



NT 700 *Advanced Hermeneutics* (3)

Winter 2012

Instructor: R. R. Remin

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Class Location: L2100

Course Description

Although Christian interest in hermeneutics is primarily the hermeneutics of a written text, our investigation will begin with the nature and purpose of communication (verbal and non-verbal) and the hermeneutic practiced therein.

Advanced Hermeneutics is concerned with the literary, philosophical, and theological questions of how one derives meaning from a text, and in particular how Christian readers derive meaning from biblical texts. This investigation will include uncovering the theological foundations, philosophical presuppositions, historical developments and sociological factors that create the grid within which contemporary biblical interpreters function. The course will also consider the hermeneutic in play in the context of ministry in a typical evangelical church. The goal of the course is to have students understand the complexities of biblical hermeneutics, contemporary issues within hermeneutics as well as identifying their own hermeneutic and developing a responsible practical paradigm for their own practice of biblical interpretation.

Student Outcomes

1. The student will fully grasp that all readings / interpretations of a text, and especially a biblical text, are premised on a particular hermeneutic with implicit or explicit theological and philosophical presuppositions. (*Can there be such a thing as interpretation of scripture without presuppositions?*)
2. The student will be introduced to the history of biblical interpretation and understand the shape and significance of the contemporary debate over biblical hermeneutics. (*Why doesn't everyone, especially evangelicals, agree on the interpretation of every text? Sometimes the debate is more a debate about what a given text means than an actual debate about "hermeneutics."*)

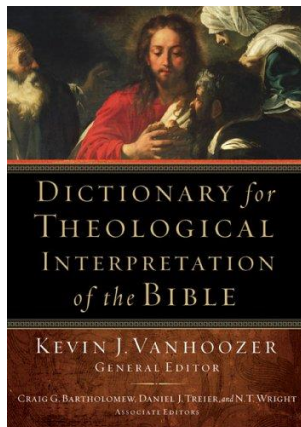
3. The student will learn to critically analyze various biblical interpretations by recognizing the hermeneutic that is being used explicitly or implicitly in the production of a particular interpretation. (*Why is my preaching, evangelism, etc., not effective? Why do people disagree (ignore) my interpretation?*)
4. The student will develop their own working paradigm for the interpretation of the biblical text within the framework a Christian protestant theological context. (*So, how then will I interpret scripture?*)

Required Texts

The required texts for this course are:

Willard M. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women, Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation* (Herald Press, 1983). 366 pp.

Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Baker, 2005). 896 pp.



For the pastor or serious layperson, the realm of biblical interpretation can be a confusing maze of personalities, communities, methods, and theories. This maze can often result in obscuring the main goal of interpreting Scripture: hearing and knowing God better. The Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible is a groundbreaking reference tool that introduces readers to key names, theories, and concepts in the field of biblical interpretation. It discusses these approaches and evaluates their helpfulness in enabling Christians to hear what God is saying to the church through Scripture. The contributors come from a variety of

backgrounds, and the dictionary covers a broad range of topics with both clarity and depth.

Required reading for this course in addition to the required texts is:

Frank Viola, George Barna, *Pagan Christianity, Exploring the Roots of Our Christian Practices* (Tyndale House, 2007).

Course Requirements

1. Attend all of the class lectures and discussions
2. Reading. Read the three texts in their entirety as scheduled and/or directed.

3. Each student will make two public presentations on chapters and/or topics as assigned and scheduled. See the another section of this syllabus for the beginnings of a schedule.

Presentations will be no longer than 20 minutes and must include a summary of the reading or topic. Students are expected to offer some critique of their reading and/or topic. The presenter will pose the initial questions for the ensuing discussion and facilitate the discussion. Each presentation will be supported by a printed copy of the basic report.

Topics for presentations include:

- a. Sections of Swartley's book; or
- b. Distinctive and historical hermeneutical approaches.

Each presentation of type a. and b. shall include the following:

- i. a short introduction to the method(s);
- ii. a short description of how it fits into the larger history of biblical interpretation;
- iii. a larger section in which the premises, the philosophy and the outcome of the method(s) are discussed;
- iv. at least one detailed example of this method being applied to a biblical text;
- v. an evaluation of the premises and promises of this particular hermeneutic or discussion. Your evaluative remarks may be theological, philosophical and/or practical. All three are preferred.

