

**HERMENEUTICS
ON5100
MINI-SYLLABUS
Summer 2024
RTS Atlanta
July 22–26, 2024**

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*.)

R. L. Pratt. *He Gave Us Stories*.

M. Silva, ed. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*.

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.

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.)

Professors

* Professors Dr. Cara and Dr. Belcher (technically, Robert J. Cara, Ph.D. and Richard P. Belcher, Jr., Ph.D.).

Class participation

* For both Cara and Belcher, bring and sing 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 interact with a variety macro-hermeneutical issues, including Reformed models, to enable the student 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, Monday through noon Wednesday.

* Four units: (1) Post-modernism vs modernism w/in a Van Till framework. (2) Macro-hermeneutics per se. (3) Review of Cara's hermeneutical proverbs. (4) Covenant Structure of Bible and Hermeneutical Implications

* Belcher, 1:00 pm Wednesday through Friday.

* 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.

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.

* Test due on Saturday, Aug 17, 11:59 pm.

* 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/R-H/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.

- * 25% of grade.

- * Paper due on Saturday, Aug 17, 11:59 pm. Will be graded by Cara

- * Silva, M., ed. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*.

- * Read anyone of the books in this book, excepting Silva's *God, Language and Scripture* and Long's *The Art of Biblical History*.

- * Submit a (fake) 7–10 page paper that includes:

- * A statement that student read 100% of book w/in the book.

- * Summarize book (1/3 of paper).

- * Critique one small or large section in the book (2/3 of paper). The critique should show knowledge of Cara/Belcher lectures and the ability of the student to theologize about hermeneutics.

- * 25% of grade.

- * Paper due on Saturday, Aug 17, 11:59 pm. Will be graded by Belcher

- * Read all of Greidanus' *Preaching X from the OT*, all of Beale's *Handbook on the NT Use of the OT*, Belcher, *Fulfillment of the Promises of God*, pp. 139–270, and the two Cara articles.

- * On final test will be the question, "Did you read 100% of the assigned reading from Greidanus, Beale, Belcher, and Cara?"

- * 10% 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

Professor: Cara and Belcher

Campus: Atlanta

Date: Summer 2024

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	
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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submits one self-reflective paper and one critical book review. 2. Significant overview of the history of hermeneutics, both in the church and in philosophy.
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.)	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scripture's interpretation of Scripture is included. 2. Scripture's understanding of "meaning" is included. 3. Some original language included in OT-in-NT texts.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overview of Reformed view of General and Special Revelation. 2. Reformed hermeneutics. 3. History of Reformed denominations. 4. Swain and Belcher books and Cara articles include historical Reformed views.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psalm singing in class. 2. Self-reflective paper.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is Bible the ultimate authority for hermeneutics? 2. Student's background affects hermeneutics. 3. Van Til discussions.
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 manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ethos of RTS is explicitly presented and evaluated as to effect on hermeneutics.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preaching is related to hermeneutics. 2. Creeds are related to shepherding.

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)