

#912 Biblical Interpretation
Western Reformed Seminary
John A. Battle, Th.D.
Spring 2019

COURSE INFORMATION

Course objectives

This course is designed to acquaint you with the importance of biblical interpretation as a discipline, with the history of biblical interpretation in the church, with several important errors in interpretative methods, and with basic principles used to accurately interpret the Bible. In addition, you will be introduced to specialized topics related to biblical interpretation, including the transmission and translation of the Bible, New Testament textual criticism, and critical methodologies of interpretation.

You will survey this subject through lectures and notes, read two books on this subject, and complete a special assignment in a particular area of study.

Course outcomes

At the end of the course you should be able to discern the most common errors in interpretation as they occur, and to recognize proper interpretation. You will know about the tools and methods necessary to carry out detailed, accurate interpretation of the Word of God, leading to a lifetime of profitable Bible study and teaching.

You will be able to apply sound principles of interpretation in the preparation of Bible studies or sermons. You will be able to intelligently evaluate the interpretations of others, whether in person or in writing or in the media.

Required reading

These two books are required to be read by the dates given on the course schedule.

- Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*
- D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*

Special assignment

Choose one of the following for a special assignment. This special assignment is due as noted on the class schedule.

- **Book reading and review**

Select and read a scholarly book in the area of hermeneutics or exegesis. Write a review article on the book of about 300 words, which would be suitable for publication in a theological journal.

- **Analysis paper**

Select a passage of Scripture. Write a paper of about 1500 words analyzing how various standard interpreters have interpreted that passage in different ways. Provide a critique, and reasons for the view you favor. The paper should be typed in standard format.

- **Article response**

Write an article critiquing another article written in a scholarly journal concerning hermeneutics or exegesis. Your article should be about 1000 words in length. Use standard formatting.

- **Subject overview**

Produce an annotated outline of Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Interpretation*, organized into five to ten sections. This outline should have enough material included to provide the basis for a series of five to ten lectures on this subject. Include additional material in areas in which you would supplement Berkhof (especially if he presents a different viewpoint than you would have).

Examinations

The midterm (Study Questions #1-35) and final (Study Questions #36-61) examinations will be based on our class lectures and notes. You may use a Bible during these examinations. Dates are shown on the course schedule.

Grading

Reading	30%
Special Assignment	15%
Midterm Examination	20%

Final Examination	20%
Class attendance and participation	15%

Course schedule

Jan.	24	Introduction to course
	31	
Feb.	7	
	14	
	30	
	21	
	28	Berkhof due
Mar.	7	
	14	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
	21	
	28	(Spring recess)
Apr.	4	
	11	
	18	Carson due
	25	
May	2	Special assignment due
	9	FINAL EXAMINATION