

HERMENEUTICS
ON5100
MINI-SYLLABUS
Fall 2026

Note: This syllabus is the “mini-syllabus” and is not to be confused w/ the “mega-syllabus” that contains all the class-lecture notes, biblio, various articles, etc. The mega-syllabus will be posted on “Canvas” and is needed for all the class lectures. For the first day of class, the student should be prepared w/ either a hard-copy of the mega-syllabus or have it downloaded to his laptop.

Note: No prerequisites for this course.

Required Texts:

- Trinity Psalter—words-only edition (Crown and Covenant). Use in class. (Note, this is not the Trinity Psalter Hymnal.)
- Bible (Nestle-Aland 28 or 29, UBS 4 or 5, CSB, ESV, NAS, or other quality text).

Books

- R. L. Pratt. *He Gave Us Stories* (1–128, 306–402)
- S. Greidanus. *Preaching Christ from the OT*.
- G. K. Beale. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*.
- S. R. Swain. *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation*.
- R. P. Belcher. *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology*. Pages 139–270.
- Mangum, Douglas and Douglas Estes. *Literary Approaches to the Bible*. Lexham Methods Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017.

Articles

- R. J. Cara. “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: Trusting the New Testament’s Hermeneutics.” Pages 595–602 in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: A Gospel Realized*. Edited by Kruger. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016.
- R. J. Cara, “Psalms Applied to both Christ and Christians: Psalms 8, 22, 34, 118, and Romans 15:3 // Psalm 69:9.” Pages 97–111 in *Redeeming the Life of the Mind: Essays in Honor of Vern Poythress*. Edited by Frame, Grudem, and Hughes. Wheaton; Crossway, 2017. (PDF of this article is included in Cara’s mega-syllabus.)
- Meek, Russel. “Hans-Georg Gadamer: His Philosophical Hermeneutics and Its Importance for Evangelical Biblical Hermeneutics.” *Eleutheria* 1.2 (2011): 97–106.
- Payne, Philip Barton. “The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Human Author's Intention.” Pages 70–81 in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*. Edited by G. K. Beale. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.
- Porter, H. C. “The Nose of Wax: Scripture and the Spirit from Erasmus to Milton.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1963): 155–74.
- Steinmetz, David C. “The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis,” *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27–38.

- Thiselton, Anthony C. “Hermeneutics.” Pages 283–87 in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Craig G. Bartholomew, Daniel J. Treier, and N. T. Wright. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Professors

- Professors Dr. Cara and Dr. Stevens (technically, Dr. Robert J. Cara, Ph.D. and Chris S. Stevens, Ph.D.).

Class participation

- For Cara, bring and sing the Psalter.
- Attend class and participate (intelligently!) when called on. Lose points for not being in class and/or not participating.

Course Objectives

- The overarching purpose is for the student to engage with a variety of macro-hermeneutical issues, including Reformed models, to better interpret/apply the Bible.
- Course objectives as coordinated with MDiv Student Learning Outcomes are shown at the end of this document.

Structure of the Course

- Cara, first half of course.
 - Three units: (1) Post-modernism vs modernism w/in a Van Till framework. (2) Macrohermeneutics per se. (3) Review of Cara’s hermeneutical proverbs.
- Stevens, second half of course.
 - Three units: (1) History of interpretation of the Bible: Philo through modern day. (2) NT use of OT, including NT writers’ hermeneutical context. (3) Preaching X from the OT: Typology and Greidanus.
 - Objective: To orient students to the major themes, content, and scholarship of hermeneutics.

Know (Head):

- Define key terms and concepts related to biblical interpretation.
- Identify significant approaches, trends, and presuppositions of biblical interpreters both past and present.
- To examine the various hermeneutical methods, ancient and modern, used to interpret the OT and NT.

Be (Heart):

- To become responsible readers who handle ancient texts well, especially the biblical canon.
- To wrestle with the Bible as a reader and partaker.

Do (Hands):

- To participate in the art and science of interpretation that leads to internal understanding and external articulation of the Biblical text.

