Purpose and Goals of the Course

The purpose of this course is to help the student develop a critical approach to the study of the canonical literature of the early church and to its theological appropriation for the life of the church today.

In order to accomplish its purpose, the course contains the following emphases:

1. Careful reading of the text of the Gospels and Letter as they are found in the Bible. When interpreting the Bible, there is no substitute for reading the Bible itself; this is the heart of the course;

2. Consideration of basic issues in the critical interpretation of the history and literature of early Christianity through class lecture and through attentive reading of fundamental secondary sources;

3. Beginning to develop patterns by which systematically and critically to engage the Biblical text through preparation short weekly papers that each introduce the student to a different aspect of biblical exegesis;

4. Introduction to basic theological method for the critical theological appropriation of texts for the life of the contemporary church through evaluation of themes and passages.

Theoretically, any student who successfully completes the course will be exposed to methods and issues which encourage the minister to interpret the sacred literature of the early church in a responsible way in teaching, preaching and other forms of theological appropriation. Further courses in the study of the Bible introduce the student to more detailed issues and methods in interpretation and are designed to increase the student's confidence as an exegetical and theological interpreter.

Throughout, the student needs to follow the syllabus very carefully. The course moves very quickly and very systematically; therefore, the student will want to give full attention to every component at the time it is considered by the class. Please give primary attention to the

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preparation of the 2 page papers, the Bible readings for the content quizzes, the readings for the Main Focus for each class session. Give the reading for the Supplementary discussions as much time as you can.

**Time to Allot for Class Preparation**

The seminary expects that you will spend two hours of outside preparation for every hour of class time. Therefore, you can expect to work on this class for six hours each week outside of our regular class meetings.

**Late Work**

Please note two things about unexcused late work: (1) the instructor will read it and grade it but will not comment extensively on it; and (2) the grade will be reduced by a full letter grade.

**Submit All Papers Electronically**

Please submit all papers by the time class starts to ron.allen@cts.edu. I do not receive paper submissions. Per the policy on late work stated above, the grade on papers that are emailed after the time class starts will be reduced by one full letter. Thus, a B paper will become a C paper.

**Form of Written Work** (See further Appendix 3)

1. Written work should be typed in a double-space format, 70 characters to the line, 25 lines to the page, 12 point font, with normal margins as on this page.
2. Please do not justify the right margins.
3. Please do not use a title page.
4. Please do not write from one edge of the page to the other.
5. Please do not play space-games with your word processor (as you try to get more on a page); this behavior only irritates the instructor.
6. Please note the seminary policy on plagiarism stated in Appendix 4.

**Material on inside.cts.**

You are asked to read a number of small pieces that are not in the required books for the course. These materials are both on the reserve shelf in the library and are posted on the class site in inside.cts.edu.

To find material on inside.cts.edu:

1. Go to inside.cts.edu
2. Log in using your user name and password (these identifications are the same as for your CTS email)
3. Go to the Academics page (Use the Academics tab at the top)
4. Go to “All My LMS Courses”
5. Find B-502 Introduction to New Testament
6. You should find the syllabus and all the hand-outs posted there

The Seminary regards the CTS email system as our official line of communication.
Structure of Each Class Session

Each class week is divided into 5 parts.

1. A quiz on the assigned Gospels and Letters content for the day (5 questions) (about 15 minutes)
2. A lecture and discussion around the Main Focus for the class (about an hour and half)
3. A break (about 15 minutes)
4. A lecture and discussion around the Exegetical Issue, Help or Method on which a paper is sometimes due the next week (about 10 minutes)
5. A supplementary lecture and/or discussion that adds to our understanding of some aspect of the interpretation of the Gospels and Letters or that models a dimension of appropriating the Gospels and Letters for the church today (about 35 minutes)

Required Textbooks

The required texts are as follows:

Kurt Aland, ed., Synopsis of the Four Gospels
Ronald Allen, Contemporary Biblical Interpretation for Preaching
Ronald Allen and Clark Williamson, Preaching the Gospels without Blaming the Jews
Ronald Allen and Clark Williamson, Preaching the Letters without Dismissing the Law
Ronald Allen, Preaching and the Other
Harper Collins Study Bible (New Revised Standard Version) (abbreviated HCSB)
John G. Gager, Reinventing Paul
Ronald Allen, The Life of Jesus for Today
Dennis E. Smith, ed., Chalice Introduction to the New Testament
Ronald Allen, Reading the New Testament for the First Time
Miguel A. De La Torre, Reading the Bible from the Margins

Other materials are on reserve in the Library.

Recommended E-Resources

Bible software for Macintosh (www.oaksoft.com).
Bibleworks (available through CTS or through www.bibleworks.com).
Gramcord Institute proves multiple electronic resources (www.gramcord.org)
Olive Tree Software provides multiple electronic resources, especially for Palm and Pocket PC computers (www.olivetree.com)

Concordances (my recommendation: Whitaker and Kohlenberger)

Note: if these volumes are out of print, they can be purchased used through Amazon or other second-hand book outlets.

Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger, The NIV Exhaustive Concordance
Bruce M. Metzger, Exhaustive Concordance: New Revised Standard Version
Richard Whitaker, The Eerdmans Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version of the Bible

NB: Although inexpensive and popular, you should avoid *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance to the Bible* and *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance,* . These volumes are keyed to the King James Version. The definitions of Hebrew and Greek words in the glossary at the back are too brief (and many are too dated) to be of help.

**Recommended One Volume Commentaries from Particular Social Locations** (every minister should have each of these as each volume offers a perspective from a different social location)

Tokunboh Adeyamo, *Africa Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars*


Curtis Paul Deyoung, Wilda C. Gaffney, Leticia Guardiola-Saenz and George E. Tinker, *The People’s Bible*

Curtis Paul Deyoung, Wilda C. Gaffney, Leticia Guardiola-Saenz and George E. Tinker, *The People’s Companion to the Bible*

Cain H. Felder, ed., *The Original African Heritage Study Bible* (in Reference)

Deryn Guest, Robert E. Goss, Mona West, and Thomas Bohache, *The Queer Bible Commentary* (in Reference)

Samuel Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the NT*

Bruce J. Malina, *Social Science Commentary on Acts*

Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*

Bruce J. Malina, *Social Science Commentary on Paul*

Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe, eds., *Woman’s Bible Commentary* (in Reference)

Ann Nyland, *Study New Testament for Lesbians, Gays, Bi and Transgender with Extensive Notes on Greek Word Meaning and Context*

Daniel Patte, *The Global Bible Commentary* (in Reference)

Elizabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, ed., *Searching the Scriptures* (in Reference)

Fernando F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah, eds. *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*

**Recommended Bible Dictionaries** (my recommendation for first year students: Powell)

Mark Allen Powell, ed., *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Revised and Updated)

George A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (but see now, Sakenfeld)

David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*

Watson Mills and Richard Wilson, eds., *Mercer Bible Dictionary*

Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, ed. *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (multiple volumes)

**Recommended Books for Counseling Students**

Donald Capps, *Biblical Approaches to Pastoral Counseling*

Rodney Hunter, ed., *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*

William Oglesby, *Biblical Themes for Pastoral Care*

Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman Kaplan, *Biblical Stories for Psychotherapy and Counseling: A Sourcebook*

Edward P. Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*
Grading procedures are as follows:

1. “A student who misses a class is required to notify the professor immediately. A student who misses four class sessions of classes that meet once a week (or eight sessions for classes that meet twice a week) for any reason will not receive credit for the course. In special cases exceptions to this rule may be granted by the Dean’s Office. Individual Faculty may choose to enforce stricter attendance regulations for specific classes. Faculty may also choose to count accumulated tardiness to class as a single absence.” (Adopted by the CTS Faculty, 2012).

2. In addition, in this class Regular attendance and participation is essential. Two unexcused absences from individual class sessions will lower the final grade one full letter

3. A course grade that would have been a C will become a D.

   Attendance will be recorded each day.

4. The instructor will read and grade late work but will not comment on it.

5. All written work is due at the beginning of the hour on the class session assigned.

   The grade on late work will automatically be reduced by one full letter.

   A paper that would have received a C will be marked with a D.

6. Assignments and their contributions to the course grade are as follows:

   Each assignment is assigned a specific number of points.

   The course grade will be based on 1,000 points.

   Books of G&L in order and spelled correctly (in class) 30 points

   9 content quizzes (you will take 11 quizzes but count only the top 9)
   (20 points per quiz) (in class) 180 points

   2 papers on readings on Jesus and Paul (100 points each) 200 points

   3 papers on exegetical method (50 points per paper) 150 points

   2 take-home exams (175 points each) 350 points

   Class Participation 90 points

   Total 1000 points

   Note: These assignments are all described on the dates on which the paper is due in the class calendar below.

8. Letter grades will be coordinated with numerical grades according to the following scale:

   A 95% 960 points
   A- 90% 900 points
   B+ 87% 875 points
   B 82% 825 points
   B- 80% 800 points
   C+ 77% 775 points
   C 72% 725 points
   C- 70% 700 points

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2 You will take 11 content quizzes. However, only nine will count towards the grade for the course. You may drop the lowest two scores.
9. All work will be graded in accordance with the standards adopted by the CTS Faculty in 2012:

A = truly superior work according to the declared purposes and criteria
A- = very good work, but not quite reaching excellence on all purposes and criteria
B+ = good work, beyond basic expectations
B = competent work, clearly and solidly fulfilling basic purposes and criteria
B- = satisfies the basic purposes and criteria in a minimal way
C+ = meets many of the basic expectations but does not satisfy some significant purposes and criteria
C = meets some of the purposes and criteria but leaves several unfulfilled
C - meets few purposes of the assignment and satisfies few of the criteria
D = student did something but does not meet the purposes and criteria of the assignment
F = work does not deserve credit or was not turned in

10. All assignments must be completed in order for the student to receive credit for the course. Uncompleted work will result in failure of the course.

Submit All Work Via Word-File in Email

Submit all papers in Word files by email to ron.allen@cts.edu. Papers are due by the time class begins on the day due

Preparation for the Content Quizzes

Each quiz will consist of only 5 questions. (Each question will be worth 4 points). The best preparation for the content quizzes is simply to read through the assigned material. Some quizzes ask for you to pay attention to particular themes. Note these on the dates quizzes are assigned. The quizzes do not deal with minutia but with things that you should be able to pick up in reading in order to get the "big pictures" in each document.