The professor will help each student develop the topic and make suggestions for reading. Please ensure that the presentation is creative and interesting and complete with handouts, power point, etc.

Here are some possible topics:

- Hermeneutics in the workplace (business).
- The hermeneutics of Islam and the Koran.
- Hermeneutic lessons from linguistics. Moises Silva, *God, Language and Scripture, Reading the Bible in the light of general linguistics* (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, Vol. 4, 1990).
- Hermeneutical reflection on translation as a process, the translations and KJV debate. Eugene H. Glassman, *The Translation Debate, What makes a Bible translation good?* (IVP, 1981); D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate, A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979); and William A. Smalley, *Translation as*

Mission: Bible Translation in the Modern Missionary Movement (1991). The hermeneutics of the various study Bibles (e.g. Scofield and all the one's since).

- Liberation Theology
- The Jesus Seminar
- Feminist theology
- African theology (USA)
- Source Criticism OT
- Form Criticism OT/NT
- The Literary Critic (as opposed to literary criticism)
- Redaction Criticism OT/NT
- Rhetorical criticism OT/NT
- Canonical criticism (Brevard Childs)
- *Heilsgeschichte*
- Dispensationalism of the late 19th and early 20th century (e.g. Scofield, but not Ryrie)
- Popular Evangelicalism
- New Hermeneutic
- Reader Response Criticism
- Deconstructionism

More topics may be identified from Vanhoozer's *Dictionary*.

Selection any topic is subject to the approval of the professor.

4. Observation of the praxis of hermeneutics. During this semester each student will be required to listen carefully and critically to a teacher, preacher or professor (or even themselves) on four occasions. You are to be listening for the following:
 - a. their hermeneutical assumptions by which they function when dealing with biblical texts;
 - b. their view of scripture;
 - c. their view of the community in which they communicate scripture;
 - d. the way in which they move from the biblical text to application in public.

After the four sessions you will meet with the preacher / teacher and by means of a series of questions have them communicate to you their "philosophical hermeneutic." After the meeting compare and contrast your perception of their hermeneutic and their stated hermeneutic. Write up and submit a three to four page assessment of your reflections.

DO NOT NAME the individual but provide a brief summary of their background and the nature of their ministry. If two or more of you are observing the same individual, please arrange to interview the person as a group.

DO NOT ARGUE, DISPUTE OR ATTEMPT TO INSTRUCT OR CORRECT!

5. Major project. After reading Swartley, research, prepare and submit a potential fifth section to Swartley's discussion. The topic of this section is the use of scripture in the debate over the acceptability of homosexuality. Follow Swartley's methodology in which he first outlines how each side is using scripture in support of their view and then analyze their respective heremenetic as well as discuss how their hermeneutics are similar or different from the hermeneutics used in the other debates (slavery, Sabbath, war, women). More details will be provided. Evaluate the hermeneutics and DO NOT ARGUE EITHER SIDE OF THE ISSUE. Arguing the issue will result in a failing grade for this assignment.
6. "How then shall I interpret?" is an articulation of your past and future hermeneutical paradigm.

Write a 7-9 page paper in which you articulate your formulation of your own biblical hermeneutic. Include in this paper:

- a. your theology of scripture;
- b. your philosophy of the locus of meaning within texts;
- c. your principles by which you relate the Old and New Testaments, resolve conflicts between biblical texts, your paradigm for interpreting prophetic literature, proof texting, preaching OT without reference to NT, every sermon must be Christ centred, *etc.*
- d. the practical steps you would take to move from a definite section of scripture to application within a contemporary ministry context.

You will incorporate materials read and discussed for this class as well as further research in the contemporary literature on biblical hermeneutics. I am particularly interested in seeing how you integrate your foundational beliefs about scripture and the hermeneutical task and how this works itself out in practice.

