



**BI 502**  
**Principles of Exegesis**  
**George M. Schwab, Ph.D.**  
**Spring 2012**  
**Tuesdays, 8:00 – 11:00 am**

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**I. 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 during the first year of study for M.Div., M.A.E.M., M.A.C.M., and M.A.T.S. students. This course is a prerequisite for all exegesis-credit courses. Three hours.

**II. Course Goals**

A. General Mission of Erskine Seminary

The mission statement of the seminary indicates that its purpose is to educate its students “for ministry in the Christian Church....” Ministry, in this context, is shorthand for ‘ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ’—the good news of God’s saving purposes, which runs throughout the Old and New Testaments. Thus we see that the content of this course is essential to the purpose of the seminary and of seminary education: to be engaged in ministry one must be able to faithfully interpret the Word of God. This course will attempt to lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning about and from the Scriptures.



B. Goals of this Course

One of the goals of the seminary is teach its students to “Study the Bible in its own literary, historical, and theological settings, and interpret it with relevance and meaning applicable for today.” In view of this goal, our course could be described as a round trip journey: we will learn to ‘go’ to the ‘then and there’ of the biblical text, seeking to understand what impact it was intended to have in their own day; and then we will ‘come back’ to the ‘here and now,’ seeking to understand what it would look like if the text were to have similar impact in our day.



- C. By the end of the course, the student should be able to:
1. Define basic terms related to Biblical interpretation (e.g., exegesis, hermeneutics, textual variant, dynamic equivalence theory, etc.);
  2. Outline and discuss a basic exegetical method or plan, applicable to most Biblical texts;
  3. State and discuss various fundamental principles of exegesis;
  4. Critique their own and others' comments on Biblical texts in light of fundamental principles of exegesis;
  5. Outline the history of the translation of the Bible into English, and critique various current English translations;
  6. Demonstrate ability to apply sound exegetical procedure and principles to selected Old and New Testament texts;

### **III. Required Reading**

- A. Dan McCartney, *Let the Reader Understand*. Presb & Reformed, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
- B. Various reading assignments
1. Small reading assignments may be required throughout the semester, including a number of sample exegesis papers on reserve.
  2. The student is required to do all reading that is necessary for the production of a quality exegesis paper, including readings in commentaries, articles, lexical tools, and so on.

### **IV. Exams and Assignments**

- A. Exams 55% total
1. Three exams will be given, each worth 15%.
  2. The exams will include all material presented in class or assigned to be read.
  3. The three exams are cumulative, and each will include material from the previous exams
  4. A quiz will be given on the Greek alphabet 5%
  5. A quiz will be given on the Hebrew alphabet 5%
- B. Exegesis Paper 30%
1. Exegesis Paper: an exegesis paper (20%) will be required.
  2. Sample papers are posted.
  3. Throughout the semester, various components will be submitted that contribute to this paper (10%).
  4. *If a component is not submitted on time, the student will receive 0% for that component. Late submittals will not be accepted.*
  5. *The student will lose one percentage point for each day any other assignment is late.*

C. A worksheet on a select passage of Ephesians will be required, 10%

D. Class Attendance and Participation 5%

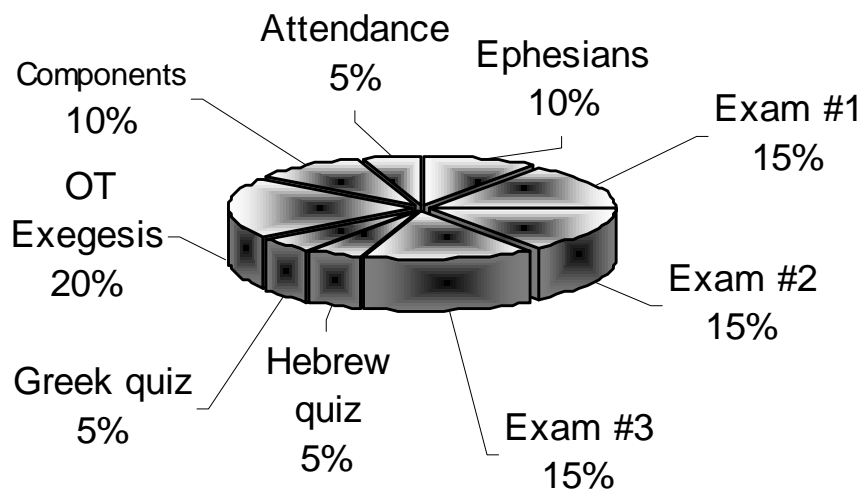
1. 5% of your grade will be class participation, attendance, and punctuality with assignments.