Inclusive Language

“Except when quoting from other writings, writers of papers are urged to use inclusive language. For example, generic language phrased in sex-specific terms and the use of gender designations for inanimate objects should be avoided (e.g., “brother” when the meaning is human being or person; “her” as the pronoun for an inanimate object). Language for “God” should be selected with great care so that the metaphors and grammatical forms are faithful to the biblical revelation of God whose being transcends titles, names, and metaphors.” (Adopted by the CTS Faculty, 2012)

The following may be helpful guides: Keith Watkins, Faithful and Fair, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, ©1981) and "Inclusive Language Guidelines for Use and Study in the United Church of Christ,” June 1980, United Church of Christ Leadership Resources, P.O. Box 179, St. Louis, MO, 63166
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Main Focus of Class</th>
<th>Pages to read in Smith, <em>Chalice Intro</em> or other source</th>
<th>Subject of Content Quiz</th>
<th>Introduction in Class to Paper Due the next week, e.g., on Exegetical Issue, Help or Method</th>
<th>Paper Due</th>
<th>Supplementary topic or class discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>Cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>Smith, 6-24; Allen, <em>Reading the New Testament for the First Time</em>, pp. 17-36, 37-45</td>
<td>27 books of G&amp;L in order and spelled correctly</td>
<td>Introduction to paper on Jesus (again)</td>
<td>Small group discussion on what you observe regarding how the Gospels and Letters function in the life of the congregation</td>
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<td>Sep 18</td>
<td>Jesus Christ</td>
<td>Smith, 117-135</td>
<td>Jude, James</td>
<td>Introduction to Working with Commentaries</td>
<td>Small group discussion on your experience of Jesus Christ</td>
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<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Introduction to Paul; Book of Romans</td>
<td>Smith, 77-95; Allen, <em>Reading the New Testament for the First Time</em>, pp. 81-104; also Allen and Williamson <em>Preaching the Letters</em>, 68-86; 215-224</td>
<td>Romans, Galatians</td>
<td>Introduction to working with a Concordance and doing word studies</td>
<td>3 page paper due on John G. Gager, <em>Reinventing Paul</em> and Allen and Williamson, <em>Preaching the Letters</em>, pp. xviii-xxv. (email to <a href="mailto:ron.allen@cts.edu">ron.allen@cts.edu</a>)</td>
<td>Text criticism (Smith, pp. 1-7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Reading Week:</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Mark bring <em>The Four Gospels</em></td>
<td>Smith, 117-135; 136-154; Allen, <em>Reading the New Testament for the First Time</em>, pp. 105-118. Also Allen and Williamson <em>Preaching the Gospels</em>, 97-109, 110-113, 117-120, 130-140, 147-165</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Introduction to redaction criticism; Allen, <em>Contemporary Biblical Interpretation for Preaching</em>, 61-70</td>
<td>Mid term take home exam due (email to <a href="mailto:ron.allen@cts.edu">ron.allen@cts.edu</a>)</td>
<td>Small group discussion: questions and issues related to your ministry sparked by this course</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
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<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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| Dec 11 | Hebrews, Revelation  
        | To the Hebrews, Revelation  
        | Introduction to take-home exam  
        | Small group discussions on ways in which your perception of yourself and your community may have been affected by this encounter with G&L—especially what has happened to your perception of yourself on the conservative-liberal spectrum (see *One Gospel, Many Ears*, pp. 149-173) and in regard to your perception of the role of the G&L in the church |
| Dec 17 | Review of main themes discussed in class; student questions  
        |  
        | Take-home exam due at class time. (email to ron.allen@cts.edu)  
        |  
|
Welcome to the course
Prayer
Overview of syllabus
The approach of our Class
*Allen, Reading the New Testament for the First Time, pp. 1-16

Exegesis: Encountering the texts of the Gospels and Letters as Others
Read: Allen, Preaching and the Other, pp. 28-46
For this reading, pay special attention to the ways in which a biblical text is an Other. What can you do to help respect the Otherness of the text (and avoid reading your own image into it too flagrantly?)

Content Quiz

Although there is no content quiz, we will take a short diagnostic quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters.

The instructor will also teach a song to help learn the books of the Gospels and Letters in order. A quiz will follow on this subject on September 11. You will be required to write the books of the Gospels and Letters in order and to spell them correctly.

Paper Due

Although there is no paper due, the instructor will talk about the papers and their relationship to the course.

Text with which to Live for the Semester
In several weeks, you will turn in papers on exegetical methods. These papers will typically include an exercise in actually working with a biblical text. The text with which we will live is the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-34.

Introduction to paper due on September 18

NB: Submit all papers in Word files by email to ron.allen@cts.edu. Papers are due by the time class begins on the day due.

3 page paper is due on September 18, on Ronald Allen, The Life of Jesus for Today and Smith, Chalice Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 117-135

Organize your paper according to the following questions. Please use these questions as the structure of your paper: state the questions in the paper and respond to them.

1. What issues regarding our knowledge of the life of Jesus prompted Allen to write this book?
2. Summarize Allen’s picture of the historical Jesus giving particular attention to the main theme of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus’ relationship with Judaism, the reasons for the death of Jesus.
3. How do you react to Allen’s reconstruction of the historical Jesus? How does it compare to your own understanding of Jesus?
4. Please offer a critical evaluation (i.e. an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses) of Allen's book.

Supplementary topic and discussion

The supplementary topic is the spectrum of views on biblical authority from the positions of one-voice and multiple-voice authorities.

Please be prepared to discuss the following:
1. How satisfactory are the terms one-voice and multiple-voice for this discussion? How do they compare to the terms “conservative” and “liberal?”
2. What one-voice and multiple voice Christians share, especially when viewed against the backdrop of wider North American culture?
3. What are the primary characteristics of the one-voice position?
4. What are the theological outcomes of the one-voice position for using the Bible in arriving at how you interpret of God’s purposes?
5. What are the primary characteristics of the multiple position?
6. What are the theological outcomes of the multiple voice position for using the Bible in arriving at how you interpret of God’s purposes?
7. Why does the instructor look unfavorably on a moderate position?

Quiz on the books of the Gospels and Letters

You will be asked to write the books of the Gospels and Letters in order and to spell them correctly.

Main Focus: Cultural Backgrounds of the Gospels and Letters

Formative influences in the first century world, 300 BCE to 200 CE.
Read: *Smith, pp. 6-30, esp. 6-7, 8-10;
*Allen, Reading the New Testament for the First Time, pp. 17-36, 37-45

Judaism in the First Century Palestine (apocalypticism, the Pharisees, the Zealots, the temple crowd, the effect of the fall of the temple).
Read: *Smith, pp. 6-30, esp. 8, 11-13, 17-21;
HCSB, Maps 12-17 (in the map section in the back)

Judaism in the Diaspora (Diaspora life, the Septuagint, Philo, Hellenistic influences on Diaspora Judaism)
Read: *Smith, pp. 6-30, esp 13-17, 21-23

Introduction to Paper Due next week

A 3-page paper is due on September 18 on Ronald Allen, The Life of Jesus for Today and Smith, Chalice Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 117-135

Organize your paper according to the following questions.

1. What issues regarding our knowledge of the life of Jesus prompted Allen to write this book?
2. Summarize Allen’s picture of picture of the historical Jesus giving particular attention to the main theme of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus’ relationship with Judaism, the reasons for the death of Jesus.
3. How do you react to Allen’s reconstruction of the historical Jesus? How does it compare to your own understanding of Jesus?
4. Please offer a critical evaluation (i.e. an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses) of Allen's position

NB: Submit all papers in Word files by email to ron.allen@ct.edu. Papers are due by the time class begins on the day due.

Supplementary Topic: there will be no supplementary topic this week because cultural backgrounds is such a far-reaching subject
Content Quiz

The five question content quiz will focus on James and Jude. All you need to do to prepare is to read these books. The format of the quiz will include fill in the blank, multiple choice, and true false.

Paper Due Today:


The paper is described on p. 11.

Main focus: Jesus Christ

The elusive historical Jesus (the critical quest)
How has Jesus been understood in the life of the Church (a series of images)
The trajectory of the development of Christology in the NT.
The Jesus who is important to the church: the centrality of the resurrection for the interpretation of the life and literature of early Christianity and for contemporary theology.

READ: Smith, pp. 117-135
HCSB Maps, Map 13 (in the map section in the back of the study Bible)

Introduction to paper due next week

There will be no paper next week.

Introduction to Working with Commentaries

The commentary is a basic resource for working with the Torah, Prophets, Writings, Gospels and Letters.

Please read “Working with Commentaries” (on the pages following) in preparation for a brief discussion on using commentaries in the work of biblical interpretation.

You will want to have this discussion in the background when you write your paper on historical criticism.

Supplementary topic or discussion:

Small Group Discussion of your interpretation of Jesus Christ.
Come to class prepared to discuss the following with a small group of your classmates:
1) How you have understood Jesus Christ in the past? Who is he? What does he do for you?
2) What sources have fed your understanding of him?
3) How does Allen’s approach compare and contrast with your own? At what points does his presentation confirm you? Surprise you? Alarm you?
4) What is a question you would like for your small group to discuss? To put to the instructor?
Working with Commentaries.

A “commentary” provides an interpretation of the biblical text verse by verse or, on occasion, pericope by pericope. Not all commentaries are the same. Some focus on the original language of the text; others discuss issues of historical import; others concentrate on theological concerns. Further, commentaries are shaped by the theological perspective of the author. Different authors will raise different questions and concerns. What is important to recognize is that no single commentary will tell you all you want to know about a particular text. Moreover, no commentary can take the place of your own careful study and interpretation of a given text. What a commentary can provide is an opportunity for you to engage in conversation around a particular text with other students of the Bible.

If you want to explore commentaries more, you can follow the exercises below.

All the commentaries listed below may be found in the reserve section of the library. Select three commentaries from the list and look up the story of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-36 in each of them. As you read each commentary, ask yourself:

*What does the author say about him/herself and his/her particular emphasis in the introduction to the commentary?
*How is the commentary organized?
*With what kind of information does the commentary provide you?
*What kinds of questions or concerns does the author raise?
*In what ways is this commentary distinctive from the other two?

For this exercise, you are not trying to summarize what the author actually tells you about the passage. You are trying to identify the type of information the author provides (e.g. translation, the structure of the text, connections with other ancient literature, word studies of particular words, observations by other scholars, etc.).

Commentaries on Mark either in the reference section or on the reserve shelf at the CTS Library:


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1 A pericope is a self-contained literary unit. It is pronounced pe-rík oh-pee.


Quiz on books of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus on Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. You will be given five passages and asked to identify the document in which each passage is found. You will not need to provide chapter and verse.

No paper is due.

Main focus: Between Jesus and Paul, and Introduction to Paul

The Christian movement before the time of Paul (lecture)


Introduction to Paul, Apostle to the Gentile

Paul: the reason (perhaps) you and I are Christian
Older views of Paul
The letter as Apostolic Parousia
Sources of Paul's thought (apocalypticism, Diaspora Judaism, Hellenistic sources)

Main themes in Pauline theology.
1. the situation of the world (sin)
2. the death and resurrection of Jesus as confirming that God is bringing about the apocalyptic transformation of the world
3. Pauline theological method in relating the gospel to the life of the church and the world
4. Paul's view of Judaism and the Law
5. The Good News for Gentiles

READ: *Smith, pp. 24-27, 31-53
* Allen, *Reading the New Testament for the First Time*, pp. 81-104
Chart, “Possible Chronology of Paul’s Letters,” in HCSB p. 2113

Introduction to paper due next week


In your paper, please include the following:
1. A statement of the older view of Paul in relationship to Judaism that Gager along with Williamson and Allen seek to displace
2. A statement of the view that Gager/Williamson/Allen advocate
3. An summary of the bases on which Gager/Williamson/Allen advocates change in perspective on Paul
4. An assessment of the arguments of the authors
5. An indication of the implications of the revisionary view for Christian preaching and teaching. What would preachers and teachers need to do if they adopt the position recommended by Gager/Williamson/Allen?
Supplementary topic: Working with Exegesis of Yourself and of your Community

The purpose of this exercise is to begin or continue the process of helping students become aware of factors in their personal and corporate worlds that affect their interpretation of the Bible. These questions are only introductory. You can explore them much more fully on your own as well as in classes in psychology, sociology, church history, systematic theology, ethics, worship, etc.