7. With the exception of the major project, the written papers which you turn in must follow the following format. Each of these papers is to be submitted in the following format:
 - a. There will be no title page, except for the "major project." The title page of the major project will include the following:
 - i. the topic of the paper,
 - ii. the student's name but not an ID number,

- iii. the professor's name,
- iv. the words "Ambrose Seminary," and
- v. the date.

The title page will include nothing else; certainly no fancy borders, no fancy fonts, no fonts larger than 12 point.

- b. The paper will be white! The pages are bound with no more or no less than a single staple in the upper left corner. Please do not use folders, plastic covers or binders.
- c. For the other submissions, in the upper left corner only the title of the assignment, student's name, the words "Ambrose Seminary" and the date will appear. This information is single spaced.
- d. The remainder of the paper is double spaced in 12 point font of a common type with standard margins; the format is that appropriate to an academic paper with footnotes and bibliography. No extra colours. Standard fonts will be used except for Greek and/or Hebrew, if they appear in the paper. The bibliography is single spaced.
- e. If you don't know Greek or Hebrew, do not attempt to write either. To do so is committing a lie! If you do know Greek and/or Hebrew and use them, these words (phrases) must be written in Greek and/or Hebrew fonts. Beware! Not all printers will print all fonts correctly. This is your responsibility to ensure all fonts are printed correctly in you papers. Italicized and transliterated Greek (and/or Hebrew) is an option, unless you knew the languages in which case you must write (type, print) Greek and/or Hebrew. When you write Greek or Hebrew in their respective alphabets, do not italicize, underline or use quotations marks. The font is sufficient to indicate that this is not an English word.
- f. The last page contains the bibliography in an appropriate and consistent academic format.
- g. The presentation of the ideas in your papers must be consistent with academic standards. Each student is expected to do research and then state the ideas derived from that research in their own words in their papers. There will be no direct quotations at all in the body of your

paper. At no point will an idea be introduced with a perfunctory phrase such as “Somebody F. Scholar says.” If a student errs and a student does include material taken *verbatim* from a source, and since you have been told there will be no direct quotations or quotation marks, this is plagiarism and the student will be dealt with according to Ambrose’s academic policies. The grade for the assignment will be F.

Course Schedule

This course meets on Thursdays from 8:15 to 11:00 a.m. in one of the class rooms of the Ambrose Seminary except for the following Thursdays:

- February 2 – Ambrose Seminary’s student and faculty retreat.
- Feb 23 – Winter Modular Courses

The last class is on April 12th.

Due dates for assignments are:

- April 5 is the due date for the major project.
- April 5 is the due date for the observation assignment.
- April 12 is the due date for “How then shall I interpret?”
- April 21 is the last day of the semester and the day beyond which no professor can grant an extension for incomplete work. To have an extension beyond this day a student must apply to the Office of the Registrar before April 9th.
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The schedule for readings and presentations is as follows but subject to revision:

<i>Schedule for Readings and Presentations</i>		
<i>Tentative Date</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
January 12	Introduction	Remin
January 19	TBA	Remin
January 26		1. 2.
February 2	No Class	
February 9	<i>Viola, Pagan Christianity</i>	Everyone
February 16	Swartly, section 1	1. 2.
February 23	No Class	
March 1	Swartley, section 2	1. 2.
March 8	Swartley, section 3	1. 2.
March 15	Swartley, section 4	1. 2.

March 22		1. 2.
March 29		1. 2.
April 5		1. 2.
April 12		

Course Grade

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 10% -- attendance, participation in class and reading
- 20% -- class presentations
- 15% -- observation of the praxis of hermeneutics
- 15% -- Personal Hermeneutic Paper
- 40% -- major project

