

90-901 Biblical and Theological Hermeneutics

Wednesday 1:00-3:50 p.m.,
PhD Core Seminar, Fall 2017

Room TBD

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I. Course Content and Aims

Central to all theological endeavors, theoretical and practical, is the interpretation of “texts:” biblical, historical, theological, liturgical, and “living.” Before modernity, theologians and pastors had already developed sophisticated forms of interpretation, especially as a practice of the interpretation of scripture. The modern era has seen the rise of historical criticism and the use of scientific hermeneutical tools, which both depend upon and rebel against the pre-modern forms of biblical interpretation. Modern methods of biblical interpretation have been fiercely defended and contested in both the church and the academy. With the development of post-modern sensibilities, modernist scientific hermeneutics has itself come under fire. This course will explore pre-modern, modern and post-modern hermeneutical approaches, including African-American, global feminist, and postcolonial perspectives, with special emphasis on a theological hermeneutics of culture.

The purpose of the course is not simply to engage with the theoretical controversies over interpretation, but for each student to: 1) develop an understanding of how interpretation is used in her or his theological discipline, 2) to understand how hermeneutics function more generally within that discipline, and 3) to become theological interpreters of culture and reality in order to engage and transform reality. Our methodology will be both dialogical and heuristic; the seminar will be as good as the quality of what we all as participants put into preparation, dialogue and discovery. The required readings are only meant a minimum common denominator.

The objectives of this course are:

1. to acquaint the students with several historical and contemporary biblical, theological, and philosophical hermeneutical methods and their underlying interpretive practices;
2. to provide opportunities for students to learn the skills of distinguishing and deploying distinct hermeneutical methods as they are appropriate to their fields of scholarship and inquiry;
3. to help students use this knowledge to think systematically theologically about culture, as such, and multiple discrete cultural discourses; and
4. to create a competence in understanding and communicating both the historical development of hermeneutics and various modes of contemporary application.

II. Class Format and Requirements

A. Preterm work:

Read Laughlin, et al., *Brain, Symbol and Experience* and prepare a brief paper of 4-5 pages addressing the following questions: (a) what do you perceive as the main theme of the argument regarding human cognition, reality, and understanding; (b) what is the relevance of the theme to a theological hermeneutics of culture; (c) what is the relevance of the theme to your theological discipline; (d) what are its weaknesses? Please send this paper to both professors, via e-mail, by 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 6 – it will provide a basis for our introductory discussion of hermeneutics.

B. Panels: A small group of students will work together to present the relevant background and influences on the text for the day, as well as its implications for theological hermeneutics. The collective presentation will last not more than 50 minutes and will include handouts for the class. The presentation should presuppose that all members of the seminar have read and prepared the text for that day, and will shed further light on that text as a basis for conversation. The groups will be set up on the first day of class as we set up the seminar (30 % of grade).

C. Précis with working hypothesis: Each student will make a brief presentation of the final paper toward the end of the semester. Be prepared to distribute a 1 page abstract of your final paper. This should include a thesis statement; some clarification of the thesis you are working with in the final paper; attention to the methodological orientation of the paper; and an indication of your conclusions, including the application to ministry. 10% of grade

D. Final Paper: 15-18 pages, double-spaced. Review the relevant biblical, philosophical, and/or theological approaches to hermeneutics studied in the course as these relate to *your* discipline. The student may also choose to orient the paper from a particular perspective in hermeneutics, e.g., feminist, cultural, or post-colonial hermeneutics. Address how this/these approaches will affect your thinking and approach to your discipline, as well as your methods of teaching and research. What are the implications for ministry in the particular context in which you anticipate serving (teaching, counseling, parish ministry, Christian education, etc.)? Due Dec. 6, 2017. 40% of grade

E. Participation in seminar: 20% of grade

1. Regular and punctual attendance. Absences may result in a lowering of the grade. If an absence becomes necessary, please contact one of the instructors.
2. Appropriate weekly preparation that allows for active class participation.
3. All written work is due on the date assigned. Late work may result in a lowering of the grade.

F. Self-Evaluation: In one or two paragraphs, reflect upon, your participation in the class and the quality of your preparation and written work. Due Dec. 6, 2017.

Please note:

- 1) It is not possible to pass the course without the completion of all assignments.
- 2) Plagiarism must be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs and will become a part of your record while enrolled. It will jeopardize receiving credit for this course and could result in dismissal from the program (see the plagiarism policy in the G-ETS *Student Life and Academic Handbook*).