2. You will be held responsible for all material presented in class.

3. Attendance: the student is required to attend all classes. If the student misses a class, he or she will be required to do work equivalent to the number of class hours missed. It is contingent on the student to seek out the professor for this compensative work to avoid losing credit for those hours.

4. If you miss more than 3 class periods, you will be given a failing mark for the course.

## Requirements



## V. Grading

A. Erskine's grading policy is as follows.

Grade	Value	GPA	Grade	Value	GPA
<b>A</b>	95-100	4.0	<b>C</b>	80-83	2.0
<b>A-</b>	93-94	3.7	<b>C-</b>	78-79	1.7
<b>B+</b>	91-92	3.3	<b>D+</b>	76-77	1.3
<b>B</b>	88-90	3.0	<b>D</b>	72-75	1.0
<b>B-</b>	86-87	2.7	<b>D-</b>	70-71	0.7
<b>C+</b>	84-85	2.3	<b>F</b>	0-69	0.0

B. The actual assignment of a letter grade will take into consideration the performance of the class as a whole (i.e. you will be graded on a curve).

C. The grading of actual assignments sometimes includes an E, which is a high failing grade.

## VI. Seminary Policies

A. Seminary policies are found here:

[http://seminary.erskine.edu/content\\_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf](http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf)

B. **Writing:** The style guide adopted by the seminary is that of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The seminary encourages making use of inclusive language. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.

C. **Attendance:** the student is required to attend all classes. If the student misses more than one day's class, an F will automatically be assigned. Sleeping in class = an absence.

D. **Conduct in Theological Discussions:** There are no favorites at Erskine. Publicly rejecting this ethos with the result of making fellow students feel unwelcome will be considered unethical behavior, and is grounds for course failure on the level of cheating and plagiarism. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.


E. **Plagiarism.** This course does not include a research paper. You should not have to reference anything outside of the Bible. Do your own work, say things in your own words. Any deviation from this should conform to the catalog's plagiarism policy.

F. **Office hours:** You can always reach me by email in January.

G. **Required Textbooks.** Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. Check out <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html> for links to familiar vendors. ETS SBA gets a small percentage from purchases through this portal. Please also check out the Erskine Campus Bookstore, which carries and orders required texts.

