

Erskine Theological Seminary

BI 502 A: PRINCIPLES OF EXEGESIS

Spring 2009

Augusta Site: Saturdays (2/21, 3/21, 4/25, 5/9) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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OFFICE HOURS FOR SPRING 2009:

I will typically be available in my office in Columbia, Monday-Friday, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., though it is always advisable to call or email for an appointment first. Other times and locations may be available.

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. *Three hours.*

COURSE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to “educate persons for service in the Christian Church.” This includes 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 purpose of this course is to enable students to study and interpret 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 the process by which the texts of the Old and New Testaments have been written and transmitted;
- Make effective use of the basic tools necessary for responsible Biblical interpretation;
- 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:

NOTE: Textbooks are available from the Erskine Theological Seminary Virtual Bookstore at www.ecampus.com/erskine.

Doriani, Daniel M., *Getting the Message. A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1996.

Doriani, Daniel M., *Putting the Truth to Work. The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2001.

Carson, D. A., *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

Treier, Daniel, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

W. Grudem (ed.), *The ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Your final grade will be based upon the following factors:

A. Three quizzes: **30%** (worth 10% each)

There will be in-class quizzes on **March 21, April 25, and May 9**.

B. Homework and Worksheets: **40%**

Details on these will be provided in class.

C. Exegesis Paper: **30%**

Guidelines pertaining to the paper will be provided in class.

D. Other factors affecting your grade:

- 1) **Attendance is mandatory at all class sessions.** Missing a session of an all-day class will result in a 10% reduction in your course grade. You cannot afford to miss class. If you are aware of any conflicts that will prevent you from attending one of the class sessions, you should register for a different section or take the course at another time.
- 2) Some optional extra credit projects are possible – details will be given in class.
- 3) In this class, as in many seminary-level classes, assignments frequently involve a substantial writing component. To do well in this class, therefore, it is essential that you have excellent writing skills. Students whose writing skills are weak are *strongly* encouraged to take PM 090 Writing for Ministry before taking this course. **Students who have passed PM 090 or who are taking it concurrently with this course and who complete it successfully will receive 5% extra credit.**

OVERALL GRADING SCALE:

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C		
92-91	B+	79-78	C-	69-0	F
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS and SEMINARY POLICIES:

Registration: 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.

Official Seminary Class Attendance Policy: Class participation is considered an important part of the total educational experience at Erskine Seminary. Students are expected to attend classes on a regular basis and are responsible for the mastery of all materials required in the course. In general, students are allowed up to three hours of unexcused absence without penalty. Students taking a class that meets four times over a semester/term must attend the first meeting of the class. Students who cannot attend the first course meeting should not register for the course or, if already registered, should drop the course and complete the drop/add form. (If the drop/add form is not completed and turned in to the Registrar, the student will still be charged for the course and will receive an “F” grade.) If students have to be absent for part or all of another class meeting day, they are still responsible for all work missed and all work due. A student who misses as much as one full class day or its equivalent in late arrival or early departure should consult with the professor to see whether it is still possible to pass the course. NOTE: missing a session of an all-day course will result in an automatic 10 percentage point reduction in your overall grade. If you are aware of any conflicts that will prevent you from attending one of the class sessions, you should register for a different section or take the course at another time.

Late and/or Incomplete Work: Any work not submitted by the due date will be assessed a late penalty. Students should review the Seminary policy on “Incompletes” in the Seminary catalog. The grade of “I” or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of “I” is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An “I” in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become “F.”

Plagiarism: Any student who commits plagiarism is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal. See the academic section of the Catalog for complete information.

Language about God and Humanity: 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.

Taping Class Lectures: To tape a lecture the student must complete an "Audio Recording Request" form, which can be downloaded from the Seminary website at:

http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics_Files/PdfDownloads.html

IMPORTANT DATES:

In-class quizzes: **March 21, April 25, and May 9.**

Further details on assignments and due dates will be provided in class.