

## MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

### Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

BI-5525 Theological Foundations for Biblical Interpretation, 3 credit hours

### Course Description

An exploration of theological and doctrinal concepts and their bearing on Christian interpretations of Scripture. Emphasis placed on the analysis of the relationship between biblical interpretation and various theological perspectives. Specific continuity and discontinuity positions, including dispensationalism, will be examined. The effect of one's own theological perspectives on biblical interpretation is also introduced.

*There are no prerequisites required for this course.*

### Course Goals

In this course the learners will:

- Understand the interrelationship between biblical interpretation and theological systems
- Understand the methods involved in constructing theological systems and their impact on interpreting Scripture
- Appreciate the impact of theological perspectives on interpreting Scripture
- Realize the influence that personal theological positions have on biblical interpretation

### Course Objectives

By the completion of this course the learners should be able to:

1. Discuss the relationship between specified doctrines and the interpretation of Scripture
2. Assess the manner in which Scripture is used in the development and defense of a particular theological or doctrinal position
3. Describe the concept of authority and the manner in which it is utilized in the development of theology
4. Develop a conceptual framework within which one's own use of Scripture as authoritative in the construction of theology may be evaluated

### Course Textbook(s) and/or Supplemental Information

#### Books:

**Ward**, Timothy. *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009)

#### Articles:

**Bock**, Darrell L. "Why I Am a Dispensationalist with a Small 'd'," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41 (1998): 383-398.

#### Essays:

**Chamblin**, Knox. "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*. Edited by John S. Feinberg (Wheaton: Crossway, 1988): 181-202.

**Chan**, Simon. *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998): 56-76.

**Moo**, Douglas J. "The Law of Moses or the Law of Christ," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*. Edited by John S. Feinberg (Wheaton: Crossway, 1988): 203-220. [Available at <http://www.djmoo.com/articles/lawofmoses.pdf>]

**Nebeker**, Gary. "Who Packed Your Bags?: Factors that Influence Our Preunderstandings"

[<http://bible.org/article/who-packed-your-bags-factors-influence-our-preunderstandings>]

**Spencer**, James. "Structural Evil and God's Freedom in Scripture and Theology: A Preliminary Sketch" Unpublished, 2012.

**Toussaint**, Stanley D. "Israel and the Church of a Traditional Dispensationalist," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views*. Edited by Herbert W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999): 227-262.

**Vangermeren**, Willem. "Prophets, the Freedom of God, and Hermeneutics," in *Westminster Theological Journal* 52.1 (1990): 79-99.

**Woudstra**, Martin H. "Israel and the Church: A Case for Continuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*. Edited by John S. Feinberg (Wheaton: Crossway, 1988): 221-228.

## Assignments

All assignments are due according to the schedule listed on the Course Schedule.

**DISCUSSION BOARDS:** Participation is expected. You must maintain a significant presence in the discussion board. Please refer to the discussion board rubric included in the **Course Resources** section of this course for more information on how your participation in the discussion board will be assessed.

**READING ANALYSIS:** Use and complete the "Reading Analysis Worksheet" found in **Course Resources** as assigned each week. These will be submitted electronically to your instructor for review and grading. The Reading Analysis assignments are designed to help you evaluate works with which you will be interacting by requiring you to develop a context in which the work may be understood. The Reading Analysis will be used to help you frame your thinking about particular works, as well as a way of organizing the content of the reading for use in later courses and study.

The Reading Analysis requires the completion of the chart provided. It does not call for exhaustive analysis, but should include enough information to thoroughly cover the area of discussion. The final critique section should be approximately two paragraphs in length. The other sections of the work may range from 1-2 sentences to 1 paragraph in length.

**WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS:** Complete the weekly assignments as described in the Course Schedule.

### **Assignment 1: Biblical Interpretation**

In two (2) single-spaced pages or less explain the biblical interpretation in light of your reading on sin, structural evil, and theological anthropology.

### **Assignment 2: "Word of God" Distinction**

In two (2) single-spaced pages or less explain the distinction between the "Word of God" as it is used in relation to the Bible and to Jesus. Include a description of the implications of such a distinction to Biblical interpretation.