Course Requirements and Grades

- **Final Test**
 - Test will be $\approx$ 85–90% verbatim of Lecture Review Questions. The remainder will be miscellaneous questions from the class lectures and readings.
 - For answers to Lecture Review Questions, you may/should enquire of fellow students in this class.
 - **40% of grade.**
- **Pratt's *He Gave Us Stories*, pages 1–128, 306–402 and Swain's *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading*.**
 - Submit a fake (i.e., no or few footnotes) 7–10 page paper that includes:
 - A statement that student read 100% of Pratt and Swain reading requirement.
 - Self-consciously evaluate one or more aspects of the student's interaction w/in his covenant community (both heritage and present) that has (or will have) influenced the student's macro method of biblical interpretation (e.g., BT/RH/ST, preaching theory) or a specific theological topic (e.g., elder roles, Trinity, inerrancy). This influence can be either positive, negative, or both.
 - The paper should show knowledge of your covenantal community and at least some categories from Cara's lectures and Pratt/Swain books.
 - Although no research is required, this paper should have a sophisticated understanding of macro-hermeneutics and indicate that the student can "theologize" about himself relative to his theological community.
 - Paper due on last day of Cara's lectures ($\approx$ half-way through semester). Give to Cara. 32 f/s/s.
 - **20% of grade.**
- **Mangum, Douglas and Douglas Estes. *Literary Approaches to the Bible*. Lexham Methods Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017.**
 - Read any three of the methods (from chapters 2–8) in this book.
 - Submit a (fake) 7–10 page paper that includes:
 - A statement that student read 100% of chapters w/in the book.
 - Summarize each method (1/3 of paper).
 - Critique one small or large section in the book (2/3 of paper). The critique should show knowledge of Cara/Stevens lectures and the ability of the student to theologize about hermeneutics.
 - Paper due on last day of Stevens' lectures. Give to Stevens. 32f/s/s.
 - **20% of grade.**
- Read all of Greidanus' *Preaching X from the OT*; all of Beale's *Handbook on the NT Use of the OT*; Belcher's *Fulfillment of the Promises of God*, pp. 139–270; and the two Cara articles.

- On the final test, we will ask the question, “Did you read 100% of the assigned reading from Greidanus, Beale, Belcher, Cara, and articles: Meek, Payne, Porter, Steinmetz, Thiselton ?”
 - **20% of grade.**
- Bring and sing Trinity Psalter.
 - No grade associated with this unless one does not do it!

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Hermeneutics (ON5100)
 Professor: Dr. Cara and Dr. Stevens
 Campus: Jackson
 Date: Fall 2026

<u>Mdiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Course basic exegetical principles for interpreting Scripture
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	See course title and description
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Reformed distinctives on Scripture and its interpretation are carefully considered
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Scripture is the primary means of grace, its study ought to be an act of love toward God
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Minimal	Focused on interpreting Word of God rightly
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring	Minimal	Though we hope the professors and students exemplify this spirit

	manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)		
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	Must understand what the text means to preach it rightly
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	Course is relevant to worship but is not centered on worship, as such
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	Using Scripture rightly is central to good shepherding
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Though alternative approaches to Scripture will be considered and application of original meaning to contemporary contexts

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

RTS Jackson — Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

- 1) Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:

<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>

- a) This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 - b) Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 - c) If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
- 2) The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
 - 3) The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
 - 4) Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a) Sign in with the proctor.
 - b) Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c) Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d) Log in to your Canvas account.
 - e) Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this Student Quick Start Guide (PDF).
 - f) The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g) The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h) The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i) Sign out with the proctor.
 - 5) Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
 - 6) In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.

Additional Bibliography

Hermeneutics

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- Fuller, David J. "Gadamer and Biblical Studies: Retrospect and Prospect." *Dalogismos* 2 (2017): 17–52.
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Porter, Stanley E. and Beth M. Stovell, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*. Spectrum Multiview. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012.

Smith, Brandon D. *Taught by God: Ancient Hermeneutics for the Modern Church*. Brentwood, Tennessee: B & H, 2024.

Trible, Phyllis. "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation." *JAAR* 41 (1973): 30–48.

Steinmetz, David C. "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis." *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27–38.

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Thiselton, Anthony C. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

Thiselton, Anthony C. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Exegesis & Hermeneutics

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Bultmann, Rudolf Karl. "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" *Encounter* 21.2 (1960): 194–200.

Casarella, Anthony. *The Johannine Paraclete in the Church Fathers: A Study in the History of Exegesis*. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Biblischen Exegese. 25. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983.

Conzelmann, Hans, and Andreas Lindemann. *Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of New Testament Exegesis*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2012.

Lanier, Greg. *Old Made New: A Guide to the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022.

Longenecker, Richard N. "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament." *Tyndale Bulletin* 21, (1970): 3–38.

Porter, Stanley E. and Kent D. Clarke. "What is Exegesis? An Analysis of Various Definitions," Pages 3–21 in *A Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

*Steinmetz, David C. "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis." *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27–38.

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Vanhoozer, Kevin J. "Exegesis and Hermeneutics." Pages 52–64 in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, Donald A. Carson, and Graeme Goldsworthy. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

Niche or Ideological Hermeneutics

Archer, Kenneth J. *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture, and Community*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series* 28. London: T & T Clark International, 2004.

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General Works:

*Beale, G. K. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

*———. *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

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