Course Description:

This course is concerned with the introduction of exegetical methods. We give special attention to developing the skills, tools and hermeneutical principles necessary to become conversant with New Testament texts. To learn exegetical methods is to approach the New Testament consciously and deliberately and skillfully. It is to learn tools that enable one to interpret biblical texts first-hand before turning to secondary sources, and to evaluate those sources critically. It is also to learn tools that deepen devotional habits. To exegesis is a religious practice and a key practice of ministry that is connected to other pastoral practices. Indeed, very often it is a necessary precursor and foundation for such other practices.

This course is also concerned with the cultivation of exegetical thinking. Although the application of exegetical steps or methods to a text is foundational, students have not actually interpreted a text until they connect the parts of their research to illuminate the whole text in a meaningful way. A reader begins with an investigation of the parts of a text, by researching its form and function, grammar and vocabulary, and social and historical background. Displaying this research without connecting those parts, however, is not an interpretation but a data report. Interpretation requires a creative act of the imagination. The musician is not virtuosic until she combines tempo, rhythm, dynamics and intonation with a personal engagement of the piece she plays. Thus, in this course, we also give attention to engaging New Testament texts and synthesizing the results of exegetical methods in order to produce sound and meaningful interpretations.

Course Objectives:

Students who have completed this course will have:

- articulated the value of becoming deliberate, skillful interpreters of biblical texts by learning exegetical tools and methods (articles 1-2 of the GCTS mission statement).
- demonstrated the ability to use the tools and methods of exegesis presented in this course (articles 1-2 of the GCTS mission statement).
- demonstrated the ability to synthesize the results of their exegetical work into a sound and meaningful interpretation of a New Testament text (articles 1-2 of the GCTS mission statement).
- identified significant hermeneutical issues involved in reading ancient texts in a modern world, and articulated the contemporary application of a New Testament text (articles 1-3, 6 of the GCTS mission statement).
**Required Textbooks:**


**Required Readings (on CAMS):**

*Reference Manual for Interpreting the New Testament*


Kevin Vanhoozer, “Reforming the Reader: Interpretive Virtue, Spirituality, and Communicative Efficacy.” Pages 367-452 in *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge.*

**Recommended Reading:**


Course Evaluation:

1. Readings and weekly Study Questions — 15% of final grade
   Students will prepare weekly written assignments based on the assigned readings. Each set of study questions must be answered in 1 typed, single-spaced page. Each set of study questions will be posted on CAMS two weeks before it is due.

2. Weekly Analyses — 20% of final grade
   Each week, students will prepare an analysis of an assigned text that applies the exegetical tool learned in class. Each analysis assignment will be explained in class and posted on CAMS two weeks before it is due.

3. Word Study Paper (due on Nov. 18) — 15%
   Students will research the meaning of ONE of the following Greek words in its NT context: μετανοεῖν in Acts 2:38
   σάρξ in Romans 7:5
   ἐλπιῖς in 1 Peter 1:3
   Students will write a 5-6 page, single-spaced paper discussing their findings in essay form, using the method and outline in the Reference Manual, pages 87-97.

4. Exegesis Paper (due by 5 p.m. on Dec. 22) — 50% of final grade
   Students will write an 8-10 page, double-spaced exegesis paper that applies the tools and methods learned in class to ONE of the following NT texts:
   Acts 2:37-41
   Romans 7:4-6
   1 Peter 1:3-9
   Guidelines for researching and writing the exegesis paper will be discussed in class and posted on CAMS.

Final semester letter grades will be assigned as follows:
- A 93% and up
- A- 90
- B+ 86.6%
- B 83.3%
- B- 80
- C+ 76.6%
- C 73.3%
- C- 70
- D+ 66.6%
- D 63.3%
- D- 60
- F below 60
All work for the course will be graded according to the policies outlining performance expectations in the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Catalog. In this class, grades are based on the student's actual performance in a course judged against the criteria for grading stated in the course syllabus. The following letter grades and the accompanying description are used:

A  Reserved for outstanding work of exceptionally high quality that reflects a creative appropriation of course material and practices.
B  Work that meets all of the stated course requirements and reflects a firm grasp of course material and practices.
C  Work that shows a basic grasp of the course materials and practices.
D  Work that shows serious deficiencies but meets the minimal requirements of the course.
F  Work that fails to meet the minimal requirements of the course. No credit is given.

A “minus” or “plus” indicates work that falls just short of the stated descriptions.

Course Requirements:

1. Each student is required to complete all reading, weekly study questions and weekly analyses as indicated on the syllabus. Class readings and analyses will be drawn on during class, and the instructor will assume knowledge of this material.

2. Each student is expected to be present in class. Unexcused tardiness or absence from class will be reflected in the final grade for the course.

3. All written assignments must be turned in at the end of the class for which they are due.

4. All work must be submitted on time. Late assignments will receive a 10% drop in grade. All work for the course must be submitted in order to receive a passing grade.
Course Schedule

Understanding our Location

Introduction to the Course and the Approach

9/11 no assignment due - get ahead on the required reading.

History of Interpretation (the rise and fall of the historical-critical method)

9/16 due: Study questions on Black and Dockery, 1-44, 74-186.
9/18 due: Analysis of Mark 3:22-30 and its synoptic parallels

Investigating the Text

Translation Theory
Fee, Steps 1-3

9/23 due: Study questions on Fee, 5-38

Textual Criticism
Fee, Step 5

9/25 due: Study questions on Fee, 59-70; Metzger and Ehrman, all.
9/30 due: Text criticism of 1 Cor 15:51 (see Reference Manual, 78-82)

Grammatical and Syntactical Analysis
Fee, Steps 4 and 6

10/2 due: Study questions on Fee, 41-58, 71-78; Black and Dockery, 253-71; Reference Manual, 22-35.

10/7 due: Translation and discourse analysis of Eph 2:1-10

Grammatical Analysis and Syntactical Analysis (cont.)
Fee, Steps 4 and 6, cont.


10/14 READING WEEK – no class
10/16 READING WEEK – no class

10/21 due: Sentence diagram of 2 Cor 1:8-9

Lexical Analysis
Fee, Step 7


10/28 due: The significance of ἀρτοί in Mark 6:30-8:21 (concordance study)

Identifying the Character of NT Texts (Not all Scripture Looks Alike)

Analysis of Genre, Form and Structure
Fee, Step 9

10/30 due: Study questions on Fee, 16-31; Black and Dockery, 272-95; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?,” Pages 24-49 in Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies.

11/4 due: Analysis of Mark 5:21-43

Reading NT texts with Peripheral Vision

Analysis of the Historical-Cultural Context
Fee, Steps 8 & 10

11/6 due: Study Questions on Fee, 96-111; Ferguson, all.

11/11 READING WEEK – no class

11/13 READING WEEK – no class

11/18 due: Historical-context text collection

Analysis of the Literary Context
Fee, Step 11

11/20 No study questions due; work on exegesis paper

11/25 due: What does Rom 12:1-21 have to do with 1:18-32?
11/27 THANKSGIVING VACATION – no class

Analysis of Biblical and Theological Context
Fee, Step 12

12/2  *due:* Study questions on Black and Dockery, 209-29, 481-505.

12/4  *due:* Paul’s use of Deut in Rom 10:6-8

Studying the NT for Transformation, not just Information

Hermeneutics and Preaching

12/9  Study questions on Black and Dockery, 506-23; Vanhoozer, “Reforming the Reader: Interpretive Virtue, Spirituality, and Communicative Efficacy,” pages 367-452 in *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*

2/11  SNOW DAY — no class unless make-up needed