**Assignment 3a: “Characteristics of Scripture” Table**

Create a table containing the characteristics of Scripture included in this week’s reading. The table should contain the following columns (Note also the sample table below):

- Summary of Scriptural Characteristic
- Relationship to Other Characteristics
- Implication for Biblical Interpretation

	Summary of Inspiration	Relation to Other Characteristics of Scripture	Implications for Biblical Interpretation
Inspiration			

*Sample Table 1*

**Assignment 3b: Dispensationalism Treatment**

Produce a three (3) page, single-spaced treatment of Darrel Bock’s article entitled “Why I am a Dispensationalist with a Small ‘d’.” Include the following in the paper:

- Summarize the major thesis and supporting arguments included in Bock’s article
- Evaluate his discussion noting points of strength and weakness
- Provide a discussion reflecting on the balance between conviction and awareness of contingency in one’s understanding

**Assignment 4a: Analysis of Scriptural Authority**

In 2-3, single-spaced pages, analyze the aspects of Scriptural authority used in VanGemenen’s essay. Be sure to include answers to each of Kelsey’s four questions as described in the audio lecture entitled “Kelsey’s Four Questions”.

**Assignment 4b: Interpretive Uses of Genesis 22**

Reflect on the manner in which the three different interpretive uses of Genesis 22 are conditioned by the context in which the passage is employed. Be sure to describe the manner in which the interpretations differ and the purpose of the discourse in which Genesis 22 is used. Use the table provided in the **Lesson 4 Resources** folder to complete the assignment.

**Assignment 5: Essay Evaluation**

In 1-2 single-spaced pages evaluate Nebeker’s essay on preunderstandings including the following sections:

- a. Summary of Nebeker’s central thesis and main points
- b. Evaluation of Nebeker’s article
- c. Discussion of your own views concerning preunderstandings
- d. An identification of two of your own preunderstandings and how they impact your view of Scripture

**Assignment 6: Two Views of the Israel-Church Relationship**

In one (1) page or less summarize the two (2) views of the relationship between Israel and the Church as represented by Toussaint and Woudstra.

**Assignment 7: Two Views of the Law**

In one (1) page or less summarize the two (2) views of the Law as represented by Chamblin and Moo

**Assessments** (how learning is evaluated and measured, including grading scale – see CDS pages 7f)

Your grade for this course will consist of:

Discussion Boards	10%
Weekly Reading Analysis work	20%
Assignment 1: Biblical Interpretation	10%
Assignment 2: “Word of God” Distinction	10%
Assignment 3a: “Characteristics of Scripture” table	5%
Assignment 3b: Dispensationalism treatment	5%
Assignment 4a: Analysis of Scriptural Authority	5%
Assignment 4b: Interpretive Uses of Genesis 22	5%
Assignment 5: Essay Evaluation	10%
Assignment 6: Two Views of the Israel -Church Relationship	10%
Assignment 7: Two Views of the Law	10%
	<b>100%</b>

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Description
A	96 – 100	Exceptional work
A-	94 – 95	Excellent work
B+	92 – 93	Very good work
B	89 – 91	Good work
B-	87 – 88	Above average work
C+	83 – 86	Average work
C	79 – 82	Work needs improvement
C-	75 – 78	Minimally acceptable work
F	< 75	Unacceptable work

## Course Resources

Online students have access to the Moody Library. Though students may wish to check out books via inter-library loan, the online database has a number of articles and reviews available for download. You can access the online database by logging into your account at [my.moody.edu](http://my.moody.edu). If you have not previously accessed the library database you may wish to complete the database tutorial at <http://library.moody.edu>.

In addition to the resources available at the Moody Library, you may wish to visit <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk> or [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). These sites contain content on various topics written by competent biblical scholars. It is also suggested that you download a free version of the NET Bible at [bible.org](http://bible.org).

The final resource that deserves mention here is iTunes University. Apple has developed a platform for colleges and universities to post audio and video content. There are a number of lectures available on iTunes U including various schools such as Dallas Theological Seminary, Seattle Pacific University, Duke, Yale, and Covenant Theological Seminary.

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