Please read De La Torre, Reading the Bible from the Margins, pp. 1-54. Pay special attention to pp. 1-13. In succeeding material, note how we tend to impose our meanings on ancient texts, especially in self-serving ways, and ways that. Pay close attention to the definition and discussion of racism on pp. 21-24. Consider the difference between reading from the center and reading from the margins (pp. 31-35). Be prepared to characterize reading the Bible from a place of privilege and from the margins (pp. 36-54).

Read: Allen, Preaching and the Other, pp. 75-94. Contrast modern and postmodern views on privilege and social location. Consider the degree does social location permit a community to read a text in any way it wants in order to serve its own (sometimes liberating) purposes? Are there constraints on what a text can mean for today?

When you have some extra time, you may want to look at Stephen Farris, Preaching that Matters: The Bible and Our Lives (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), “This Side of the Analogy,” pp. 25-38 (which inspired the limited exercise below) or at Norman K. Gottwald, “Framing Biblical Interpretation at New York Theological Seminary: A Student Self-Inventory on Biblical Hermeneutics,” in Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., Reading from this Place (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 251-261. (This material is on inside.cts.edu)

We never engage in exegesis as blank slates. Who we are as individuals and as participants in communities is always a part of our work as interpreters. Consequently, it is important to become as aware as we can of our identities as individuals and as communities. Identity is compromised of deep and complex thoughts, feelings, values, social relationships, and social location. We consciously choose some aspects of our identities. Some dimensions of our selves are powerful but nonconscious force fields. They include matters that are related to such things as family of origin, gender, race, religious orientation, social class, education, social class, political views, marital status, sexual orientation, aesthetic inclinations, practices, personal and corporate ambitions. As noted in connection with our discussion of ideology criticism in a few weeks, we often tend to interpret the Bible in ways that who we are. Many of us want the Bible to reflect who we are and to support our values, lifestyle, commitments, and desires. For instance, males often interpret the Bible in such a way as to support male dominance in the world. Middle class and upper class people sometimes interpret the Bible so as to support the continuation of their economic security. Republicans or Democrats interpret the Bible so as to find continuity between the Bible and the positions advocated by their political parties. Often we think or intuit (without bringing such intuitions to the level of consciousness) that our identities and our interpretations of the Bible are normative. At the level of ideology criticism, we formally identify how such factors play into our patterns of interpretation, and we reflect critically on them. Sometimes we discover that points of our identities interfere with our capacity to hear a text. Our predispositions can lead us to not recognize or entertain a word that we need to hear from the Bible in order to mature as optimum Christians. Sometimes, of course, we find that who we are is a positive point of contact with the text. When we work with hermeneutics, we will make analogies between the world and the text and our worlds. At that time, it is important to be as aware as possible of our worlds. For now, it is enough to begin to name describe our personal identities and the identities of our interpretive communities, and to begin to reflect on how they might play conscious and nonconscious roles in our interpretation of the Bible. This process will continue not only over the course of the semester, but over the course of your entire ministry.
You will be divided into groups of three. Each person is asked to reflect briefly (in no more than a minute) on each of the questions below. Each person in the group should reflect on the first question, then the group should move to the second, etc. We will have about forty-five minutes in small groups. Consequently, there will not be time to cover all questions. The subquestions below, usually beginning “For example,” are not exhaustive. You do not have respond to all of them. You can expand your responses to the main question beyond the subquestions.

1. What is your ethnicity? How might your racial/ethnic identity predispose you toward interpreting a Biblical text? For example, if you are a member of a race that is socially, economically, and otherwise privileged, how might that affect your hearing of a biblical passage? If you are a member of a race that is socially, economically, or otherwise prejudiced against, how might that affect your hearing of a biblical text?

2. What is your gender? How might your gender predispose you towards hearing a biblical text? For example, if you are a woman, to what might your experience increase your sensitivity in a biblical text? What themes would you like to find in passages? What themes do you dread?

3. What is your age? How might your age (particularly generation—World War II or Builder, Silent, Boomer, Generation 13) predispose you towards a Bible passage? What does your generation value? What would you like for a biblical passage to authorize? What does your generation? What would you like for a biblical passage to disconfirm?

4. What is your economic class and situation? How might your economic class predispose you towards a biblical text? Does your economic situation incline you to want to find certain attitudes towards economic resources and material goods in a biblical passage? Are there some themes that you would not want to find in a passage?

5. What is your political affiliation (e.g., Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Socialist, other)? If you are reluctant to claim an affiliation with a particular party or movement, what is your general political outlook? How might your political affiliation or outlook affect your hearing of a biblical text? What attitudes, behaviors and opportunities do you like to hear confirmed? Disconfirmed? How does the fact that you are a citizen of a democracy affect your hearing of a biblical passage?

6. What would you describe as some of your most important values? How might these values play into your hearing of a biblical text? What do you want to be supported? What do you hope will not be supported?

7. What is your denomination or Christian movement? How might your participation in your denomination or movement influence your hearing of the Bible? For instance, Pentecostalism often heightens the perception of a person or community towards the presence and movement of the Holy Spirit.

8. What do you most deeply believe about God? How might this belief color your exegesis of biblical texts? For instance, do you believe that God is unconditional love? What do you do when you come across biblical texts, or aspects of biblical texts, that do not portray God as unconditional love?
9. What is your marital status and household status? How might your marital status and household status affect your hearing of a biblical passage? What might you hope to find legitimated? Delegitimated? For example, if you are a single person, what do you hope to find in a biblical text? What do you find frustrating?

10. What is your sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual)? How might your sexual orientation affect your hearing of a biblical text? For example, what might your sexual orientation lead you to assume as “normal?” How might your sexual orientation incline you to view persons with other sexual orientations?

11. Briefly describe your family of origin. What did your family of origin value? Consider normative? How might your experience in your family of origin influence your hearing of a biblical text?

12. If you related to a Christian community during your childhood and youth, briefly describe that community and its possible effects on your hearing of a biblical text? What did that community consider acceptable? Unacceptable? Can you identify some subtle ways in which that community is still a part of your life? If you were not related to a Christian community during your childhood and youth, briefly describe your associations and impressions of Christian communities. Are some of these associations and feelings still operative?

13. Briefly describe the Christian community(ies) that have been most formative during your adult years? What did/does that community consider the essence of Christian life? What did/does that community consider acceptable? Unacceptable? Can you identify ways in which that community still affects your life?

14. What kinds of books do you most like to read? Avoid? Movies that you like to see? Avoid? Music that you like to hear? Avoid? What do these preferences tell you about your proclivities with respect to biblical texts?

15. What is your personality type according to the Myers Briggs Type Indicator or some other kind of personality categorization? How might your personality type prompt you to hear biblical texts in certain ways and not in other ways?

16. Identify traits that are not on this list and reflect on ways in which they might affect your hearing of a biblical passage?

Most of the preceding questions can also be adapted for the communities of which you are a part. For example, what is the predominant race or ethnicity of your congregation? How does that affect the ways in which the Bible is interpreted in your community?

Remember, this list is not exhaustive.

The following articles help identify aspects of the relationship between social location and interpretation in the groups mentioned: They are all found in volume 1 of The New Interpreter's Bible, edited by Leander Keck et. al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), volume 1: James Earl Massey, "Reading the Bible from Particular Social Locations" (pp. 150-153); James Earl Massey, "Reading the Bible as African Americans" (pp. 154-161); Chan-Hie Kim, "Reading the Bible as Asian Americans" (pp. 161-166); Fernando Segovia "Reading the Bible as Hispanic Americans" (pp. 167-174); George C. Tucker, "Reading the Bible as Native Americans" (pp. 174-181); Carolyn Osieck, "Reading the Bible as Women" (pp. 181-187). (The New Interpreter's Bible is found in the reference section of the library) (This material is also on inside.cts.edu).
Oct 2

Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz focuses on Galatians and Romans. You will be given five passages and asked to identify the document in which each passage is found. You will not need to provide chapter and verse.

Paper Due


In your paper, please include the following:
1. A statement of the older view of Paul in relationship to Judaism that Gager along with Williamson and Allen seek to displace
2. A statement of the view that Gager/Williamson/Allen advocate
3. An summary of the bases on which Gager/Williamson/Allen advocates change in perspective on Paul
4. An assessment of the arguments of the authors
5. An indication of the implications of the revisionary view for Christian preaching and teaching. What would preachers and teachers need to do if they adopt the position recommended by Gager/Williamson/Allen?

Main Focus: Romans

The theological significance of Romans for the church, especially the Reformation
What is the occasion?
The gentiles in the world of the letter to the Romans as encouraging gentiles to become more respectful of Judaism, and, indeed, to become more Jewish in attitudes and behavior
The relationship of idolatry and sin.
The relationship of the law and grace.
The work of the spirit.
Judaism and Christianity in relationship to God and one another

Key word: Righteousness (justification)

Read Smith, pp. 77-95
As possible, please read: Allen and Williamson *Preaching the Letters*, 68-86; 215-224

Introduction to the paper due next session

No paper is due next session. We will have a little introduction to working with a concordance.

Supplementary topic

The supplementary topic is on textual criticism. How do we establish the wording of the text of the Gospels and Letters?

Read: *Smith, pp. 3-6*
Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus on 1 and 2 Corinthians. You will be given five passages and asked to identify the document in which each passage is found. You will not need to provide chapter and verse.

Paper due

A paper is not due.

Main Focus: 1 and 2 Corinthians

What is the situation in the congregation at Corinth?
Who are the opponents?
What do they teach?
What are the specific issues that Paul addresses?
How does Paul apply his understanding of the gospel to the Corinthian situation? (This notion is key)

The Corinthian Correspondence is an exceptionally clear example of Paul interpreting situations in the life of the church in light of his understanding of the gospel.

Key Passages: 1 Cor. 1:18-26
15:1-5
2 Cor. 8-9

Key Words: wisdom, power

Read: *Smith, pp. 54-76; Allen and Williamson Preaching the Letters, 17-28, 116-122, 188-195; 123-130, 148-154

Introduction to a paper due next time we meet

A two page paper due next week will focus on working with historical criticism. This exercise is described on Working with Historical Criticism on the next pages.

Introduction to take home exam

The instructor will give out the mid-term take-home exam. For the exam write no more than 5 double-spaced pages in 12 point font per the instructions in the syllabus.

