

**Erskine Theological Seminary**  
*Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning*

**BI 502**  
**Principles of Exegesis**  
**Spring Term 2010**  
**Tuesdays, 6:00 –9:00 P.M.**  
**Due West Campus**  
**J. P. Hering, Ph.D.**

Office Telephone: (864) 379-8880

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri., 2:00-5:00 P.M., appointment recommended

E-mail: [hering@erskine.edu](mailto:hering@erskine.edu)

Seminary Fax: (864) 379-3171

Mailing address: P.O. Drawer 668, Due West, SC, 29639

**Course Description:** This course introduces the student to the principles and practice of exegesis of the Old and New Testaments and surveys the history of the texts and translations of the Bible, as well as the ways the Old and New Testaments have been interpreted by the Church. Passages for exegetical practice are selected from both Testaments. *Required.* Three hours.

**Course Objectives:** The mission statement of Erskine Seminary indicates that its purpose is to educate its students “for service in the Christian Church”, in particular, the study of the Bible “in its own literary, historical and theological settings”, so that the student may “interpret it with relevance and meaning applicable for today.” The preaching and teaching ministries are primary forms of service within that Church, and represent a significant element of those competencies which Erskine Seminary strives to impart to its students. This course enables the student to preach from Biblical texts in an informed manner by incorporating exegetical tools and methods of interpretation of the Biblical text. By the completion of the course, the student should be able to:

- ◆ Define basic terms related to Biblical interpretation (e.g., exegesis, hermeneutics, textual variant, dynamic equivalence theory, etc.);
- ◆ Describe from memory and explain each step of a basic exegetical procedure;
- ◆ Describe the process by which the texts of the Old and New Testaments have been written and transmitted;
- ◆ Describe the basic tools which are necessary for undertaking responsible Biblical interpretation and the value of each;
- ◆ Outline the history of the translation of the Bible into English;
- ◆ Identify the major types of literature found in the Old and New Testaments, and describe exegetical issues connected to each;
- ◆ Demonstrate the ability to exegete a Biblical text using the principles and procedures learned in the classroom.

**Required Textbooks:** Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskine.edu/seminary/bookstore>. There you will find links to familiar vendors and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore. The following text will be used in this course, and is required reading of each student:

William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg and Robert Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Nashville: Nelson, 1993. ISBN# 0-7852-5225-8

In addition, there will be small reading assignments throughout the course, as noted in the course outline. The student is required to do all the reading necessary for the production of a quality exegesis paper, including readings in commentaries, journals, lexical tools, etc.

**Course Requirements:** Students are expected to attend every class meeting. If a student must be absent due to an emergency or illness for all or part of a session, the student is responsible for all work done and due for that session. Any student who misses more than *three class sessions* (Tuesdays) will not pass the course.

Students are expected to be adequately prepared for each class session, including reading assignments and written work due. Classroom discussion will constitute an important element of our learning together, and will be adversely affected by poor preparation.

All work must be submitted on time, and the tests must be taken on the assigned dates. Late work will be penalized at least one letter grade. The semester will include the following exercises and assignments:

Two objective one-hour tests will be administered, and will be related to the material covered in the previous sessions.

An exegesis paper will be required. The student will be free to choose a text from either Testament, with the proviso that the professor approves the passage (for suitability as a pericope). The papers will follow the format discussed in class. These papers must be typed, well-researched and written, and fully documented (including footnotes and full bibliography) according to the Erskine Seminary's "Style and Form Standards for All Master's Level Programs", which follows the style and formatting outlined in Kate Tarabian, *A Guide for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (7<sup>th</sup> edition).

**Evaluation:** The Seminary grade scale (p. 42, *Catalog*) will be used in determining a letter grade. The student's final grade will be calculated as follows:

Two one-hour tests	=	60%
Exegesis paper	=	40%

Note: Completed and graded tests and papers will be returned to the student in a subsequent class period. Papers and tests tendered at the end of the semester (where impossible to return in class) will be held by the professor for pick-up by the student.

Alternately, if the student wishes, the paper/test may be placed in the student's campus mailbox, or mailed to the student. In such cases, the student should indicate the mailbox number on the paper/test, or, when mailed, supply a SASE.

**Class Meeting Dates:** This course will meet on the Due West campus on Tuesdays from 6-9 PM. See class schedule below. Please note Holy Week break, March 27-April 4!