H. **Office hours:** Wednesday mornings. Please contact by email first.

## VII. Course Schedule

<b>Date</b>		<b>Assignments Due</b>
<b>1/31</b>	Intro	Come to class well rested and ready to work!
<b>2/7</b>	Inductive Bible Study	<i>McCartney</i> , chapter 1
<b>2/14</b>	Key Terms	<b>Greek quiz 5%</b> <i>McCartney</i> , chapter 2
<b>2/21</b>	Translation	<b>Ephesians worksheet 10%</b> , <i>McCartney</i> , chapter 3
<b>2/28</b>	Exegetical Principles	<b>First Exam 15%</b> <i>McCartney</i> , chapter 4 <i>Pericope chosen 1%</i>
<b>3/6</b>	<i>ARP Presbytery,</i> <i>possibly no class</i>	Read Schwab, "Driver and Origen" Work on outlining Samuel, word studies, Intro
<b>3/13</b>	Writing your Paper	<b>Hebrew quiz 5%</b> <i>Four translations 1%</i> <i>McCartney</i> , chapter 5 – 6 ATLA data base introduction (trip to library)
<b>3/20</b>	Word Studies	<i>McCartney</i> , chapter 7 <i>Ten references 1%</i> <i>2 articles 1%</i>
<b>3/27</b>	Word Studies	<b>Second Exam 15%</b> <i>McCartney</i> , chapter 8 <i>Outline of Biblical Book 1%</i> <i>Introduction 1%</i>
<b>4/3</b>	<b>Spring Break</b> 	
<b>4/10</b>	Textual Criticism	<i>McCartney</i> , chapter 9 <i>Word Study 1%</i> Read Grisanti (2001)
<b>4/17</b>	Cultural Analysis	<i>McCartney</i> , chapter 10 and Conclusion <i>Outline of Exegetical Paper 1%</i> <i>Inductive Bible Study 1%</i>
<b>4/24</b>	Hermeneutical Spiral	<i>McCartney</i> , Appendix A <i>Three Sermon Points 1%</i>
<b>5/1</b>	Preaching	<b>Exegesis Paper due 20%</b> <i>McCartney</i> , Appendix B
<b>Exam week</b>		<b>Final Exam 15%</b>

## In the Laboratory With Agassiz, By a Former Pupil<sup>1</sup>

It was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz, and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterwards proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire, and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter I replied that while I wished to be well grounded in all departments of zoology, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

“When do you wish to begin?” He asked.

“Now,” I replied.

This seemed to please him, and with an energetic “Very well,” he reached from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

“Take this fish,” said he, “and look at it; we call it a Haemulon [pronounced Hem-yú-lon]; by and by I will ask what you have seen.”

With that he left me, but in a moment returned with explicit instructions as to the care of the object entrusted to me.

“No man is fit to be a naturalist,” said he, “who does not know how to take care of specimens.”

I was to keep the fish before me in a tin tray, and occasionally moisten the surface with alcohol from the jar, always taking care to replace the stopper tightly. Those were not the days of ground glass stoppers, and elegantly shaped exhibition jars; all the old students will recall the huge, neckless glass bottles with their leaky, wax-besmeared corks half eaten by insects and begrimed with cellar dust. Entomology was a cleaner science than ichthyology, but the example of the professor, who had unhesitatingly plunged to the bottom of the jar to produce the fish, was infectious; and though this alcohol had “a very ancient and fishlike smell,” I really dared not show any aversion within these sacred precincts, and treated the alcohol as though it were pure water. Still I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. My friends at home, too, were annoyed, when they discovered that no amount of *eau de cologne* would drown the perfume which haunted me like a shadow.

In ten minutes I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor, who had, however, left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, my specimen was dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate it from a fainting-fit, and looked with anxiety for a return of the normal, sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed, an hour, another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around; looked it in the face-ghastly; from behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three-quarters’ view-just as ghastly. I was in despair; at

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<sup>1</sup> This article appeared as an appendix in “Independent Bible Study” by Irving L. Jensen, Chicago: Moody Press, pp. 173-178, 1963. From *American Poems* (3d ed.; Boston: Houghton, Osgood and Co., 1879), pp. 450-54. This essay first appeared in *Every Saturday*, XVI (Apr. 4, 1874), 369-70, under the title “In the Laboratory With Agassiz, By a Former Pupil.”

an early hour I concluded that lunch was necessary; so, with infinite relief, the fish was carefully replaced in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation again looked at it. I might not use a magnifying glass; instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish; it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my finger down its throat to feel how sharp its teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me—I would draw the fish; and now with surprise I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.

“That is right,” said he; “a pencil is one of the best of eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet and your bottle corked.”

With these encouraging words he added,

“Well, what was it like?” He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me: the fringed gill-arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips, and lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fin, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body. When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then, with an air of disappointment,

“You have not looked very carefully; why,” he continued, more earnestly, “you haven’t seen one of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plainly before your eyes as the fish itself; look again, look again!” And he left me to my misery.

I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish! But now I set myself to my task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, until I saw how just the professor’s criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly, and when, towards its close, the professor inquired,

“Do you see it yet?”