III. Required Texts/Readings (note: all prices are Amazon.com, but copies may be available elsewhere at different costs.)

Anderson, Cheryl B. *Ancient Laws and Contemporary Controversies: The Need for Inclusive Biblical Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009.

ISBN 978-0-19-530550-0 \$23.16

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. *On Christian Doctrine*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by R. P.H. Green. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997 [427]. ISBN 0-19-283928-4 \$6.99

Cahalan, Kathleen and Gordon Mikoski. *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*. 2014 New York: Rowen and Littlefield, 2014. ISBN. 0742561267. \$36.97

Dockery, David S. *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in Light of the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1992. ISBN 978-0801030109 \$26.00

Douglas, Mary. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. ISBN: 978-0415314541. \$18.95

DuPrè, Louis. *Symbols of the Sacred*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000. ISBN-13: 978-0802847485. \$13.88.

Fish, Stanley "Is There a Text in This Class?" In *Is There a Text in This Class: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1982. pp. 303-321. ISBN-13: 978-0674467262. \$29.81.

Frei, Hans W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974. ISBN: 0-300-02602 \$31.98

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. London: Continuum Publishing Group

- Crossroad, 2004 [1960]. Parts II and III. ISBN 08264-7697X \$18.85
- Hughes, Graham. *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity*. 2003. Cambridge University Press. ISBN-10: 0521535573 \$45.75
- Julian of Norwich. *Showings*. 1977. Paulist Press. ISBN-13: 978-0809120918. \$19.78.
- Khanna, Ranjana; Fish, Stanley; Jameson, Frederic. *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*. Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003. ISBN-13: 978-0822330677. \$26.70
- Laughlin, Charles, McManus, John, d'Aquili, Eugene. *Brain, Symbol & Experience: Toward a Neurophenomenology of Human Consciousness*. 1990. New York: Columbia University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0877735229. \$20.95
- Ray, Stephen. *Do No Harm: Social Sin and Christian Responsibility*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2002. ISBN: 0800634977. \$16.62
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University, 1976. ISBN 0-912646-59-4 \$16.95
- Stern, Donnell B. *Unformulated Experience: From Dissociation to Imagination in Psychoanalysis*. Hillsdale, NJ and London: The Analytic Press. 1997. ISBN 0-88163-141-8. \$44.74.
- Stone, Ken. *Practicing Safer Texts: Food, Sex and Bible in Queer Perspective*. New York Bloomsbury T&T Clark 2005. ISBN 978-0567081728. \$67.45
- Tillich, Paul. *Theology of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press 1962. ISBN 0195007115 \$13.99 (Kindle)
- Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1987. ISBN 0226803414 \$20.00
- Zimmerman, Joyce Ann. *Liturgy and Hermeneutics*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999. ISBN 0814624979 \$15.43

IV. Class Schedule and Assignments

Introduction and Historical Perspectives on Hermeneutics

Dates	Topic	Assignment
1. Sept. 6, 2017	Introductions, Syllabus Review, Hermeneutics Exercise Dr. David Hogue	See pre-term assignment

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| 2. Sept. 13, 2017 | Hermeneutics in Process | Read: Douglas, DuPre Fish, "Is There a Text in This Class?" |
| 3. Sept. 20, 2017 | Early Biblical Hermeneutics: Patristics | Read: Dockery, <i>Biblical Interpretation Then and Now</i> ; Augustine, <i>On Christian Doctrine</i> |
| 4. Sept. 27, 2017 | Hermeneutics and the Reformation:
Luther to Schleiermacher
Dr. Stephen Ray [panel 1] | Read: Frei, <i>The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative:</i> |
| 5. Oct. 4, 2017 | Philosophical Hermeneutics after
Schleiermacher
Dr. Stephen Ray [Panel 2] | <u>Read:</u> Gadamer, <i>Truth and Method</i> , Parts II and III. |
| 6. Oct. 11, 2017 | Phenomenological Hermeneutics
Dr. Stephen Ray [panel 3] | <u>Read:</u> Ricoeur, <i>Interpretation Theory</i> |
| 7. Oct. 18, 2017 | A Theological Hermeneutics

Dr. Stephen Ray [panel 4]
; | <u>Read:</u> Tillich, <i>Theology of Culture</i> , Ray, <i>Do No Harm</i> . |
| 8. Oct. 25, 2017 | Psychoanalytic Thought and Hermeneutics
Dr. David Hogue | <u>Read:</u> Stern, <i>Unformulated Experience</i> |

