

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice.
The information below is provided as a guide for course selection
and is not binding in any form.

MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

TH-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 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

Required textbooks for all Moody Online classes can be found on the [Required Textbooks](#) section of the Moody website.

NOTE: Additional content or links to Internet content may be required and will be provided in the course.

Assignments

Part 1 - Regular Assignments:

FOUR READING ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS (In Weeks 1, 2, 6 & 7): 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 1-2: Biblical Interpretation Journal Entry

Explain in your online journal how the readings this week affected the way you will interpret the Bible from now on? Is this the way you feel ALL people should interpret the Bible? (Please write 2-3 paragraphs, mentioning several of the sources you read or listened to this week.)

Assignment 2-2: “Word of God” Distinction Journal Entry

After completing your readings this week, explain what you feel is the distinction between the "Word of God," as it is used in relation to the Bible, and Jesus. How will this knowledge influence the way you interpret the Bible from now on? (Please write 2-3 paragraphs, incorporating what you have read this week.)

Assignment 3-1: “Characteristics of Scripture” Chart

Fill out the provided chart with characteristics of Scripture included in this week’s reading. The chart contains the following columns to fill in:

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

Assignment 3-2: Dispensationalism Treatment Chart

Fill out the provided chart based on Darrel Bock’s article, “Why I am a Dispensationalist with a Small ‘d’.” writing your responses in 1-2 paragraphs to the following subjects.

- Summarize the major thesis and supporting arguments included in Bock’s article
- Evaluate his discussion noting points of strength and weakness
- Discuss the balance between a *conviction* on a theological position and a *preference* for a theological position

Assignment 4-1: Analysis of Scriptural Authority Paper

In **two (2) double-spaced pages** (in Turabian style), 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 4-2: Interpretive Uses of Genesis 22 Chart

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.

Assignment 5-1: Essay Evaluation Chart

Fill out the attached chart to evaluate Nebeker’s essay on preunderstandings; write 1 or 2 paragraphs

for each topic. Cite page numbers when necessary from Nebeker's essay by writing the page number in parentheses after the sentence, such as: (15) or a page range: (15-17). Fill in the chart about the following topics:

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

Assignment 6-2: Two Views of the Israel-Church Relationship Chart

In a few paragraphs each, summarize the two (2) views of the relationship between Israel and the Church as represented by Toussaint and Woudstra in the provided chart.

Assignment 8-1: Two Views of the Law Chart

In a few paragraphs each, summarize the two (2) views of the Law as represented by Chamblin and Moo in the provided chart.

Part 2 - Discussion Assignments (you will also have to reply to other students' posts):

Week 1: Having completed the Saboteur Assessment, reflect on your assessment results by answering the following questions: How might your "saboteurs" impact your performance in this program and in biblical interpretation more generally?

Week 2: How might a biblical interpreter better recognize and enlist the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit?

Week 3: Assuming human frailty and the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit discussed in Lesson 1, discuss your perception of the human interpreter's ability to understand the word of God commenting on the connection between personal conviction and dialogue within the Christian community? Be sure to avoid the argument "in essentials unity, in non-essentials charity."

Week 4: Describe scriptural authority. How might you utilize the four questions listed by Kelsey (15) as you move forward in the MA in Applied Biblical Studies program? How do they relate to your description of authority?

Week 5: Rank the following criteria related to biblical interpretation and discuss why you have ordered these criteria in this way. Also describe what you might do if the first two criteria in your ranking contradict one another or stand in tension. Discuss the issue in relation to [Genesis 22:12, Psalm 89](#), and the issue of **God's knowledge** described in the lecture entitled, "**The Issue of God's Knowledge: A Discussion of God's Knowing in Genesis 22:12 and Psalm 89.**"

1. Genre of Scripture
2. The meaning of specific words
3. Doctrinal positions
4. Other Biblical witness
5. Purpose of the discourse in which the passage is located
6. Historical backgrounds

7. Comparative literature from other cultures (e.g. ancient Near Eastern literature)
8. Discussions in secondary literature
9. Traditions of the Church

Week 6: How do the ways in which Scripture is used by Toussaint and Woudstra differ? Do Toussaint and Woudstra assume different understanding of Scripture’s authority? If so, how do they differ? Give an example.

Week 7: Do Chamblin and Moo assume different understanding of Scripture’s authority? If so, how do they differ? Give an example. How do Chamblin and Moo differ in the way they make decisions concerning the use of Scripture in the development of their respective arguments?

Assessments

Your grade for this course will consist of:

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|---|-------------|
| Discussion Boards (7) | 25% |
| Four Reading Analysis Worksheets (Weeks 1, 2, 6 & 7) | 20% |
| Assignment 1-2: Biblical Interpretation Journal Entry | 5% |
| Assignment 2-2: “Word of God” Distinction Journal Entry | 5% |
| Assignment 3-1: “Characteristics of Scripture” Chart | 5% |
| Assignment 3-2: Dispensationalism Treatment Chart | 5% |
| Assignment 4-1: Analysis of Scriptural Authority Paper | 5% |
| Assignment 4-2: Interpretive Uses of Genesis 22 Chart | 5% |
| Assignment 5-1: Essay Evaluation Chart | 5% |
| Assignment 6-2: Two Views of the Israel-Church Relationship Chart | 10% |
| Assignment 8-1: Two Views of the Law Chart | 10% |
| Total: | 100% |

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 |