Important Notes

1. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy which is printed on white paper in an appropriate academic format. The documents must use Greek and/or Hebrew fonts as appropriate and must not contain any “fancy formatting” that involves colours or unusual fonts. As appropriate means, if you don’t know Greek and/or Hebrew, you don’t use them. If you do know Greek and Hebrew and you write a word, you have to use fonts.
2. You may **contact your professor** by various means.
 - a. Office Hours. These Office Hours on campus are subject to meetings called by higher authorities (president, dean, registrar), previously scheduled meetings with other students, the instructor’s health (doctors’ appointments, medical emergencies), snow storms, ice storms, highway closures, automobile failure, and/or “the crick don’t raise” and “California doesn’t freeze over.”
Book an appointment via email so that I know you’re coming and you receive notification of cancelation or being preempted by another appointment (the above notwithstanding).
Your professor is typically available as follows.
 - i. Monday Afternoons (Mornings are given to meetings)
 - ii. Tuesday Not available
 - iii. Wednesday Between the first and second class periods; after lunch.
 - iv. Thursday Afternoons
 - v. Friday Between the first and second class period; after lunch.

- b. Email in the office: rremin@ambrose.edu
- c. Voice in the office: 410-2000 ext 7906

3. Remember The Rules For The Class

Have fun!
Make mistakes!
Ask dumb questions!
Cheat! (Except on the tests and the final.)
Consider this classroom a safe zone! There are no dumb questions!
There are no topics which are off limit.

4. Other dates for which you don't want to be late:

- January 22 (Sunday) is the last day to add/drop a course without financial penalty.
- February 28 is the deadline for applying for scholarships (\$\$\$\$\$) and other financial assistance (\$\$\$\$). Please apply for money (\$\$\$\$\$)! The applications are available on February 1.
- March 5 is the last day to request a change of examination date.
- March 23 is the last day to withdraw from the course and receive a W (withdraw) for a grade.
- April 9 is the last day to apply for an extension on course work beyond April 21, the last day of the semester.
- April 12 is the last day of classes.
- April 21 is the end of the semester.

5. **Classroom Etiquette.** The following activities are considered poor classroom etiquette:

- Coming in late,
- Talking while someone else is talking,
- Disruptive behavior,
- Consumption of meals as opposed to minor snacks,
(Definition. If a knife, fork, spoon or sticks are required it's a meal!)
- Consumption of snacks in a noisy, smelly and/or disruptive manner,
- Personal grooming,
- Use of electronic devices such as cell phones, *i-pods*, *etc.*,
- Use of laptops for purposes (*e.g.* watching videos, playing solitaire) not directly connected to the class, and
- The practice of any behaviours considered impolite in adult company or in contravention of the laws of Alberta, specifically those prohibited while driving a motor vehicle.

Depending on the degree and/or frequency of the breach(es) of etiquette, the professor may display his displeasure in any one or more of the following manners:

- Frown, scowl, rolling eye balls (his not yours),
- Utterance of sounds of disgust,
- Sarcastic comments,
- Utterance of specific prohibitions,
- Dismissal of a student from the class,
- Ending the class prematurely, or
- In extreme cases the professor's immediate departure from the classroom.

In extreme cases, in cases where the professor determines that a student's behaviour, attitude or consumables are affecting other student's negatively, the offensive individual and "theirs" will be summarily dismissed from the classroom for a "time out" the length of which will be determined unilaterally by the professor.

6. **Grades for the course.** The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Satisfactory
C-	
D+	
D	Minimal Pass
F	Failure

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

An **appeal for change of grade** on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

7. The instructor shall comply with all academic regulations as printed in the current *Academic Calendar* and *Student Handbook*, and it is the student's

responsibility to be familiar with these regulations. The following academic policies are particularly relevant. **Some more very important dates.**

The **last day to enter** a course without permission and /or **voluntary withdrawal** from a course without financial penalty (**drop**) – **Sunday, January 22, 2020** (Winter semester). These courses will not appear on the student’s transcript.

*Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit, or drop out of the “audit” up to the “drop” date indicated above. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees. Please note that this is a **new policy**, beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year.*

Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to **voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (withdraw)** – **Friday, March 23** (Winter semester). A grade of “W” will appear on the student’s transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

8. It is **the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar**. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.
9. **Extensions and Alternative Examination Dates.** Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period **unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office**. Requests for course extensions or an **alternative examination time** must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the appropriate deadline (as listed in the Academic Calendar. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.” The deadline this semester is **Monday, April 9, 2012**.
10. **Plagiarism and Cheating.** We at Ambrose are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each

member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

11. Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.