



Queensland
Theological College



RYP31/51

Principles of Interpretation

Brisbane

Unit Outline

About this Unit Outline

This unit outline contains information essential to finding your way around the unit **Principles of Interpretation Brisbane**. It provides a structure for your learning, giving details of lecture topics, assessment requirements, and key resources.

SEMESTER 1 2017

Important notice

While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the information given below, **it is the personal responsibility of each student to check the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook**, copies of which may be found in the Library or online at www.actheology.edu.au

It is very important that students plan their time carefully to ensure that reading and especially assignments receive adequate attention and so as to prevent a bottleneck of work at the end of the semester.

It is very important that all quoted material in assignments be properly footnoted and acknowledged. The attention of students is drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed "**Academic Misconduct**". Failure to comply with the standards required will incur penalties as outlined in the ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook.

The attention of students is also drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed "**Guidelines for Essays.**" (See also the QTC Student Handbook) All essays should comply with these standards.

Information about this unit

Unit description

'Principles of Interpretation' is the foundation of everything we seek to do at QTC. This unit aims to go 'back to basics' to ensure that everyone is handling the Bible in a helpful and responsible way, before we throw ourselves into the detail of studying the text in earnest. In this unit, you will be introduced to a way of reading and studying the Bible which is coherent, flexible and will shape the way in which you interpret the Bible in every context – whether reading it for personal study or studying the text in order to teach it to others. We will examine in turn the importance of History, Literature and (Biblical) Theology in reading the Bible, before giving some attention to the way in which this will affect how we seek to communicate the message of any text in the context of the flow of the whole Bible. After completing this unit, every student should be equipped to understand how the Bible fits together, how Jesus Christ is the key to all the Scriptures and how to approach the task of interpreting any part of the Bible.

Learning Objectives

1. To introduce the general principles of the interpretation of Biblical documents.
2. To assist students to gain a basic appreciation of the various genres of literature in scripture and a how such genres should be interpreted.
3. To impart an awareness of foundational considerations for the exposition of biblical texts.
4. To develop skills of biblical interpretation that will form a basis for personal study of the scriptures, expository preaching, and group Bible study.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this unit students will be able to:

1. Exegete a passage of scripture in a manner which is sensitive to its original context, literary genre and the flow of biblical theology;
2. Explain to someone else the way in which they would go about interpreting a passage in such a way as to show its significance for a Christian audience;
3. Prepare to deliver a Bible Study or preach a sermon that reflects sound exegetical and hermeneutical principles and an awareness of Biblical theology.

How this Unit Contributes to the Course

We are very aware that our students start at very different places – some come to us straight from studying another course, whereas others have been in the workplace for years and are petrified about the challenge of tertiary level study! But we are also mindful of the fact that our students come from a variety of church backgrounds, and have had very different spiritual journeys. As if that weren't all, some of us have (often unconsciously) picked up some very bad habits over the years when it comes to reading and studying the Bible! That is why 'Principles' is very deliberately set up as a 'back to basics' course, in which we strip away our presuppositions and rebuild from the ground up, in order to ensure that every student is well-equipped to study ensuing courses (and to serve well in the church) over the years ahead.

Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

This subject is a Type B Elective. It caters for students studying for the following accredited courses of the Australian College of Theology: BTh/BMin/AssocDegTh/DipTh/DipMin and MDiv/GradDipDiv/GradCertDiv

This unit is being taught at QTC at foundation level (300/500 level); therefore there are no prerequisite requirements.

How this unit is organized & what we expect of you

This unit is taught over 10 weeks, with a total of 20 hours contact time involving lectures, class discussion time and work in small groups.

This unit is a half unit, worth 2 credit points (cp) towards your degree.

A 2cp unit is considered to require an average total time commitment of approximately 32 hours outside of class time.

Students are required to attend all lectures, complete any set pre-reading and complete any assessment tasks by the relevant due date.

There will be no lecture notes provided for this course. However, the presentations shown will be posted *after the weekly lecture*.

Teaching staff

LECTURERS

Rev Dr Gary Millar

Email: gmillar@qtc.edu.au

Please feel free to contact me if you have any problems or concerns about the course.

Mr. David Walter

Email: david.walter@es.org.au

Other Key Contacts

Registrar's office

Contact the Registrar's office for any queries about which unit to enrol in next, if you wish to change your enrolment, defer due to illness, family circumstances etc., or request an extension for your assessment (criteria apply).

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Moodle functions and queries

Contact the Registrar or the Assistant Registrar for help if something on Moodle is not working, if you need help using Moodle etc.

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Library/Resources

Contact the Librarian for help with finding resources for your assessment, finding full-text database articles, for help with logging into the library databases and catalogue, and for help with how to renew a book for longer or place a hold on a book currently out to another person.

E library@qtc.edu.au

Unit timetable: topics & teaching and learning activities

College week	Lecture Topic
Week 1	Learning to Read - the who, why and how of Interpretation
Week 2	Reading the Bible in context – why History matters
Week 3	Literature and Interpretation part 1: Reading the Bible for what it is – an introduction to Genre
Weeks 4	Literature and Interpretation part 2: The art (and science) of reading the Bible
Weeks 5 and 6	Literature and Interpretation parts 3 & 4: Reading Narrative, Poetry, Prophecy, Parables and anything else we can think of!
Week 7	Theology and Interpretation part 1: Introducing Biblical Theology
Week 8	Theology and Interpretation part 2: Exegesis and Biblical Theology
Week 9	Theology and Interpretation part 3: Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology Exegeting hard passages
Week 10	The demands of Assessment How to spot the 'real thing' – sermons, commentaries and variable exegesis

RYB31 Assessments

Assessments are submitted online via Moodle

In order to pass the unit, you must submit all assessment pieces and attain a mark of at least 50% for the unit as a whole.

