BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION – SYLLABUS

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DATES & TIMES: (All Fridays) Jan. 15, 29, and Feb. 12, 2027; 9:30am to 3:30 pm.

LOCATION: In person: Northern Ohio District CoB, District Office
1107 East Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805, or Zoom

PURPOSE: This course will emphasize the historical concepts of how the Brethren viewed and interpreted Scripture. This course will also look at the many ways that the Bible is viewed and interpreted in today's culture, and we will also study how those concepts have evolved and influenced the Brethren understanding of Scripture today.

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this unit, the student will:
1. Be familiar with some of the basic tools or resources needed for in-depth biblical study.
2. Be able to identify and discuss various critical or exegetical procedures used to interpret a biblical text.
3. Be able to demonstrate skills in exegeting a particular biblical passage and in using that exegesis as the basis for a sermon or teaching outline.
4. Be able to describe the contributions of at least three contemporary scholars who enriched our understanding of the biblical materials.
5. Be able to compare the strengths and weaknesses of a half dozen or more present-day translations and paraphrases of the Bible.
6. Be able to articulate the role of the faith community in the process of biblical interpretation as understood in the Anabaptist tradition.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
1. **The Bible**
2. **How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: Fourth Edition**, by Gordon D. Fee, and Douglas Stuart, 2014, Zondervan, ISBN: 978-0310517825 [Available on Amazon for approx. $9.99].
3. **What Is the Bible Today and How Do We Understand It?** by Dennis R. Edwards, 2019, Herald Press, ISBN: 978-1513805641 [Available on Amazon for approx. $6.97].

READING ASSIGNMENTS
1. Read: **How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: Fourth Edition**, by Fee and Stuart. Specifics of reading that is required for each class is specified below.
2. **What Is the Bible Today and How Do We Understand It?** by Dennis Edwards. Specifics of required reading is specified below.
3. N.T. Wright Case Study handouts (this will be sent out electronically)

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION – SYLLABUS *(continued)*

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
- **attendance at all classes**
- **engaged participation in all class activities**
- **complete reading assignments as scheduled**
- **complete the three writing assignments to be submitted as scheduled**

1. OUR FIRST CLASS: (January 15, 2027)
In our first class, we will discuss origins of the Bible, language and translations, Views of Scripture, and available tools to help for Biblical Interpretation.

b. reading assignment #1 - read ***How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, chapters 1-4,** and read ***What Is the Bible*, Introduction & chapters 1-2** prior to class.

c. writing assignment #1– Due via email attachment, **January 22, 2027**.
Personal View of Scripture, write a 2 page essay (double-spaced, Arial font, size 12) describing your personal view of Scripture and how you use it in your preaching/teaching.

2. OUR SECOND CLASS - (January 29, 2027)
In our second class, we will discuss exegesis and hermeneutics, genres of Scripture, and lenses of interpretation.

b. reading assignment #2 - read ***How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, chapters 5-9,** and read ***What Is the Bible*, chapters 3-6** prior to class.

c. writing assignment #2– Due via email attachment, **February 5, 2027**.
Sermon Outline, write a 2 page sermon outline (double-spaced, Arial font, size 12) demonstrating how you would present a sermon on one of the following Scripture passages (Matthew 21:33-44 [Vineyard Owner]; Acts 10:9-16 [Peter's Vision]; Romans 13:1-8 [Governmental Authority]). In this outline, you must demonstrate your exegesis (original meaning/context) and your hermeneutics (here and now) as described by Fee and Stuart (pp. 27-35).

3. OUR THIRD CLASS – (February 12, 2027)
In our third class, we will discuss how Scripture and experience is used to shape interpretation, how the Bible has been interpreted in different contexts and periods, and how the authority of Scripture can speak to today's culture.

b. reading assignment #3 - read ***How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, chapters 10-13**, and example handouts from N.T. Wright prior to class.

c. writing assignment #3– Due via email attachment, **February 26, 2027**.
Case Study on a contemporary issue in the church today. Write a minimum of a 5 page essay (double-spaced, Arial font, size 12, max of 8 pgs.) that discusses a contemporary issue that the church continues to struggle with how to answer today (ie, homosexuality, ordination of women, abortion, military service, etc. **DO NOT** use the Bible as your topic). You will write in the pattern of N. T. Wright's case studies on monogamy and Sabbath (To Be Provided). You will identify the issue that you would like to discuss, describe how the issue is addressed in the Old Testament and in the New Testament (both positively or negatively), and then use Scripture to support the position that you believe in based upon your interpretation of Scripture. **NOTE:** All resources must be listed, and this will take more than a Bible and your class books.

MISSED CLASS POLICY:
In case a participant needs to miss a class (due to illness or scheduling), to receive credit for the class the participant will need to watch the class recording (all classes are recorded via Zoom). Additionally, the participant will have to choose three (3) points from the class discussion to react to and share their reaction in a paper.
If a participant has to miss more than one class (2) they will not receive credit for the course and will be required to retake the course.

This course complies with the Brethren Academy and BBI Policy on Citation Style and Plagiarism as described below:
"Integrity is central to life in community. In the Christian academic community, integrity means giving proper credit to people for the ideas and information we receive from them. It also means that the work we submit and represent as our own is really work we ourselves have done.

The Church of the Brethren 2008 Annual Conference Ethics in Ministry Paper (2008) Part III Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders states: 'I will give credit for all sources quoted or extensively paraphrased in sermons and prepared papers. I will honor all copyrights' (p. 8, Letter M).

"Plagiarism is using the work of other people without giving them credit, whether in written assignments, oral reports and sermons. The consequences for plagiarism will vary according to the extent of the offense. These may range from rewriting the assignment, non-crediting the assignment, or non-crediting the course."