Supplementary topic

The supplementary topic is the formation of the Canon: What got in and why.

Read: *Smith, pp. 1-7

NB: This material can be very useful when dealing with the issue of authority, especially biblical authority, in a congregation, as this material illustrates the wide variety of material that churches consider “canonical” or “authoritative.”
August 1, 2012

Working with Historical Criticism


Historical criticism is the attempt to locate the meaning(s) of a text in its historical context. At a basic level, historical criticism helps us understand the first century meanings of words, places, actions, characters, and dimensions of the world of the Bible. For example, what full spectrum of associations would have come to the mind and heart of a first century listener who heard the terms “great whore of Babylon” or “resurrection from the dead?” We early twenty-first century people have a tendency to hear the Bible in terms of our own culture and presuppositions. Historical criticism reminds us to listen for how the Bible would have been heard in its own time. This basic work of historical criticism is helpful in interpreting all the literature in the Gospels and Letters.

Some of the easiest to use resources for making these discoveries are the Bible dictionaries and the commentaries as well as work with the concordance. A basic question to ask of every detail of a text: “How would this dimension of the text have been heard by a first century listener?” Furthermore, historical critics sometimes seek to reconstruct the historical situation that lies behind a biblical book or passage. The text was written to address that setting. When we have a window into the historical situation, we can often identify the effect a text was intended to have. The historical critics seek to identify (a) the author, (b) the date of composition, (c) the place of composition, (d) the community to which the text was written, (e) the circumstances of the community to which the text was written, (f) the purpose of the document or passage in that historical context. Historical critics depend upon two kinds of data for their reconstructions: material in the books of the Gospels and Letters that seem to point to the situation of the community; and material from the larger Mediterranean world that provides information that would have been assumed by first century listeners. Students can get hold of this kind of reconstruction in several places: in your textbook in Introduction to the New Testament, in the introductory sections of the commentaries, in articles on the book of the Bible that you are studying in a Bible Dictionary, in specialized books or articles. However, students need to be cautioned that we cannot answer with precision in regard to every book in the Gospels and Letters historical critical questions of authorship, time and place of composition, circumstances of the community, etc. Most of the letters of Paul, for instance, give us a lot more data with which we can work with confidence than the Gospels. Students also need to be aware that scholars sometimes debate these matters. When students (and other Christians) come upon differences of opinion, students need to decide which scholarly opinions make the most sense, and why.

The purposes of these exercises are to give the student practice at listening to the details of a text with the ears of a first century person, and to consider how reconstructing the situation of a first century congregation enhances our perception of the purpose of a text.

Consider how two scholars reconstruct the situation of the community to which Mark wrote. Pick two of the scholarly attempts (below) to reconstruct the historical situation of the gospel of Mark. These resources can be found on inside.cts.edu.

Please structure your paper using these questions. Print the question in your paper, then respond to it, then go to the next question.

1. What do we mean by “historical criticism?”
2. Read and summarize the pertinent material from the two commentaries that you picked (usually found in the Introduction or in an article, chapter, or setting that deals with the historical setting). The page numbers where this material is found are indicated in connection with the commentaries and other scholarly sources below.

3. Identify strengths and weaknesses in the scholars’ reconstructions of the historical setting of Mark. What ideas, arguments, and uses of evidence do you find persuasive? Why? What arguments, uses of evidence, etc., do you find non-persuasive?

4. Now, select one of the two scholarly reconstructions you have just described, and indicate how the story of the woman with the issue of blood, Mark 5:24b-34, is intended to address the setting of the Gospel of Mark, as described in that source. From this point of view, what effect is the story supposed to have on the congregation in that historical setting?

The following are commentaries and other sources from which you might choose. (on reserve or in reference).


Write no more than a total of two double-spaced typewritten pages (about 1/3 of a page on each question) in response to these questions.
Oct 16: Reading Week: No Class

Oct 23

Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will be on Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. You will be asked five easy to answer questions (one on each book).

Paper due

The 2 page paper due focuses on working with historical criticism. This exercise is described on Working with Historical Criticism on the previous pages.

Main Focus: Ephesians

Grace as God's unmerited favor
Grace and the relationship of Jewish and gentile peoples
Grace and the principalities and the powers (cosmic universalism)
Grace embodied in the life of the Christian community
Grace in the personal struggle against the principalities and the powers
Grace as creating a new social world

Read: Smith, pp. 96-116; Allen and Williamson Preaching the Letters, 154-163; 224-230; Allen, Reading the New Testament for the First Time, pp. 119-128; Map in HCSB, p. 2213

Supplementary topic

Dealing with negative images of the Jewish people in the Gospels and Letters.

Note especially how and why the early church developed such negative caricatures of Jewish people and what today's church needs to do to correct these developments that have had so many horrific consequences.
Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus on Mark. You will be given five texts and will be asked to put them in the chronological order in which they occur in Mark.

Main Focus: The Synoptic Tradition and the gospel of Mark

What is a "gospel?"

Four approaches to studying a gospel: by narrative movement, by themes, by key passages, by lifeworld

READ: *Smith, pp. 117-135

The Gospel of Mark: Studying a Gospel by Means of Narrative Movement

Why did Mark write?
Mark as apocalyptic drama
The Markan characters: Jesus, Satan, the disciples, the Jewish people, the crowd Mark and Judaism
The miracle stories
The passion
The resurrection


READ: *Smith, pp. 136-151;
Allen and WilliamsonPreaching the Gospels, 97-109, 110-113, 117-120, 130-140, 147-165

Take-Home Exam is due today

The mid-term Take Home Exam is due at class time today. Please email to ron.allen@cts.edu.

Introduction to Redaction Criticism

Read Allen, Contemporary Biblical Interpretation for Preaching, pp. 61-70

Supplementary topic or discussion

You are asked to identify issues that the course is raising for you regarding the use of the Bible in your preaching, teaching, or in other aspects of ministry. Explain why these issues are important to you. What resources and strategies will you use to address them? Each group is asked to write down a question to be read to the instructor in a plenary session at the end of the hour.
Working with Redaction Criticism


Redaction criticism focuses on identifying an author’s particular theological emphases. Normally, redaction criticism is employed only with the Synoptic Gospels. It begins by examining the ways in which the author has modified her source material. These deliberate changes to the source material often reflect themes or concerns that the author develops elsewhere in the Gospel. It is assumed that these themes or concerns in some way address the *Sitz im Leben* or life setting of the author and reflect the author’s purpose in writing. Redaction criticism is a valuable tool for gaining insight into the theological concerns of the author.

If you want to further explore redaction criticism, you will need a copy of Aland’s *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* and can follow the exercises below. In addition, you will need to have completed the required reading listed above.

1. Turn to #138, Jairus’ Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage, (pp. 125-127) in Aland, *The Four Gospels*. For the purpose of this exercise, concentrate on the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-34 and the respective parallels in Matthew and Luke. Do not try to consider the whole of Mark 5:21-43.

2. Observe all the ways in which Matthew alters the text of Mark: words added or omitted; changes in discourse (e.g. making a question a statement or vice versa); changes in setting or character; changes in verb tense; changes in word order or narrative order, etc.

3. Now consider whether any of the changes reflect themes, patterns of description, words or concerns that appear elsewhere in Matthew’s Gospel. You may find it helpful to consult your textbook, a Bible dictionary or a commentary, employ a concordance, or re-read the Gospel of Matthew. Be aware that omissions, as well as changes and additions, may be significant – e.g., How does the omission (or addition) alter the character, setting, or event? [Also be aware that some changes are made simply because the author thought they rendered a smoother narrative. Not every change will be of earth shattering significance.]

4. What do these changes tell you about the particular emphases, interests, or concerns of the author of the Gospel of Matthew?

5. Repeat steps 2, 3 and 4 with Luke.

Note: There is no paper due on redaction criticism. This exercise is provided for fun and learning.
Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus Matthew. You be given five texts and asked whether or not each occurs in the Gospel of Matthew. You will indicate “Yes” if it is found in Matthew, and “No” if it is not.

Main Focus: Matthew: Studying a gospel by means of themes.

Mark and Matthew
Matthew as Pharisee and Apocalyptist
Matthew's divided community
Matthew and the law
Matthew and the presence of the risen Christ


READ: *Smith, pp. 152-174; Allen and Williamson Preaching the Gospels, 5-29, 95-108, 130-167

Introduction to the paper due next week

The 2 page paper due next week will focus on working with literary criticism with components focusing on both a single pericope and a larger literary unit. This exercise is described in the two sections that follow—Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Single Passage and Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Larger Literary. AFTER YOU HAVE READ BOTH SECTIONS, WRITE YOUR PAPER USING THE FOUR NUMBERED QUESTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SINGLE PASSAGE AND THE FOUR NUMBERED QUESTIONS THAT OCCUR IN CONNECTION WITH LARGER PASSAGE. Structure your paper according to those questions. (Do not do the questions in connection with the single passage that are listed according to a-b-c-d etc.). You will write on eight questions total.

Supplementary topic or discussion

The supplementary topic for focuses on earliest Christian Literature and issues of race

The presence of people of color in the Bible, especially in the 27 books written by the church
The manifestation of ethnic tension in the Hellenistic world. Slavery in the Hellenistic era
The use of the Bible in the emergence of ethnic injustice, especially in slavery in the U.S.
Impulses in the witnesses of the early church which lead toward justice.
The uses of the Bible in African American communities and the emergence of an Afrocentric approach to Biblical interpretation

Read: De La Torre, Reading the Bible from the Margins, pp. 65-82. Note particularly how Eurocentric people used and use the Bible to oppress people of color. How does a reading from the perspective of people of color challenge such Eurocentric readings? Flag the special concerns of: African Americans, Amerindians, Asians, and Jewish people.

Allen, Preaching and the Other, pp. 121-137.
Literary Criticism Exercise

This exercise due next week is described in the two sections that follow—Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Single Passage and Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Larger Literary. AFTER YOU HAVE READ BOTH SECTIONS, WRITE YOUR PAPER USING THE FOUR NUMBERED QUESTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SINGLE PASSAGE AND THE FOUR NUMBERED QUESTIONS THAT OCCUR IN CONNECTION WITH LARGER PASSAGE. Structure your paper according to those questions. (Do not do the questions in connection with the single passage that are listed according to a-b-c-d etc.). You will write on eight questions total.

Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Single Passage


Literary criticism is a broad term that covers several different approaches to interpretation. Among the various types of literary criticism are genre criticism, the “New Literary Criticism,” rhetorical criticism, narrative criticism, reader response criticism, and structuralism. These methods can be used to interpret either single biblical passages, or they can be used to interpret larger units within a biblical book, and even whole books.

These different approaches to literary criticism share the attempt to read or hear the Bible in much the same way that one reads or hears other types of literature.

In the case of narrative texts (e.g., the Gospels and Acts), the critic identifies the genre as well as the setting, the characters, the plot, other elements that contribute to the story, the narrator (actual and implied), the audience (actual and implied, and the intended effect of the text on the listener.

