

Eastern Regional Conference – Ministry Training Institute (MTI)

Course No. TH202 Course Name: Introduction to Biblical Interpretation

Term: Fall Year: 2020 Dates: September 3-November 19

Time: Thursdays 6pm-9pm

Instructor Judd Spencer

Phone: (205) 382-1660 Email: judd4christ@hotmail.com

Virtual Office Contact Hours: As Needed

I. Course Goals and Objectives

1. Gain a greater appreciation for God’s Word and the unity that exists within the diverse scriptures.
2. Become more comfortable interacting with and interpreting various biblical passages from diverse genres both orally and in writing.
3. Become aware of and evaluate the pre-understandings we bring to the biblical text.
4. Gain an increased understanding of the overarching narrative of scripture and how individual passages propel that narrative forward.
5. Apply biblical truths to our lives, ministries, and circumstances.

II. Course Methodology:

1. Interacting with the works of biblical scholars and interpreters through assigned readings.
2. “Hands on” interaction with diverse biblical passages.
3. Class lectures and discussions focused on biblical interpretation history and practices.
4. Researching and writing on select biblical passages.
5. Prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: Anyone auditing the course is not expected to complete any of the graded assignments. It is recommended that auditing students complete the assigned readings in Grasping God’s Word as knowledge of these will be assumed in class lectures.

III. Grading Scale

A	93-100	Outstanding	C	73-76	Average
A-	90-92	Superior	C-	70-72	Acceptable but definitely below average
B+	87-89	Very good	D, F	69↓	Not acceptable
B	83-86	Good work			
B-	80-82	Satisfactory			
C+	77-79	Above average			

NOTE: A final grade of D or F will not meet the requirements for MTI course fulfillment.

IV. Course Requirements

1. Write “The Story of the Bible”. Beginning with Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning...” tell the narrative of the scriptures through the new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21. Additional details will be given in class. (30%)
2. Complete readings and worksheets as assigned from *Grasping God’s Word*. (30%)

3. A final paper (5-7 pages) on a biblical passage using the skills and tools you have acquired in this class. You may pick from the following passages: John 13:1-20, Ephesians 2:1-10, or James 1:19-27. You must cite the corresponding commentary from the required textbooks in your paper as well as at least one other academic commentary. Websites such as Wikipedia, Theopedia, etc. are not considered academic sources and should not be consulted. (30%)

4. Class participation. (10%)

Plagiarism statement: Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failing grade for the assignment. Cite your sources; if you are not sure if it needs to be cited, cite it!

V. Required Textbooks

1. The Bible; Instructor will be using the NRSV but any modern translation will be allowed (no paraphrases)
 2. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (3rd ed.) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012)

3. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible Workbook* (3rd ed.) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012)

Note: Both *Grasping God’s Word* and the *Grasping God’s Word Workbook* have been updated significantly with each edition. Please make sure you have the 3rd edition of both.

4. D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991)

Or

Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010)

Or

Doug Moo, *The letter of James* PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000)

Recommended Resources: See pp. 125-135, 180 in *Grasping God’s Word*

VI. Schedule of Class Sessions: The class will follow the schedule below with flexibility as needed:

Week No./Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
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Note: Readings and workbook assignments are to be completed by the date listed

Papers are due to the professor by 6pm on the date listed

Week 1 – September 3	Introduction to Biblical Interpretation	GGW pp. 9-38; 225-233
Week 2 – September 10	History of the Discipline The Formation of Canon	GGW pp. 443-454
Week 3 – September 17	The 5 Steps of Interpretation	GGW pp. 39-49; 113-135; 149-161
Week 4 – September 24	The Bible: Unity Within Diversity	
Week 5 – October 1	Walkthrough of the Bible	
Week 6 – October 8	Meaning: Authorial Intent How to Read the Book - Sentences	The Story of The Bible Due GGW pp. 51-68; 137-146; 163-224 Assignments 3-1, 3-3
Week 7 – October 15	How to Read the Book – Paragraphs How to Read the Book - Discourses	GGW pp. 69-112 Assignments 4-1, 4-3, 5-1, 5-3

Week 8 – October 22	Application	GGW pp. 235-247
Week 9 – October 29	New Testament – Letters New Testament - Gospels	GGW pp. 249-290 Assignments 14-1, 14-2, 15-1
Week 10 – November 5	New Testament – Acts New Testament - Revelation	GGW pp. 291-330 Assignments 16-1, 17-2 Final Paper Due
Week 11 – November 12	Old Testament – Narrative Old Testament - Law	GGW pp. 331-372 Assignments 18-1, 18-3, 19-1
Week 12 – November 19	Old Testament – Poetry Old Testament – Prophets Old Testament - Wisdom	GGW pp. 373-442 Assignments 20-1, 21-1, 22-2

VII. Ministry Training Institute Policies:

- All work is due to the professor as stated in the syllabus schedule.
- Late work may be downgraded one letter grade per week when the lateness is not due to an excused absence or other extenuating circumstances. This same policy will also apply to scheduled examinations or tests. There will be no exceptions to the foregoing policy except by action of the MTI program director based on a written petition by the student and recommendation by the instructor.
- Acceptable utilization of laptop computers in the classroom during any class is for note-taking and directly-related course activities only. Unacceptable usage during class time includes e-mail, internet, games, messaging and other activities not directed related to the course. Violations may result in disciplinary action.
- Cell phones are an unnecessary distraction in the classroom. Students should place their phones on vibrate and should not make or receive calls during class unless there are extenuation circumstances, such as for an on-call medical professional, in which case the instructor should be notified prior to class. Violations may result in disciplinary action.
- If you are a student with a disability, it is your responsibility to notify your professor at least one week prior to the needed service so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
- Students are expected to participate in all class sessions. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor prior to the class, if at all possible, of any intended absence. The instructor may, at their discretion, grant one excused absence but reserves the right to assign additional work to compensate for the absence. Absences in excess of one require the approval of the Director of the MTI and may result in the reduction of a letter grade. A single class absence due to the death of a spouse, parent or member of the student’s immediate family shall automatically be considered excused and will simply require the student to make up any work that was due at that class.
- Students are expected to be on time for each class. Lateness, particularly habitual lateness, denigrates the learning experience and undermines the integrity of the learning cohort that is the class. If the instructor decides the reason for the lateness is not acceptable, a penalty in the class participation grade may be the result.

MISSION AND VISION

MTI exists to equip Christ followers so that they can effectively serve God’s kingdom.

The MTI is a biblically-based school maturing disciples of Jesus Christ who are impacting people, churches, and communities for Christ.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ❖ Adhering to biblical truth.
- ❖ Teaching, learning and applying sound theology.
- ❖ Advancing personal, Christian faith.
- ❖ Emphasizing the practical aspects of ministry.
- ❖ Developing skills in ministry practices
- ❖ Promoting the multiplication of disciples, servant-leaders and churches.