

Reformed Theological Seminary
Hermeneutics
ON5100 (3 Credit Hours)
Spring 2026
Mondays 8–10:55 am

Dr. Josh Malone

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TA: Tucker Alexander

1. Course Objectives:

To orient students to the major themes, content, and scholarship of the 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.

2. Course Description from the RTS Catalogue (p. 79)

Students will cover traditional hermeneutical issues, including the relationship between the OT and the NT, the role of the interpreter, the use of creeds and confessions in interpretation, and the relationship between original meaning and modern meaning.

Assignments:**Required Material**

- English Bible with cross references (CSB, ESV, NAS, etc.)
- Hand edition of the Greek New Testament (NA28, UBS4, etc., with apparatus)
- Means for taking notes, which is strongly recommended not to be electronic.

Recommended Materials

- Bible Software (Accordance, Logos, etc. There are many free resources available too.)

Required Reading:

- a) *Light on the Mountain: Greek Patristic and Byzantine Homilies on the Transfiguration of the Lord*. Edited by Brian C. Daley. Popular Patristic Series 48. New York: St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary Press, 2013.
- b) Jamieson, R.B, Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022).
- c) Porter, Stanley E. and Beth M. Stovell, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*. Spectrum Multiview. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012.

Articles (check Canvas for latest list):

- d) R. J. Cara, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: Trusting the New Testament's Hermeneutics," in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: A Gospel Realized*, ed. Michael J. Kruger (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 595-602.
- e) 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.
- f) Steinmetz, David C. "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis." *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27–38.
- g) Webster, John. "Biblical Reasoning" *Anglican Theological Review* 90:4 (2008): 733-751.
- h) Beale, G. K., ed. *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. [Selections [To be assigned.]]
- i) Beale, G. K., D. A. Carson, Benjamin L. Gladd, and Andrew D. Naselli, eds. *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023). [To be assigned.]
- j) Yeago, David S., "The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological Exegesis," in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Stephen E. Fowl (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997): 87-100.

Assignments:

1. Reading Briefs: 15%, Weekly
 - a. Weekly, students are required to upload a reading brief for the **bold** listed reading on Lecture Schedule. The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument, as well as to state one's own analysis of it (in the form of questions, confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may include quotations from various points in the text (so long as page numbers are referenced). Briefs should be no less than 200 words and no more than 350 words. They should be written in complete sentences, edited carefully, and uploaded to Canvas before class begins on Monday.
2. Reflection and Critical Review: 15%, Due before Easter
 - a. A 1500-word critical interaction with two articles (Steinmetz; Stendahl/Gaebler). The first half is to insightfully summarize what the authors think hermeneutics is and how it is done. The second half reflects on the importance of the insights for improving reading, interpreting, and teaching and preaching the Bible in the church.
3. Mid Term: 20%, Due March 16
 Midterm Exam (20%) to be taken after reading week, covering lectures, assigned readings, and Bible reading up to that point.
4. Paper: Major 25%, Due April 27
 A 3000-word biblical interpretation paper. Besides the features requisite in a quality paper (clear thesis, logical argumentation, appropriate conclusion, etc.), it should include some comment on the following features: textual criticism, lexical analysis, syntactical discussion, structural analysis, location within book, biblical theological significance, covenantal insights and ramifications, and etc. (remember the layers of **cotext, context, and canon**).
 The paper will be 3000 words *excluding* footnotes and bibliography. It should demonstrate interaction with the text and secondary literature: journal articles, commentaries, monographs, biblical theologies, systematics, etc. While I do not want a summary of commentators' opinions, the goal is not to be groundbreaking or novel. You are not measured by finding something new or novel. The assignment aims to practice engaging with the biblical text and using tools for productive learning and articulation. I want to see you learn and grow in thinking as Christian scholars. One or two exceptional papers per semester will be selected for praise and reward.
 Format: **Text Body**: left justified, Font Times New Roman (or Brill, Helvetica Neue), 12 pt., 1-inch margins, indent ½ inch, and double-spaced. **Footnotes**: left justified, 10 pt., first line ½ inch indent. Pagination is on the top right. I am dyslexic, so I am sympathetic to typos, spelling errors, and grammatical

abominations. However, you are in a master's program, so labor well in proofreading and make the paper easier for me to read, or such errors will lower your grade.