In the case of non-narrative texts (e.g., the letters, the Apocalypse), the critic identifies the genre, its characteristic parts and their function, and the content and function of the particular document in which it is found (especially the effect of its literary placement).

The easiest place to discover the genre of a passage is from the commentaries. Often a commentary will name a passage’s genre, and then refer you to another book that provides more detailed analysis, e.g., literary critical studies (books or articles), handbooks on literary criticism, and handbooks on biblical criticism, Bible dictionaries. Of course, in actual practice, literary critics not only interpret the literary aspects of a passage, but also note how the passage fits into, and is influenced by, the literary patterns at work in the book as a whole.

In the exercise below, you are asked to engage in one aspect of literary criticism—genre analysis. In genre analysis, the interpreter seeks to identify (a) the genre of a passage, (b) the literary elements and characteristics of that genre, and (c) the effect that the passage intends to have on the reader or listener.

The purpose of this exercise is to give students practice in working with an aspect of literary criticism at the level of a single passage.

Respond to the following questions in this page and on the next exercise, “Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Larger Literary Unit” as one paper of no more than two double spaced typewritten pages, with the help of a good commentary on Matthew, and by reading Bailey and Vander Broek, Literary Forms in the New Testament, “Miracle Story,” pp. 137-144.
Read the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-34. **Respond to these four questions in your paper.**

1. What genre is this passage?

2. What are the literary characteristics and elements of that genre?

3. Show how the literary characteristics of this genre are manifest in Mark 5:24b-35.

4. What is the intended effect of this genre? What is the specific effect of the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood on you as a listener?

You will not have time to consider the following questions as part of this paper, but when working with literary criticism in preparation for preaching and teaching, you will want to respond to the following questions. Narrative criticism attempts to unfold ways in which a narrative works. By helping you hear the setting, characters, and plot as they would have been heard by people in the world of the first century.

   a) What is the setting of the story?

   b) Who are the main characters?

   c) What is the situation at the beginning?

   d) What is the plot?

   e) What is the situation at the end of the story?

   f) With whom do you identify in the story itself?

   g) What happens to you as you hear the story?
Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Larger Literary Unit


First, re-read the material in the box for “Working with Literary Criticism at the Level of a Passage.” The same general principles apply when working with literary criticism at the level of a larger literary unit. By larger literary unit, we can mean a chapter, a part of a book, or a whole biblical book.

The interpreter seeks to identify (a) the form or genre of the larger unit, (b) the literary elements and characteristics of that unit, and (c) the effect that the larger unit intends to have on the reader or listener.

In the case of narrative texts (e.g., the Gospels and Acts), the critic identifies the genre as well as identifies the setting, the characters, the plot, other elements that contribute to the story, the narrator (actual and implied), the audience (actual and implied, and the intended effect of the text on the listener. *The literary critic traces how these things develop over the course of the narrative.* For example, what happens to a character (or group of characters)? To tensions in the plot? To images or motifs? The critic looks for patterns that develop across the larger unit as a whole and ways in which awareness of these patterns contribute to our understanding of the passage.

In the case of non-narrative texts (e.g., the letters, the Apocalypse), the critic identifies the genre, its characteristic parts and their function, and the content and function of the particular document as a whole. The commentaries are an easy place to discover the genre of a document, and the genre’s constituent parts (and their function). Again, the critic looks for patterns that develop across the larger unit as a whole. Often a commentary will name the genre of the larger literary unit, and then refer you to another book or article that provides more detailed analysis, e.g., literary critical studies (books or articles), handbooks on literary critics, handbooks on biblical criticism, Bible dictionaries.

In the exercise below, you are asked to engage in a simple but often illuminating aspect of literary criticism by reflecting on how the placement of a story contributes to its meaning, and how its placement contributes to the meaning of the larger literary unit.

The purpose of this exercise is to give students practice at using literary criticism in a larger unit of the Bible. In this case, the unit is a series of miracle stories in Mark 4:35-5:43.

Consider some literary critical aspects of the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:24b-34) at the level of a larger literary unit.

Read the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-34 in its larger literary context in Mark 5:21-43. **Respond to these four questions in your paper.**

5. What comes immediately prior to Mark 5:24b-34?

6. What comes immediately after?

7. How does the placement of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in 5:24b-34 within the larger story of the raising of Jairus’ daughter in 5:21-43 affect our hearing of the 5:24b-34? (If you have time, comment on how the placement of 5:24b-34 within 5:31-43 affects your hearing of the story of the raising of Jairus’ daughter).
8. Read 5:24b-34 within the still wider context of the series of miracle stories stretching from 4:35-5:43. Look for a pattern in the changes of content (from sea miracle, to exorcism, to healing/resurrection) from one story to another in 4:35-5:43? Briefly describe this pattern.

Respond to all these questions in a paper that is no longer than 2 pages, typed, double-spaced.)
Nov 13

Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus on Luke. You will be given five quotes from characters in Luke and the names of five characters. You will be asked to correlate the names with the quotes.

Paper due

The 2 page paper due is working with literary criticism. The exercise is described in the preceding page.


Pay careful attention to the following:
- Differences between Luke and the gospels of Matthew and Mark;
- Differences between the picture of Paul in the genuine
- The picture of Paul in the Pauline letters and the picture of Paul in Acts.

Luke-Acts as interpretation of traditions in the LXX
Luke's picture of the world: 6 tensions
The experience of the spirit as the center of the Lucan community
The Lucan parables
Three stages of the Lucan theology of history
The Jerusalem community as the prototype church
Paul as representative of the forward movement of the church

Key words: repent, baptism, forgiveness


Read: *Smith, pp. 175-197; Allen and Williamson Preaching the Gospels, 178-198;
214-149
Chart in HCSB, p. 2060.
Maps in HCSB, pp. 2075, 2080, 2084, 2090.

Introduction to the paper due next session

A paper is not due next at the next session. We will have a little introduction to ideology criticism.

Read Allen, Preaching and the Other, pp. 47-74 and “Working With Ideology Criticism” in the material that follows
Supplementary topic or discussion

The earliest Christian literature and issues related to women

An overview of issues related to women and the interpretation of the New Testament
The social pyramid-hierarchy of the Hellenistic era, its underlying presuppositions, and its reflections in the earliest Christian literature
The importance of exercising suspicion in the reading of the Bible.
Impulses in the earliest Christian literature toward justice for women.

Read: De La Torre, Reading the Bible from the Margins, pp. 82-103. Note how Eurocentric male interpreters (and some male interpreters in other racial/ethnic communities) have interpreted the Bible to justify patriarchy and the oppression of women. How do feminists, womanists, mujeristas, and others respond? How have and do heterosexual interpreters, especially European males, used and use the Bible to oppress people with same-gender orientations?

Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus on Acts. You will be given five quotes from characters in Acts and the names of five characters. You will be asked to correlate the names with the quotes.

Paper due

A paper is not due.

Introduction to paper due next week

The paper due next week is on Social Science Criticism. See the description of social science criticism below.


See the questions, issues and key passages for the preceding week.

Read: Chart in HCSB, p. 2060.
Maps in HCSB, p. 2075, 2080, 2084, 2090.

Supplementary Topic

Unity and Diversity in the earliest Christian Literature

The twenty-seven books of the last part of the canon are not a book but a library; they are diverse. What are some differences?

At what points are the twenty-seven books a unity?
What are the great unities?

How should the church regard the diversity and unity of the earliest Christian literature?

What does the church do when the earliest Christian literature speaks with multiple, even contradictory, voices on a single issue?

Case study: attitudes towards the state in the earliest Christian literature


Introduction to paper due next week

Next week a 2-page paper is due on social science criticism. The exercise for developing the paper is on the next pages.
Working with Social Science Criticism


Social Science Criticism is concerned with identifying and describing the dynamics that governed social interaction in the Greco-Roman world. Social Science Criticism views the texts that make up the Gospels and Letters as “both a reflection of and a response to the social and cultural settings in which the text was produced.”4 It draws heavily on the field of cultural anthropology for its insights. Although related to historical criticism, social science criticism is distinguished from the former by its emphasis on patterns of behavior. However, there are times when the two fields will overlap. Social Science Criticism is multi-form in the approaches it adopts and complex in its theoretical rationale. However, students of the Bible can benefit from even a cursory exposure to the results of social scientific studies and their application to the biblical text. Social Science Criticism is an important tool that offers students a means of gaining insight into the social world of early Christians.

The purpose of this exercise is to give students practice at using the results of Social Science Criticism in interpreting texts. It is critical that you read the article by Esler before proceeding and, in addition, that you have a clear understanding of the following terms: honor; ascribed honor; acquired honor; kin; non-kin; agonistic society; challenge and response; dyadic personality; limited good; patron-client relationship.

Turn to Mark 5:21-43.

Answer the following questions [in 2 pages or less; double-spaced; type-written]:

1. What groups are the following individuals embedded in: Jairus, the disciples, the girl-child?

2. In what ways does Jairus have ascribed honor? In what ways has he acquired honor?

3. Describe the situation of the girl-child and the woman with the flow of blood in relation to patterns of kinship. How does the situation of the woman with the flow of blood change during the course of the story?

4. Describe the interaction between Jairus and Jesus in terms of patron-client relationships.

5. Some read the interaction between Jesus and the woman in terms of challenge and response. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

6. Give an example of a “limited good” in the story.

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Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus on the gospel of John and 1, 2, and 3 John. You will be given five multiple choice questions.

Paper due

The 2 page paper due focuses on working with social science criticism. This exercise is described on Working with Social Science Criticism on the previous pages.

Main Focus: the Johannine literature

The world of thought of the Johannine literature
John's church and the synagogue
The Johannine Jesus
The Johannine signs
Johannine irony
The Holy Spirit in John
The great discourses ("I am . . .")

Key words: love, reveal

Introduction to the paper due Dec 18.

The instructor will give out the take-home final exam. Write no more than five pages in 12 point font.

Supplementary topic or discussion

The supplementary topic is a method for using the Bible in discussion of contemporary theological and ethical issues.

We will explore one way that the Bible can contribute to a contemporary discussion in the church. The topic is homosexuality. While we concentrate on this sensitive topic, our larger interest is on a methodology, which can be transferred to other texts, and themes that will help the Bible speak its own voice in the larger conversation.

Read:  Genesis 19:1-26
       Leviticus 18:1-30, esp. 20:1-27, esp. 13
       Deuteronomy 23:17-18
       I Kings 14:22-24
       Romans 1:18-3:18, esp. 1:26-27
       I Corinthians 6:1-20, esp. 6:9
       I Timothy 1:3-17, esp. 1:10

Dec 11

Quiz on the content of the Gospels and Letters

The quiz will focus on To the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation. You will be asked to fill in the blanks on five well-known statements from these documents or questions relative to such statements.

Paper due

No paper is due.