### **Seminary Policies**

Once you have completed, signed, and submitted the registration to the Registrar for this class, it is considered a binding contract. The student is encouraged to read the Erskine Seminary 2009-2010 Catalogue for important information regarding drop/add procedures and deadlines (p.4, "Academic Calendar"), class withdrawal (p. 35, 37), as well as the correct manner of dealing with the grade status of "incomplete" (p.44). Please consult the Student Handbook for policies re. writing style and ethics, e.g., inclusive language and plagiarism, as well as the Seminary Catalogue, p. 40f. A brief summary of these policies is as follows:

**Incomplete:** A grade of "**incomplete**" is not a privilege of the student. It is the prerogative of the professor. It can be given as a final grade only when (1) the student has completed most of the assigned coursework and (2) when the student has been providentially hindered from completing the rest. The student and professor must complete the appropriate form before an "incomplete" can be given. The final date that an "incomplete" can be changed to a grade for the Spring semester is August 1, 2010. After this date, the grade of "incomplete" will automatically become an "F", and cannot be altered. Note that there is a fee associated with "incompletes."

**Drop/Add/Withdrawal:** Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

**Language about God and Humanity:** Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

**Conduct in Theological Discussions:** Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

**Style and Documentation:** All papers presented for course credit must be typed and fully documented (footnotes and full bibliography) according to Erskine Seminary's "Style and Form Standards for All Masters Level Programs". The papers will follow the format discussed in class. These papers must be well-researched, well-written and fully documented adhering to the above-mentioned style (cf. Kate Turabian, *A Guide for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition). The student must be especially careful regarding citation of sources in all Seminary course work. Failing to cite a reference, or claiming other's material as one's own, constitutes a type of fraud known as **plagiarism**. A charge of plagiarism is serious, and can result in the student's expulsion from the Seminary.

## Course Outline

### **Weeks 1-4, February 2, 9, 16 and 23:**

**Assignments due for weeks 1-4:** A large amount of reading before class: Read *IBI*, pp. 3-20 and 135-448. Consult the following articles: Allen Wikgren, "The English Bible" in *Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 1, pp. 84-105; Keith R. Crim, "Modern English Versions of the Bible" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 1, pp. 22-32. Select a Biblical text for your exegesis paper (must be approved by professor). Begin exegetical work on grammatical-literary interpretation.

**Discussion:** Introduction; exegetical and rhetorical terms; a basic exegetical procedure; exegetical tools; library resources; genre in the OT and NT texts; grammatical-literary analysis of the Biblical text, development of the English Bible.

**Test # 1:** Weeks 1-4 will be evaluated by means of a 1-hour objective test on **March 2**. This will be administered during the first hour of class.

### **Weeks 5-8, March 2, 9, 16 and 23 (Note that Spring Break/Holy Week extends from March 27-April 4. There will be no class on March 30):**

**Assignments due for weeks 5-8:** Read *IBI*, pp. 23-130; read K. Grobel, "Interpretation, History and Principles of" in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 2, pp. 718-724; E.J. Epp, "Ancient Texts and Versions of the New Testament" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 8, pp. 1-11. Begin exegetical work on historical-critical interpretation.

**Discussion:** The history of Biblical interpretation; cultural and historical analysis of the text; textual criticism, development of the canon of Scripture. Exegetical exercises: OT; review of OT genres.

**Test # 2:** Weeks 5-8 will be evaluated by means of a 1-hour objective test on **April 6**. This test will be administered during the first hour of class.

**Weeks 9-12, April 6, 13, 20 and 27:**

**Assignments due for weeks 9-12:** Read *IBI*, pp. 451-504; read the book of Colossians and outline the pericope 1:12-23. In this period, the student should complete the last element of the exegetical procedure, theological interpretation.

**Discussion:** An exegetical exercise: NT, Colossians 1:12-23; review of letter genre in NT; the task of preaching and teaching the Biblical text.

**Week 13: May 4.** Any uncovered material and questions related to the final stages of completing the exegesis paper will be covered. There will be a library exercise known as the “Saturday night Special.”

**Exegesis Paper due on Friday, May 7, 2010.** The paper should be handed in at the Seminary office or to the professor, in hard copy form, *on or before* this date.