Unless an extension has been applied for and granted in accordance with the Late Penalty Policy found in the QTC Handbook, where a student submits an assessment past its due date, the assessment marks will be reduced at the rate of 3% of the total possible marks for the Assessment item per calendar day, up to 14 days late.

Your essays must also be within 10% of the required word limit and your ability to meet this requirement will also be taken into account in determining your mark. QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

Assessment Task	Description
<p>Two exegetical summary pieces, each 1000 words in length and each worth 50%</p>	<p>Two exegetical summary pieces, one based on an Old Testament passage (1st assessment piece) and one on a New Testament passage (2nd assessment piece).</p> <p>The exegesis should contain short comments on how the following factors should control the interpretation of this passage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historical factors 2. Literary factors 3. Theological factors.

Both the Old and New Testament exegetical summary pieces should be submitted together on the same due date **as one document** via Moodle. Moodle does not allow you to upload your final submission document twice.

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Assessment Task	Description
<p>Two exegetical summary pieces, each 1500 words in length and each worth 50%</p>	<p>Two exegetical summary pieces, one based on an Old Testament passage (1st assessment piece) and one on a New Testament passage (2nd assessment piece).</p> <p>The exegesis should contain short comments on how the following factors should control the interpretation of this passage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historical factors 2. Literary factors 3. Theological factors.

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Guide to Assessments

What are we looking for?

1. It is important to remember that these assessments are designed *to test if you have grasped the basic principles of interpretation* (looking at the historical context, appreciating the kind of literature we are reading and how that works, and then how this part of the Bible fits into the whole flow of Scripture). We are not asking you to come up with the definitive (or exhaustive) interpretation of any particular Bible passage. Our concern is to make sure that you are *approaching the Bible properly and are aware of the issues and challenges of interpreting the text*, rather than testing your understanding of any given text *per se*.
2. The choice of passage has been left up to you, but here are some hints:
 - a. Don't choose something so long that you can never hope to cover the ground within the word limit, nor so short that you don't have enough to say! A good rule of thumb is to take an ESV paragraph (and to remember that often your Old Testament passage may be a little longer than your New Testament choice, especially if it is narrative).
 - b. Choose a part of the Bible that you are interested in or intrigued by! You will complete a better assessment if you are engaged.
 - c. Do not feel constrained to organise your assessment under the headings of 'History', 'Literature' and 'Theology' (although you should feel free to do so). What is most important is that these areas *are discussed*. [You will see, for example, that commentaries organise their material in a range of ways – using terms like 'setting', 'background', 'text', 'structure', 'meaning' etc. But behind those *organisational devices*, it's important to recognise that they are covering the same ground that we have described under 'History', 'Literature' and 'Theology'.
3. Students often ask 'How many other books should I refer to?' and 'How many footnotes or references do you want to see?' The short answer is that for these assessments, *the primary goal is to ensure that you are using the right strategies in interpretation, rather than interacting with others who have written on the particular text*. The assessments will be marked on the basis of your method and approach, rather than whether or not you are aware of how others have approached the text in the past. *However*, it will be necessary for you to refer to books (generally commentaries) for some help on historical details, literary structure and perhaps theological issues. Where you glean help from these sources, you should include a footnote, and also add the title to your bibliography.
4. In the final session of the unit, you will be shown a couple of representative examples of what we are expecting!

Learning Resources

Set Text

Köstenberger, Andreas J. and Richard D. Patterson. *An Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2011. [This book looks scary, but isn't! It is also a little expensive, but is really worth the investment.]

Other books you might like to refer to on Biblical Interpretation:

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its' Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan, 2003.

Klein, W.W., Blomberg, Craig L., and R. L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Rev. and exp. ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004.

Long, V. Philips, M. Silva, Tremper Longman III, Richard A. Muller and Vern S. Poythress. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation: six volumes in one*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical Interpretation*. 2nd ed., Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006.

Key books on Biblical Theology:

Alexander, T. D. and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. 1 vol. Leicester: IVP, 2000.

Goldsworthy, G.L. *Gospel and Kingdom*. Exeter: Paternoster, 1981.

Goldsworthy, G. L. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: the application of biblical theology to expository preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.

Goldsworthy, G. L. *Christ-centred Biblical Theology: hermeneutical foundations and principles*. Nottingham: Apollos, 2012.

Klink, Edward W. and Darian R. Lockett. *Understanding Biblical Theology: a comparison of theory and practice*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Roberts, Vaughan. *God's Big Picture*. Leicester: IVP, 2009.

Biblical Theologies:

Gentry, Peter J. and Stephen J. Wellum. *Kingdom through Covenant: a biblical-theological understanding of the covenants*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Hamilton, James M. Jr. *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Schreiner, T. *The King in his beauty: a Biblical theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013.

ACT Standards: Grades

Grades in assessment instruments are awarded in the following categories-

Grade	Score	GPA
Fail (F)	0-49%	0
Pass (P)	50-57%	1
Pass+ (P+)	58-64%	1.5
Credit (C)	65-74%	2
Distinction (D)	75-84%	3
High Distinction (HD)	85+%	4