Main Focus: Book of Revelation

The situation of the Book of Revelation
What is an apocalypse?
Symbolism in the Book of Revelation
Time: Present and future
The witness of the church
READ: *Smith, pp. 306-330; Allen, Reading the New Testament for the First Time, pp. 129-140

Supplementary topic or discussion

We will divide into small groups to reflect on ways in which this semester-long encounter with the Gospels and Letters may have affected your sense of your self and your community(ies), especially as discussed the opening class in connect with Exegesis of Self and Community. Also have look again at Jeter and Allen, One Gospel, Many Ears, pp. 149-173. Please return to those documents and talk with your small group members regarding how your interaction with the Gospels and Letters may have affected your perception of yourself in those categories.

In addition, at the closing plenary session, class members will be asked to reflect on the class as a whole, especially on learning strategies employed in the class. What have you found most helpful? What have you found less helpful? What do you recommend keeping as a part of the class? Changing?

Dec 18

A final 5 page final take-home exam is due by the beginning of the class hour in the instructor’s email. The final exam should be no more than five pages

Class discussion: most important themes in the Gospels and Letters for the church today.
Required reading:
- Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching and the Other* (Chalice Press), pp. 95-120.

Note how border crossing could become a resource for making the hermeneutical move from the text to today. How can people who are not professional biblical scholars, hermeneuts, or ministers help the preacher think about possible implications for today?

Hermeneutics is the process of moving from the meanings(s) of a text in its ancient situation to the meaning(s) of a text for the church and world today. Hermeneutics moves in three broad steps.

**Step 1.** Through exegesis as explored in previous exercises, the interpreter comes to as clear an understanding as possible of the possible meaning(s) of a text in the historical, literary, and theological settings in the first century. What are the basic realities (e.g., persons, situations, events, dynamics, feelings) of this text? What does the text invite the community to believe is true of God and the world?

**Step 2.** The interpreter makes a theological analysis of the claims of the text by evaluating the text according to the criteria of appropriateness to the gospel, intelligibility, and moral plausibility. (a) Is the text appropriate to the gospel, that is, are the claims of the text consistent with the notion that God unconditionally loves each and all and that God wills justice for each and all? (b) Are the claims intelligible, that is, can we understand them? Are they consistent with other things that Christians say and do that are appropriate to the gospel? Are they reasonably believable in our setting? (c) Are the claims of the text morally plausible, that is, do they call for the moral treatment of all people and the world of nature? (Ideology criticism often helps the interpreter become aware of ways in which texts contain theologically difficult or repressive elements.) Based on this analysis, the interpreter may reach one of the following conclusions. (i) Agree with the witness of the text. In this case, the text is appropriate to the gospel, intelligible, and morally plausible. (ii) Agree with aspects of the witness of the text but disagree with others. The text may be appropriate to the gospel, but partially unintelligible, at least on a surface level. For instance, the feeding of the 5,000 affirms God’s providence for people in marginal situations, but we do not experience that providence in the literal form of the multiplication of a handful of loaves and fish. (iii) Fundamentally disagree with the text. In this case, the interpreter is called to expose why a text is inappropriate to the gospel, unintelligible and morally implausible and to show how the gospel (the promise of God’s love and God’s call for justice) offers an alternative to the claim of the text. (iv) Ignore the text. The interpreter can simply bypass the text. However, this option is pastorally irresponsible.

**Step 3.** The interpreter makes an explicit connection between the text in its ancient context and the contemporary situation of the congregation. The usual way of making this connection is by means of analogy. The interpreter asks, “What realities in our world (e.g., persons, situations, events, dynamics, feelings) function in ways that are similar to those in the world of the text?” The interpreter then identifies how the text addresses us in a way that is analogous to its address to the people in the first century. For instance, how is the situation of our congregation similar to the situation of the church at Corinth? How does Paul’s text address our congregation in a way that is analogous to the way in which it addressed a first century congregation? Often, the method of analogy allows the interpreter to find positive meaning in a text that contains troublesome elements. For example, while we do not experience multiplication of bread and fish as described in the feeding of the 5,000, today’s interpreter can point to situations of...
limitation in which God provides for today’s people in a way analogous to the provision for the crowd in the wilderness. When a text is fundamentally inappropriate to the gospel, unintelligible and morally implausible, as noted, the interpreter is to expose why a text is inappropriate to the gospel, unintelligible and morally implausible and to show how the gospel (the promise of God’s love and God’s call for justice) offers an alternative to the claim of the text. While a Christian interpreter must sometimes expose the difficulties of an occasional text, an interpreter is never content with simply pointing out the problems. A Christian interpreter is called to show how the gospel renews the world in relationship to the text. For instance, if the text calls for women and men to relate to one another in unjust ways, the Christian interpreter not only to expose this difficulty in the text but to posit more just ways of relating.

If you want to explore hermeneutics further, you might engage in the exercises below.

Exercises in Hermeneutics

Based on your ongoing interaction with the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-35 suggests possible hermeneutical appropriation in a paper of no more than two double-spaced, typed pages. The paper should contain responses (explicitly or implicitly) to the following:

Step One.
Based on your exegesis, summarize what the text asks you to believe and do, especially with respect to the relationship between Jesus and the woman. What are the basic realities (e.g., persons, situations, events, dynamics, feelings) in the text? In particular, what is represented in the woman and in Jesus? How do they function? What are the theological claims of the text? What does the text ask you believe is true of God and the bleeding women of the world?

Step Two.
Is what the text asks you to believe and do appropriate to the gospel?
Is what the text asks you to believe and do intelligible?
   a. Can you understand the witness of the text? Is it clear?
   b. Is the witness of the text consistent with other things that Christians say and do that are appropriate to the gospel?
   c. Is the text reasonable believable in early twenty-first century North America?
Is the text asks you to believe and do morally plausible?
Based on your theological analysis, do you:
   a. Basically agree with the witness of the text?
   b. Partly agree and partly disagree?
   c. Basically disagree?

Step Three
Make an analogy between the world of the text and our world.
   a. How are persons, situations, events, dynamics, feelings) in our world function in ways that are similar to those in the world of the text? Who are people or circumstances that are similar to the woman in our text? To the regenerative power of God represented by Jesus Christ?
   b. How does the text address us in a way that is analogous to the ways in which it addressed the first century community? What is a word from the text to the community today? How do the bleeding women of our world encounter the restorative power of God through Jesus Christ?
APPENDIX 2

Working with Ideology Criticism.


Read: Allen, Preaching and the Other, 47-74. Note similarities in ideology criticism and deconstruction. Note how people combine factors such as social position, economic standing, and interpretive strategies to create circles of privilege. How does deconstruction help expose and relative such inclinations?

Ideology criticism has much in common with the hermeneutic of suspicion and deconstruction. Many students are uncomfortable with the term “ideology.” To some Christians, it sounds out of place in theological discourse. It sounds secular, political, and manipulative. Consequently, it is important for us to realize that this term puts into stark language a simple fact that is true of all Christians: we all interpret the Bible from the standpoint of a particular social location, often in ways that support that location. This fact is also true of biblical texts themselves. Texts authorize social locations, often at the expense of the social location of others. Power is a critical matter here; we often interpret the Bible in ways that support our power (and that sometimes diminishes the power of others). We all have values, biases, social customs, and other things that we simply assume. In the broad sense, these are ideologies. Ideology is sometimes communicated overtly. Sometimes it is communicated more directly, as, for example, when some people are simply omitted from texts or interpretive acts. Often we seek to interpret the Bible in such a way as to support our ideologies that support our social locations. For instance, males often interpret the Bible in such a way as to support male dominance in the world. Middle class and upper class people sometimes interpret the Bible so as to support the continuation of their economic security in the middle and upper classes. Republicans or Democrats interpret the Bible so as to find continuity between the Bible and the positions advocated by their political parties. Interpreters often make these moves unconsciously. Often we interpret in isolation, and do not bring our interpretations into conversation with others who are quite different. We seldom entertain challenges to our interpretations. We assume that our readings of the Bible are correctly normative. We do not consider other modes of interpretation, nor do we consider the damage our patterns of interpretation do to others, nor ways that our patterns of interpretation might contribute to enhancing the lives of others. Ideology criticism simply asks us to become aware of the ideologies that operate in our patterns of interpretation and to reflect on the degree to which these ideologies and their social results are consistent or inconsistent with the gospel. Clark Williamson has a simple question that helps ideology criticism get rolling. “Who benefits from the viewpoints articulated in this text? What is the payoff?” The ideology critic asks, “Whose social situation or power is maintained by this text? Whose social situation or power is diminished? Whose power and social location is maintained by the particular interpretation of this text? Is someone’s power or social location the text?” Ultimately, the ideology critic moves beyond these descriptive questions to theologically normative ones of both the text and its interpreters. Is the ideology of the text appropriate to the gospel, that is, does it authorize a world in which God’s unconditional love is graciously and freely available to each and all, and a world in which justice is possible for each and all (including both people and elements of...
nature)? Does the interpretation of the text one that offers God’s unconditional love graciously and freely for all, and does it call for justice for each and all? If not, the church may need to criticize the text and/or its interpretation (in whole or in part) and to envision a world in which God’s conditional love and unrelenting call for justice can be actualized.

If you want to explore ideology criticism further, you might undertake the following exercises.

1. Read the story of the healing of woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-35 with the help of a good commentary.

2. How would you describe the ideology that kept the woman in repression as the story opens? Who benefits? What is the payoff?

3. How would you describe the ideology that is represented in the figure of Jesus? Who benefits? What is the payoff?

4. Thinking beyond the confines of this passage or its immediate literary unit, how would you describe the ideology of the gospel of Mark in relationship to Judaism? How does this story play into that ideology? How does the church benefit from this ideology? How is this ideology a dis-benefit for Judaism?

5. Evaluate the various ideological points of view in the world of the story as represented by the woman at the beginning of the story, Jesus, the woman as the story ends, the Markan church in relationship with Judaism from the perspective of the gospel. Does the text authorize viewpoints in which God’s unconditional love is graciously and freely available to all, and a world of justice for each and all?
APPENDIX 3

Working with Your Preunderstanding of a Biblical Text


By “preunderstanding” we mean the associations that you bring to a text before you begin a formal exegesis. Some of these associations may be conscious, even well developed interpretations. Some preassociations may be more in the order of impressions. Some may be memories of earlier encounters you have had with the text—e.g., memories from Bible school when you were a child, sermons that you have heard, articles you have read, stories or jokes that your have heard, from pieces of art that you have encountered. Some of your preunderstanding may be at the level of feeling that you have not fully articulated but that comes upon you when you encounter the text. Some of your associations with a text may not actually have arisen in direct connection with the text; they may have arisen elsewhere but transferred to the text (e.g., movies, books, news articles). These preunderstandings often color your interaction with a text in the process of exegesis. Instead of hearing the text in its Otherness as text, you hear your preunderstandings of the text. Without intending to do so, you let your preunderstanding guide your exegesis. Consequently, you want to name as many of your preassociations with the text as possible. The process of identifying your preunderstandings has two particular benefits. First, by bringing these preunderstandings to consciousness, you are able to reflect critically on them and on their role in influencing your interpretation of a text. You can often identify points at which your preunderstanding is impinging on your present interpretation. You can then ask, “Is my preunderstanding an appropriate way to relate with this text, or do I need to change my angle of interpretation to cohere better with my discoveries in exegesis?” Elements of your preunderstanding can become conversation partners in your process of exegesis. Second, when you are preaching or teaching (or otherwise using the text in ministry), you can often make use of the moves that you have made from your preunderstanding (whether it was naïve or well developed) to your present understanding. Of course, we can never achieve a pure, unbiased, completely objective awareness of a text. However, we can bring to the surface as many elements of preunderstanding as possible in order to deal critically with them.