The topics below are suggestions that should cover most papers. If you have something outside of these suggestions, meet me with a written, prepared thesis and three points to prove your thesis.

Rough Paper Topics:

Will be provided before the first class.

Paper Policy:

The style and form of papers should be conducted according to the school policy. Footnotes and bibliography are SBL Style (5th), use inclusive and appropriate language, and be consistent: *behaviour* or behavior. The style and tone of papers should conform to theological journals (see for instance *JBL*, *JETS*, *JTS*).

5. Final Exam: 20%, Due May 6

The Final Exam will focus on the remaining lectures and readings but include anything from the semester.

Grading Policy:

All assignments must receive a passing grade to pass the class. There is no mathematical passing without a valid attempt at every assignment. The grading scale for this course is the seminary's grading scale on *RTS Catalog*, pg.48. Also, the professor reserves the right to grade papers, final exams, and other assignments on a comparative scale. In exams and papers, students are not required to agree with the professor or RTS. They are measured by their merit, method, and execution.

Grading:

1) Reflection & Review	15%
2) Mid Term	20%
3) Paper: Major	25%
4) Final Exam	20%
5) Reading Briefs	15%
6) In-class Participation	5%

Due Dates:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Reflection & Review | Before Easter (via Canvas) |
| 2) Mid-Term | March 16 (in class) |
| 3) Paper: Major | April 28 |
| 4) Final Exam | May 5–7 (in class) |
| 5) Reading Report | April 28 |

Late Assignments:

Late assignments lose one letter grade per day, excluding Sundays. A 'day' is any time after the beginning of class. So, if you are going to be one hour late, you might as well use the rest of the day to ensure everything is perfect. Must be either time-stamped at the front desk or prior to 11 pm on Canvas.

Attendance:

While attendance and participation in the classroom only count for 5% of your grade, I pray you would consider the actual value. All absences will be handled according to school policies. Two tardies (arriving after the beginning of class) constitute an hour of absence. Students missing more than two sessions (for any reason) may **either** submit an additional, compensatory assignment [determined by the instructor] **or** choose to receive a full letter grade reduction in their final grade.

Class Participation:

Class participation requires: preparation, reading of assignments, active listening, and discussion in class. Classroom disrespect will not be tolerated, including verbal interaction, and all devices must be used solely for classroom participation. Any student doing other activities will be dismissed and counted absent.

Plagiarism: In accordance with school policy, any cheating (quiz, paper, exam, etc.) will be submitted to the Academic Dean for resolution. Furthermore, the use and abuse of AI tools are explained in the Artificial Intelligence Policies for Use in Coursework. If there is evidence of widespread abuses, the Professor reserves the right to change how assignments are handled.



Course Objectives Related to M.Div. Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Hermeneutics ON5100

Professor: Josh Malone and Chris Stevens

Campus: Jackson

Date: Spring 2026

MDiv Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
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 manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Minimal	Though we hope the professors and students exemplify this spirit
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

Additional Bibliography

Hermeneutics

- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2nd Revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall ed. London: Continuum, 2004.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Interpretation for Preaching and Teaching: An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023.
- 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.
- Steinmetz, David C. "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis." *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27–38.
- Stendahl, Krister. "Biblical Theology, Contemporary." Pages 418–32 in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by George Arthur Buttrick. New York: Abingdon, 1962.
- Stendahl, Krister. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West." Pages 78–96 in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Exegesis & Hermeneutics

- Beale, G. K. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- 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.
- Stevens, Chris S. "John's Portrayal of Jesus as the Divine-Adamic Priest and What It Means for the Temple Cleansing in John 2:13–25." Pages 169–85 in *Johannine Christology*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Vol. 3 of JOST. Leiden: Brill, 2020.
- 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.
- Enns, Peter. "Apostolic Hermeneutics and an Evangelical Doctrine of Scripture: Moving Beyond a Modernist Impasse." *WTJ* 65 (2003): 263–87.
- Horrell, David G. *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives*. London: T & T Clark, 2010.
- Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Searle, John R. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. London: Cambridge, 1969.
- Seitz, Christopher R. *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets*, *Studies in Theological Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Trible, Phyllis. *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah*, *Guides to Biblical Scholarship Old Testament Series*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

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.
- . "Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later in the Light of Peter Enns' Book, *Inspiration and Incarnation*." *Themelios* 32.1 (2006): 18–43.