-12 (On Reserve in Library); SENTENCE DIAGRAM ASSIGNMENT DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>READING WEEK (NO CLASS)</td>
<td>Work on Semantic Structure Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>READING WEEK (NO CLASS)</td>
<td>Begin reading Longenecker and Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21</td>
<td>Historical Intro, Begin Jewish Background</td>
<td>B: cpt 3; F:1-46; 396-573; SEMANTIC STRUCTURE ASSIGNMENT DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading/Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Greco-Roman Background (Ideas and Belief)</td>
<td>F: 182-243, 319-393: Be mindful of similarities with NT statements as well as direct oppositions to these beliefs in the NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Greco-Roman Background (Society)</td>
<td>F: 48-147, deSilva, 95-119; 1 Cor 1, 5-6:8, 11:17-34, OT in the NT ASSIGNMENT DUE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>READING WEEK (NO CLASS)</td>
<td>Begin Reading Webster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>READING WEEK (NO CLASS)</td>
<td>Work on Exegesis Papers!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>Finish Greco-Roman, Discuss Longenecker</td>
<td>2 Cor 8-9, Finish Longenecker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>Exegesis and Theology</td>
<td>B: cpt 9; Bockmuehl, “Is there...”, Vanhoozer, “Apostolic Discourse,” Bockmuehl TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23</td>
<td>Theological Exegesis</td>
<td>Vanhoozer, “Introduction,” “Philippians,” “Galatians” in Dictionary of Theological Interpretation in Reference of GCTS,, Bockmuehl TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</td>
<td>Come back Fat and Happy! (AND READ WEBSTER)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Webster Discussion Part 1</td>
<td>WEBSTER BOOK REVIEW DUE. Webster chpts 1-2, Questions on CAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>Webster Discussion Part 2</td>
<td>Webster chpts 3-4, and “conclusion,” Questions on CAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/7</td>
<td>Preaching and Teaching</td>
<td>Robinson, Biblical Preaching, chpt 2, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Preaching and Teaching (cont); Discussion with Rev. Jeramie Rinne</td>
<td>Listen and take notes on the following sermons: TBD  Readings TBD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14</td>
<td>Exegesis Papers: A Discussion Among Friends; Where we go from here...</td>
<td>EXEGESIS PAPERS DUE (Have a Happy Christmas)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>