The purpose of this exercise is to give students practice in naming as many of their preunderstandings of a biblical text as they can.

Each week this semester, you will be working with the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:24b-35.

Read the text in the New Revised Standard Version (as in the HarperCollins Study Bible). Then, give yourself plenty of time to let these questions simmer on mind and heart. Try not to rush this process. Be alert for insights and memories that may come to you at times other than formal study. For instance, things may come to you when you are driving, when you are in conversation with a friend, when you are preparing supper, in class, even when you are sleeping (dreams) or especially in that half-wakefulness just prior to sleep or in the process of awakening.

You do not need to force this process. If nothing comes, nothing comes.
1. Let your mind and heart associate freely with the text. What comes to you? Do not try to censor these associations. Simply let them come. Job down your initial associations. What do these associations tell you about your relationship with the text?

2. What emotions does the text stir? Do these feelings predispose you to the text in some way?

3. What images come to the screen of your mind in connection with the text? How do these images preorient you toward the text?

4. Can you recall memories of earlier encounters with the text in Bible school? In a sermon? In liturgy? In church camp? In some other setting?

5. What questions does this text spark for you? Be honest. For example, if you have doubts name them. Does the text describe things that do not happen in the world as you experience it? If this surface encounter with the text raises a moral issue for you, articulate it. For instance, does the text picture God or Jesus or their representatives acting in ways that trouble you? Does the text...

6. Suppose a member of the congregation looks into your eyes and asks, “Pastor, what do you think about this text right now?” What would you say? Are you willing to risk the possibility that the conversation could cause you to change?

7. Do you have an intuition about where your exegesis might go? Eventually, you need to reflect critically on such hunches, but you can begin by getting them on the screen.

8. Do you care about the text and its subject (at least as you understand it now)? If your exegetical conversation leads you to the point that you must risk something, do you care enough about the subject to do so and to live with the possible reactions within yourself and from others?

9. Which of your preunderstandings seem most loaded, most charged, and most capable of influencing your exegesis?

10. What values and loyalties does the text reinforce? Challenge?
APPENDIX 4

A Little Introduction to Using Greek for Those with Minimal Knowledge of Greek

NB: many computer programs designed for Bible study will help you get the kind of information described below. The Seminary has Bible Works available through the Seminary network. The Library staff will be pleased to orient you to the use of this program. You can also purchase it for use on your own computer. With just a few clicks of the mouse, you can travel from English to Greek, precise identification of grammatical forms, some background information (a Bible dictionary function), occurrences of the same word and similar words in other documents (a concordance function), et. However, despite the convenience and romance of working with a computer, it may not always give you all the information that you want.

The interpretation of texts in the New Testament is often illuminated by direct reference to the Greek language and to secondary studies (such as Bible dictionaries, concordances, and commentaries) that makes use of Greek. With a minimal knowledge of Greek, you can make exciting discoveries about the meaning of particular Greek words and expressions, and you can make deeper, more illuminating use of many of the interpretive helps. Furthermore, some commentaries and other scholarly works refer to the language of the New Testament only in its Greek form. For instance, many volumes in the Hermeneia commentary series makes practically no use of English translation or transliteration and rely almost altogether on Greek. The Word Biblical Commentaries provide translation and some transliteration. The articles in the Journal of Biblical Literature and in New Testament Studies make extensive use of Greek. The preacher's use of these resources is greatly enhanced by the capacity to make one's way through aspects of Greek.

This appendix outlines some ways whereby persons who do not read Greek might learn enough about the language to be able to use the secondary resources, and to make some reference to the language of the text of the New Testament in Greek.

In order to use Greek, you must first know the alphabet. Any introduction to the Greek language will introduce the alphabet in its opening pages. Ward Powers, Learn to Read the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 15-23, gives a brief, clear description of the origins of the language (pp. 15-16), and the alphabet (pp. 17-18). (See the attached supplement to this appendix: 1. The Greek Alphabet, Its Pronunciation, and Transliteration).

It can be helpful to be able to pronounce Greek words. Powers gives a lucid pronunciation guide on pp. 17-18. Pronunciation can make it possible for you to speak a Greek word or phrase in preaching or teaching.

In order to refer to the Greek language in your writing for classes in biblical interpretation and in your other work in the Seminary (e.g. in classes in church history and systematic theology), you can either write in Greek directly or you can transliterate. Transliteration is using English equivalents for Greek letters. Powers provides a guide that shows how to write Greek on p. 21. He has transliteration equivalents on pp. 17, 21-22. (see the supplement, 2. How to Write Greek Letters).
When you are working with a text or a theme from the New Testament, you need access to that text in Greek. You can get access to the text in one of two ways. (1) You can refer directly to one of the standard texts of the New Testament. Scholars use two standard texts of the New Testament: Kurt Aland, et. al., *The Greek New Testament*. Third Edition (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1975); Eberhard Nestle, et. al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Twenty-Sixth Edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979). I suspect that *The Greek New Testament* is more widely used in the U.S. than *Novum Testamentum Graece*, but both are respected.5

(2) At the beginning of your work with Greek, you will probably find it easier to use an interlinear Greek-English New Testament than one of the two scholarly editions mentioned just above. The interlinear gives the Greek text in the order in which the Greek appears in the Greek New Testament, and it prints the English translation of each word in small print immediately below. The English words often appear out of English order because of differences between Greek and English word order, grammar, idiomatic expressions, etc. The following interlinear versions are printed in both Greek and English that is easy to read: Alfred Marshall, *The R.S.V. Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968). (see the Supplement, 3. Selection from the R.S.V. Interlinear). *The NRSV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek And English With Interlinear Translation by Alfred Marshall* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990) puts the NRSV and the NIV on columns on the side of the page with the RSV interlinear in the middle).

The most basic (and often the most important) thing you can do with the Greek text before you is to identify the words or phrases that seem key to the interpretation of the passage. Then, you can go to the concordances, the lexicons, the Bible dictionaries, and other scholarly helps, for background, meanings, and disputed points of interpretation in connection with these words. The commentaries will often direct you to important entries in the Bible dictionaries and other helps.

However, you will sometimes need to search for articles in the Bible dictionaries on your own. In order to do this, you need to get to the original form of the Greek word (the form that will appear as the title word for the entry in the lexicons, Bible dictionaries, and other interpretive helps). The easiest way to find the original form is often to use a concordance that correlates English and Greek in especially

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5Both of these volumes contain both the text of the New Testament in Greek (which usually takes up most of the page) and "critical apparatus" for establishing the wording of the text (found at the bottom of the page). The critical apparatus is part of the technical discipline in the study of the New Testament called textual criticism. Text criticism works with the thousands of ancient New Testament manuscripts (some of which contain different wordings, called variant readings) in order to establish the most likely wording of the text of the New Testament. Some of the more important variant readings are listed in your Harper Collins Study Bible. They are marked in the text with a tiny superscript letter (e.g. superscript a, b, c). The superscript directs you to a footnote in tiny print, usually in the lower right corner of the biblical text but above the interpretive remarks at the bottom of the page. Usually the presence of a text critical problem is indicated by words such as "Other ancient authorities." These "other ancient authorities" are different ancient manuscripts of the New Testament that contain words different from those in the texts of *The Greek New Testament* or *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Some of these variant readings will be important to your work in exegesis. For an introduction to textual criticism see Pregont, pp., 7-12. For a fuller discussion of such matters, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*. Second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).
clear fashions. The most up to date such work is Richard E. Whitaker and John R. Kohlenberger III, *The Analytical Concordance to the New Revised Standard Version of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000); Cf. Clinton Morrison, *An Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979). (see the supplement, 4. Selection from Clinton Morrison). You start with the text of the RSV, then look up the appropriate entries in Morrison. Morrison gives you the original form and a transliteration. The most popular concordance has been James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (McDonald Publishing Co., n.d.) (see the Supplement, 5. Selection from James Strong). You look up the key words (in the King James Version of the Bible) in Strong. At the end of each number, strong gives you a number. The number is keyed to a dictionary of Hebrew and Greek terms at the end of the concordance. When you turn to the dictionary, you get the original form and a rough transliteration. Robert Young, *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964ff.) is also keyed to the King James Version. (see the Supplement, 6. Selection from Robert Young). You look up your word in the text of the KJV. Then, you turn to the appropriate entry in Young. Young gives you the English, the Greek (in the Original Form) and a transliteration.


Another useful help can be the indices in indices in volume 10 of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* and in the "little Kittel." (Basic bibliographical information for these works is in the next paragraph). Each volume gives you an index of key English words (and key Greek words) and where to find them in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament in its full or abridged forms. If your text contains the word "grace," you can look in the index of either of these volumes. The index will refer you to places in these works where you can get the original form as well as pertinent information.

When you have the original form, you can then go to the more detailed Bible dictionaries that are accessible mainly through Greek. Two are especially likely to be helpful. The more recent (and less fulsome) is Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, editors, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, translated by Virgil Howard and James Thompson (Grand Rapids: Wm. E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990ff.). (see the supplement, 10. Selection from Balz and Horst).

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6The concordances often make it clear that different English words have been used to translate the same Greek word (or that the same English word has been used to translate different Greek words). These nuances are sometimes very important for interpretation.

7However, be careful not to rely too much on Strong’s definition of the word in his lexicon at the back of the concordance. Strong’s explanations tend to be too brief to be of much help. Sometimes they are greatly oversimplified, and often they are outdated.
This work is abbreviated EDNT. An older, much more extensive work is Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, editors, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, translated by Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964ff.).\(^8\) (see the Supplement, 11. Selection from Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 4). This work is abbreviated TDNT. TDNT provides two helps that may speed your process along. Volume 10, by Ronald Pitkin, is an Index Volume. It provides the following indices: (a) one correlates key English words with articles in TDNT; (b) another correlates key Greek words with articles in TDNT; (c) a third indicates and locates the major Bible passages discussed in TDNT. The "little Kittel" (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*) provides indices of transliterated key Greek words, and of key English words. (see the supplement, 11. Selection from Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 10).

When you know the original form, you can also make use of the standard Greek concordance, W.F. Moulton and A.S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963). (see the supplement, 13. Selection from Moulton and Geden). The concordances mentioned above (Morrison, Strong, Young) all help you distinguish between different Greek words translated by the same English word (and different English words translating the same Greek word). But Moulton and Geden is often a more direct and illuminating resource.

A very convenient resource helps those interested in the nuances of meaning conveyed by verb tense, noun and adjectival case, idioms, and other technical matters. Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), break down most of the words in the New Testament into their pertinent grammatical identifications and original forms. (see the supplement 14. Selection from Zerwick and Grosvenor). You simply turn in the Grammatical Analysis to your passage. If you want to know more about the interpretive significance of the identifications, you can consult the introductions to Greek or the higher level grammars.