Trajectories in Theological Hermeneutics

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| 9. November 1, 2017 | Hermeneutics of Culture
Dr. Stephen Ray | <u>Read:</u> Khanna, <i>Dark Continents</i> |
| 10. Nov. 8, 2017 | Queer Theory and Biblical Interpretation
<i>Texts</i> | <u>Read:</u> <i>Practicing Safer</i> |
| 11. Nov. 15, 2017 | Liturgical Perspectives | <u>Read:</u> Zimmerman, Joyce |

*Ann. Liturgy and
Hermeneutics*

Hughes, Graham. *Worship
as Meaning: A Liturgical
Theology for Late
Modernity*

Biblical Hermeneutics

THANKSGIVING BREAK

12. Nov. 29, 2017 Hermeneutics: The View From the Other Side Read: *Ancient Laws and Controversies*

Integrative Perspective

13. Dec. 6, 2017 Integrative Discussion and Final Class Evaluations Read: Julian, *Showings*
Pryce, *New Showings*
Due: Final Paper;
Self Evaluation

Supplementary Bibliography

- Adam, A. K. M. *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship. New Testament Series. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Ashcroft, Bill; Griffiths, Gareth; & Tiffin, Helen. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Capps, Donald. *Pastoral Care and Hermeneutics*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Crossan, Dominic D. "Paradox Gives Rise to Metaphor: Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics and the Parables of Jesus." *Biblical Research* 24-25 (1979-1980): 20-37.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Différance." In *Margins of Philosophy*, 1-27. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982.
- Donaldson, L. E. Editor. *Postcolonialism and Scriptural Reading*. *Semeia* 75. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.

- Dostal, Robert J. Editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- Felder, Cain Hope. *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.\
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- Fowl, Stephen. Editor. *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- Gerhart, M. "Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Theory as Resource for Theological Reflection." *Thomist* 39 (1975): 496-527.
- Gerkin, Charles V. *The Living Human Document: Re-Visioning Pastoral Counseling in as Hermeneutical Mode*. Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1984.
- Ferraris, Maurizio. *History of Hermeneutics*. Translated by Luca Somigli. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996. (1988)
- Johnson, Patricia Altenbernd. *On Gadamer*. Wadsworth Philosophical Series. United States: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 2000.
- Kogler, Hans Herbert. *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press, 1996.
- Kurt Mueller-Vollmer. Ed. *The Hermeneutics Reader*. New York: Continuum, 1985.
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. (1979)
- Madison, G.B. *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Mudge, L.S. "Paul Ricoeur on Biblical Interpretation." *Biblical Research* 24-25 (1979-1980): 38-69.
- Ochs, Peter, and Levene, Nancy. Eds. *Textual Reasonings: Jewish Philosophy and Text Study at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

- Palmer, Richard E. *Hermeneutics*. Evanston: Northwestern University, 1969.
- Sanneh, Lamin O. *Whose Religion Is Christianity?* Grand Rapid: Eerdmanns, 2003.
- Smith, James K.A. *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2000.
- Smugitharajah, R.S. *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Taylor, Victor E. & Winqvist, Charles E. Editors. *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Tolbert, Mary Ann. "Reading for Liberation." In *Reading From This Place, Vol. 1: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*. Edited by Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert. pp. 263-276.
- _____. "Afterwards: The Politics and Poetics of Location." In *Reading From This Place, Vol. 1: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*. Edited by Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert. pp. 305-317.
- Yeo, K.K. *What Has Jerusalem to Do with Beijing?* Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998.
- _____. "Paul's Theological Ethic and the Chinese Morality of *Ren Ren*," in Charles Cosgrove, Herold Weiss, K.K. Yeo, *Cross-Cultural Paul: Journeys to Others, Journeys to Ourselves*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, pp. 104-140.
- _____. "Christ and the Earth in Pauline and Native American Understandings," in Charles Cosgrove, Herold Weiss, K.K. Yeo, *Cross-Cultural Paul: Journeys to Others, Journeys to Ourselves*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, pp. 179-218.
- _____. *Musing with Confucius and Paul: Toward a Chinese Christian Theology* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2008), 215-252 (on Yue and music).
- Young, Robert J.C. *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Wamke, Georgia. "Hermeneutics, Tradition, and the Standpoint of Women." pp. 206-226. In *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Edited by Brice R. Wachterhauser. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-8101-1118-7