“No,” I replied, “I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before.”

“That is next best,” said he earnestly, “but I won’t hear you now; put away your fish and go home; perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you before you look at the fish.”

This was disconcerting; not only must I think of my fish all night, studying, without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be; but also, without reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had a bad memory; so I walked home by Charles River in a distracted state, with my two perplexities.

The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring; here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw.

“Do you perhaps mean,” I asked, “that the fish has symmetrical side with paired organs?”

His thoroughly pleased, “Of course, of course!” repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he had discoursed most happily and enthusiastically—as he always did—upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

“Oh, look at your fish!” he said, and left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour he returned and heard my new catalogue.

“That is good, that is good!” He repeated, “but that is not all; go on.” And so, for three long days, he placed that fish before my eyes, forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. “Look, look, look,” was his repeated injunction.

This was the best entomological lesson I ever had—a lesson whose influence has extended to the details of every subsequent study; a legacy the professor has left to me, as he has left it to many others, of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part.

A year afterward, some of us were amusing ourselves with chalking outlandish beasts upon the museum blackboard. We drew prancing star-fishes; frogs in mortal combat; hydra-headed worms; stately crawl-fishes, standing on their tails, bearing aloft umbrellas; and grotesque fishes, with gaping mouths and staring eyes. The professor came in shortly after, and was amused as any, at our experiments. He looked at the fishes.

“Haemulons, every one of them,” he said. “Mr. ----- drew them.”

True; and to this day, if I attempt a fish, I can draw nothing but Haemulons. The fourth day, a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblances and differences between the two; another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves; the odor had become a pleasant perfume; and even now, the sight of an old, six-inch, worm-eaten cork brings fragrant memories!

The whole group of Haemulons was thus brought in review; and, whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, the preparation and examination of the bony framework, or the description of the various parts, Agassiz’s training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them.

“Facts are stupid things,” he would say, “until brought into connection with some general law.”

At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects; but what I had gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

## Greek Alphabet

α	A	Alpha	A as in <i>father</i>
β	B	Beta	B
γ	Γ	Gamma	G as in <i>got</i>
δ	Δ	Delta	D
ε	E	Epsilon	E as in <i>get</i>
ζ	Z	Zeta	Dz
η	H	Eta	A as in <i>late</i>
θ	Θ	Theta	Th
ι	I	Iota	I as in <i>pit</i> , ee as in <i>feet</i>
κ	K	Kappa	K
λ	Λ	Lambda	L
μ	M	Mu	M
ν	N	Nu	N
ξ	Ξ	Xi	X
ο	O	Omicron	O as in <i>obey</i>
π	Π	Pi	P
ρ	P	Rho	R
σ, ς	Σ	Sigma	S
τ	T	Tau	T
υ	Υ	Upsilon	French u or German ü
φ	Φ	Phi	Ph
χ	X	Chi	German ch in <i>Ach</i>
ψ	Ψ	Psi	Ps
ω	Ω	Omega	O as in <i>note</i>

## Hebrew Alphabet

א	Aleph	ʾ
ב	Bet	<i>B</i>
ג	Gimel	<i>G</i>
ד	Dalet	<i>D</i>
ה	He	<i>H</i>
ו	Waw, “vav”	<i>W</i>
ז	Zayin	<i>Z</i>
ח	Het	<i>Ḣ</i>
ט	Tet	<i>Ṫ</i>
י	Yod	<i>Y</i>
כ, ך	Kaph	<i>K</i>
ל	Lamed	<i>L</i>
מ, ם	Mem	<i>M</i>
נ, ן	Nun	<i>N</i>
ס	Samek	<i>S</i>
ע	Ayin	ʿ
פ, ף	Pe	<i>P</i>
צ, ץ	Sade	Ṣ, “Ts”
ק	Qoph	<i>Q</i>
ר	Resh	<i>R</i>
שׁ, שׂ	Sin, shin	Ś, Š (“sh”)
ת	Taw, “tav”	<i>T</i>