A convenient combination of Greek text and English text for the Septuagint is given in Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986). This work is not interlinear, but with the use of the methods discussed above, a student with a little energy can get into the Greek text of the Septuagint. For the industrious student, W.P. Hatch and H.A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987) is invaluable. (see the supplement, 12. Selection from Hatch and Redpath). Hatch and Redpath is especially useful to Hebrew readers as it shows how Hebrew words are translated into Greek in the Septuagint. When researching the background of NT usage, these connections often illumine usages in the Gospels and Letters.

Here is a quick example. You are preparing a sermon on John 1:1-18 (the prologue to the Fourth Gospel). You get out your NRSV and read the passage. In connection with John 1:1, you recognize that "Word" is a key notion. You want to explore its meanings in the original language.

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\(^8\)When using TDNT, especially the older volumes (originally written in Nazi Germany), you need to be cautious of caricature, legalism, works-righteousness, and even anti-Semitism in some of the articles. When using the lexicons and Bible dictionaries, you also need to be careful not to assume that by finding an etymology you have automatically found the meaning of the word in your passage in the New Testament. You need to identify how the word is used in your passage.
You do the following (or some combination thereof). You go to the concordance and look up "word" at John 1:1. Morrison, p. 645 tells you that "word" translates λογος (transliteration: logos) (supplement 4). Strong, p. 1184, refers you to No. 3056 in the lexicon at the back of the concordance (supplement 5). There, you find that "word" translates λογος (Young, p. 1070, indicates that "word" translates λογος (supplement 6).

With the original form in hand, you use your knowledge of the Greek alphabet to look up λογος in EDNT (vol. 2, pp. 356-359) (supplement 10) and TDNT (vol. 4, pp. 69-192, esp. pp. 127-136) (supplement 11). To broaden your perspective, you also look up "word" in George A. Buttrick, et. al., editors, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (abbreviated IDB) ed. George A. Buttrick, et. al. (Abingdon: Nashville Press, 1964), vol. 4, pp. 868-873. Since the article in EDNT is brief, and the articles in TDNT and IDB are older, you turn to a new, fuller article in David Noel Freedman, et. al., editors, The Anchor Bible Dictionary (abbreviated ADB) (New York: Doubleday, 1992). However, you find no entry under "word" in vol. 6 of ABD. So, you exercise your imagination and ask, "Where might I look in this vast work (6 volumes of about 1,100 pages each) for an article on 'word' or logos?" On a hunch, you look up "logos" (in transliteration) and, behold, in volume 4, pp. 348-356, you find such an article with pp. 352-355 specifically dedicated to logos in the Johannine literature.

An alternative route into the Bible dictionaries and other interpretive helps on John 1:1-8 is to begin with the interlinear. You look up John 1:1-18 in the interlinear. You find the English expression "Word." You notice that the English "word" is immediately below the Greek λογος. You go to Alsop and discover that λογος is the original form (supplement 7). Alsop directs you to Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 480, the entry under λογος, subsection 3 (supplement 8). From this identification, you can then proceed to the Bible dictionaries as indicated above.

To use Word to type Greek from your keyboard on XP-1, use the following steps:

1. On the Windows Start menu, go to Settings, then click Control Panel.
2. In the Keyboard window, click Language,
3. In Language, click Add.
4. Open the drop panel in the Language box, click Greek, then click OK.
5. Select the box that says Enable Indicator on Taskbar
6. Exit the Language box.
7. You should have a little En (for English) on the bottom of your window. When you want to type Greek, click the En. A little box will open that gives you a choice of English or Greek. Click the Gr. At that point, your keyboard will type Greek letters. A Gr will replace the En at the bottom of your window.
8. To return to English, simply click the Gr. The little box will open, giving you the choice of Greek or English. Click En.

9Note that when you turn to logos in TDNT (vol. 4, p. 292), the citation refers you to the article on lege--a verb from which logos is derived. In order to make pertinent discoveries about logos, you must read through the article.

10The use of the Bible dictionaries (and other interpretive helps) sometimes calls for a detective-like mentality. To take another example, in the ABD, you find material on "gentiles" not under "gentiles" but under "nations."
Appendix 5

Working with Translations

Translation = Interpretation. Any student of a foreign language quickly learns that even the simplest phrase cannot be translated, word for word, from one language into another. Pres. Kennedy discovered this, when he declared at proudly to the German people: “I am a Berliner!” Unfortunately, what he actually said was “I am a jelly doughnut.” [The proper German phrase would have been “I am Berliner.”] Every translator, therefore, must try to determine what the author intended to say before translating the author’s actual words. As a result, different translators may render the same words in different ways. This is one reason why there are so many translations of the Gospels and Letters in English. Another reason is that each translator has a particular purpose in mind for their translation: e.g., a study Bible, a devotional text, a text easily understood even by children. In addition, all translators tend to render their translation in conformity with their particular theological perspective, whether consciously or not. The implications for the student of the Bible are evident. Every time you pick up an English Bible you will want to ask: who translated it? for whom did they translate it? for what purpose? did they translate from the Greek text? what “principles of translation” did they employ? In addition, students should adopt the habit of always consulting at least three different translations when studying a text. This will help alert you to some of the different ways the text can be translated, and, in turn, interpreted. If one text has a significantly different translation from the other two you will know that caution should be exercised in employing that particular translation. Over time, you will find three or four translations that are consistently helpful to you.

The purpose of this exercise is to give students practice in working with translations. Choose one translation of the Gospels and Letters from each column below.11 You may select a fourth translation of your own choosing. First, turn to the introduction to the translation and identify who the translators are, for whom they are translating, and what principles of translation they are employing. Then turn to Phil 2:1-11. Determine whether the editors indicate any other possible translations of the text (this will be indicated by a small, italic letter). Then, as you compare the different translations, observe the following: variations in punctuation, vocabulary, verb tense, headings, divisions in the text, lay-out, etc. Write a 2 page summary of your observations [type-written, double spaced]. In your comments include reflection on how the variations in translation might impact your interpretation of the passage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
<td>New English Bible</td>
<td>Good News Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
<td>New Living Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New American Bible</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
<td>Bible in Basic English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Jerusalem Bible</td>
<td>Extreme Faith Holy Bible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 These are all fairly recent translations. There are some fine older translations. They have been excluded only because they are not based on our most current reconstruction of the Greek text.
Every student who enrolls at Christian Theological Seminary will be required to do considerable theological research and reflection, much of which will be submitted in written form. There is no guarantee that a term paper submitted in proper form will save a poor paper; neither is there any guarantee that poor form will ruin a good paper. There does, however, seem to be some correlation between excellence of form and excellence of presentation. In order to submit papers in proper form, the following guidelines are suggested:

**SPACING**
Double-space the text of the paper. Direct quotations of two or more sentences or more than three lines in length should be single-spaced and blocked in to a margin of four spaces on the left side of the text.

**MARGINS**
The margin on the left side of the page should be 1½”. Margins on the other three sides should be 1”. The first page of the paper and subsequent main divisions should have a 2” margin at the top.

**INDENTATIONS**
Paragraphs should be indented six spaces for the text. Paragraphs within a direct quote should be indented four spaces from the body of the quotation.

**CORRECTIONS**
Do not turn in a photocopy as the original. Typewritten (rather than computer generated) papers should be corrected using correcting paper or liquid paper. Do not make corrections in pencil. Do not strike over mistakes.

**PROOFREADING**
It may take a little extra time to proofread the paper, but even the best typists make mistakes. Proofread one time for content only; proofread again for typographical errors.

**QUOTATIONS**
All term papers are to be your original work. It is not original if you type what others have written and use connecting phrases to tie it all together. Good research will naturally involve consulting others to discover what has been written and to assist you in the development of your own ideas on the subject. If the exact words of someone else are essential to the thrust of your paper, this constitutes a direct quotation and must be noted by the use of quotation marks to avoid plagiarism. When the ideas of another person are incorporated into your paper and you have either paraphrased or summarized that person’s material, it is known as an indirect quotation and must be footnoted to avoid plagiarism. (See the CTS “Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism.”)

**NOTES**
There are two kinds of notes — content and reference. Content notes provide incidental comments upon, amplify, or explain the text but are disruptive to the flow of the paper. These notes should be placed at the bottom of the page. Reference notes cite the authority for statements in the text and acknowledge the source of the information. Information used directly or indirectly must be acknowledged.

Term papers submitted as part of the requirements for a class may use the following form for acknowledging borrowed material within the text of the paper — set in parentheses the author’s last name, the date of the material used, and the page number. Footnotes may still be used with
this method of citation to provide information not relevant to the body of the paper but may be helpful as background.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Sources used in the preparation of the paper should be listed at the conclusion of the paper in a bibliography. Include materials quoted as well as those consulted (though not quoted) if they were important in the development of the paper. All materials should be arranged alphabetically by the last name of the authors. If more than one work is used by the same author, arrange them chronologically by date of publication.

**TITLE PAGE**

Each term paper should have a title page providing the following: title of paper, name of student, professor and course title for which the paper is being submitted, date, name of the Seminary, and student mailbox number.

**CONTENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.**

If the paper contains chapters, charts, illustrations, or other divisions or explanatory material, a preliminary page should be provided listing them and the page number for the explanatory material or the beginning of the chapters. For spacing and format consult John L. Sayre, A Manual of Forms for Term Papers and Theses, 4th ed. rev. (Enid, Oklahoma: Seminary Press, 1979). For basic reference to form, footnotes and bibliography, great use can be made of Kate L. Turabian’s A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, 6th edition, 1996.

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

Except when quoting from other writings, writers of papers are urged to use inclusive language. For example, generic language phrased in sex-specific terms and the use of gender designations for inanimate objects should be avoided (e.g. “brother” when the meaning is human being or person; “her” as the pronoun for an inanimate object). Language for “God” should be selected with great care so that the metaphors and grammatical forms are faithful to the biblical revelation of God whose being transcends titles, names and metaphors. The following may be helpful guides: Keith Watkins, Faithful and Fair, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, ©1981) and “Inclusive Language Guidelines for Use and Study in the United Church of Christ,” June 1980, United Church of Christ Leadership Resources, P.O. Box 179, St. Louis, MO, 63166.

Adopted by CTS Faculty, 2012
“Plagiarism is the failure to distinguish the student’s own words and ideas from those of a source the student has consulted. Ideas derived from another, whether presented as exact words, a paraphrase, summary or quoted phrase, must always be appropriately referenced to the source, whether the source is printed, electronic, or spoken. Students must also use proper attribution with artistic media (images, music, website elements, etc.) and attend to all copyright restrictions on the use of such media. Whenever exact words are used, quotations marks or an indented block indicator of a quotation must be used, together with the proper citation in a style required by the professor.” (Robert A. Harris, *The Plagiarism handbook* [Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing, 2011], p. 132).

The instructor is required to report every instance of plagiarism to the Dean.