

*Vanguard University of Southern California*  
School for Professional Studies Degree  
Program

“Research Methods for the Study and  
Preaching of Scripture”  
REML #367

Student Guide

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## **MODULE DESCRIPTION**

This module will provide practical instruction in the art and science of the exegesis and interpretation of the Bible, with a view to enabling the student to more effectively communicate the meaning of the text of scripture in preaching and teaching..

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student will:

1. have a foundational understanding of the skills and tools necessary to responsibly exegete the text of scripture.
2. have a basic grasp of the historical and critical methods by which scripture has been read for meaning.
3. have an understanding of authorial intent as the grounding of interpretation.
4. have a preliminary understanding of the resources available to aid in the work of exegesis.
5. be able to communicate the results of his or her exegesis in an appropriate written manner.

## TEXTS AND MATERIALS

### **Required texts:**

Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart. *How To Read the Bible for All It's Worth (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart. *How To Read the Bible Book By Book*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Glynn, John. *Commentary and Reference Survey (9<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003.

The Bible – It is required that the student have a good quality study Bible in a modern translation: Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New American Standard Version (NASV or NASV '95), or the New International Version (NIV).

## STUDENT EVALUATION

Grades will be determined based on the following:

1. Attendance and participation. (10%)
2. Weekly assignments. (60%)
3. Final project. (30%)

The final project will be an eight to ten page exegesis paper, following the outline provided in the assignments for Week Four.

Students will be evaluated by the University's 4.0 grading system as detailed below.

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Grade Point Average (GPA)</b>
93.4 – 100.0	A	Exceptional	4.00
90.0 – 93.3	A-		3.67
86.7 – 89.9	B+		3.33
83.4 – 86.6	B	Above Average	3.00
80.0 – 83.3	B-		2.67
76.7 – 79.9	C+		2.33
73.4 – 76.6	C	Average	2.00
70.0 – 73.3	C-		1.67
66.7 – 69.9	D+		1.33
63.4 – 66.6	D	Below Average	1.00
60.0 – 63.3	D-		0.67
0.00 – 59.9	F	Failure	0.00

## OVERVIEW

Reading the text of scripture for contemporary meaning is the joyous task of the exegete. In the post-modern approaches to ancient texts, they come to mean whatever the reader brings to them, reflecting more the contemporary reader than the ancient author. While there is a certain appeal to this kind of reading, it begs the question of authority – scripture can be made to say whatever one wishes. Clearly that is not the self-understanding evident in the scripture. In what seems almost prescient Paul writes to Timothy, “. . . continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” (2 Timothy 3:16-4:3, NASV)

Clearly, there is a lot at stake in the accurate reading and understanding of the Word of God. The higher one’s view of scripture, the more diligent ought one be to “get it right”. Those who believe that the text is God-breathed have their work cut out for them – they must work as hard as they possibly can, using whatever tools are available to them, and aided by the Holy Spirit to understand first what the text said and meant before they seek to understand what the text means. This approach reflects an understanding of inspiration that includes the word coming to specific people in specific times and, usually, for specific purposes. It meant something to those people to whom it came. To ignore that meaning as a grounding point seems to me to make mockery of inspiration. Therefore, this course will approach the work of exegesis with authorial intent as the control of meaning. In general, “a text can not mean what it never meant.”<sup>1</sup>

One of the most instructive ways of attempting to get at authorial intent is by means of considering reader response. While reader-response criticism has varying shades, the use of it here will be in the attempt to hear the text in as close to the way the original audience(s) heard it – and to understand it, as much as possible, as they would have understood it.<sup>2</sup> To that end, significant time and effort will need to be devoted to the exploration of the world in which the audience(s) of the text lived. Additional effort will be required in an attempt to discover how they heard the words of the text – what did they mean at the time they were penned. That will control what they can mean to other, later, audiences.

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1 Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart. *How To Read the Bible for All It's Worth (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003, 30

2 The most accessible treatment of Reader-Response Criticism as it applies to the exegesis of scripture for purposes of sermon preparation is Jerry Camery-Hoggatt’s *Speaking of God*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995

Being able to present the fruit of one's exegetical labor in a clear and compelling fashion is an important skill. And, of course, the move from exegesis to interpretation is vital to apprehend the text for today. Both of these elements will be considered during the course of this module.

Throughout the module, at the beginning of each class session and at the discretion of the instructor, time may be set aside for the purposes of spiritual formation. This is done as a means of binding the class together in Christ, to provide an opportunity for Biblically informed reflection, and because the truths of scripture are not first apprehended intellectually, but are spiritually discerned. It is also an attempt to model the fact that good exegesis and a spiritually impacting hearing of scripture are not antithetical. but are complementary.

## STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

### WEEK ONE

1. Read Fee and Stuart (*How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*) chapters 1 and 2. Your reading will assist in the first week's discussion. Make notes of things you wish to discuss and of questions that your reading raises for you.
2. After reading each of them over carefully, choose one text from among the following to work on for this module.

Luke 15:1-7 – The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Matthew 4:18-22 – The Call of the Four Fishermen

Luke 6:6-11 – The Man with the Withered Hand

Matthew 8:1-4 – The Cleansing of the Leper

Luke 18:18-27 – The Rich Young Ruler

## WEEK TWO

### 1. Meditative Exegesis (5%)

1. Read the entire book at least once in which your pericope is located.
2. Read your pericope in at least ten different translations.
  - for this exercise, only one paraphrase may be used.
3. Prayerfully put yourself before the text as the Word of God and seek to hear it.
4. As you read, slowly and with attention to meaning, what do you notice? What causes you to pause? To “trip”? Is there anything you have not heard before? What differences in the translations suggest something that needs further examination?
5. What questions need to be addressed to the text? Where do you need to know more in order to understand what it means? (Begin with basic questions to which you think you already know the answer and then let your mind be engaged by the text to see what other questions it demands to be asked.)

Write out your observations and questions. Your work will be graded based on the extent and depth of your observations and the breadth and nature of your questions.

### 2. Read Fee/Stuart (*Book by Book*) on the book of which your pericope is a part.

3. Using the resources indicated above, and any other survey texts you may have access to, provide an outline of the contents of the book, noting the section in the book in which your pericope is located. Discuss any implications that might have for your exegesis. As in all of your writing, make sure to properly cite the sources of all your information. (5%)

### WEEK THREE

1. Making use of at least two critical NT Introductions, Surveys and/or Dictionaries, answer the following questions in a short essay format of 2 – 3 pages in length. Properly cite the sources for the information you provide. (10%)
  1. Who is the author of the book in which your pericope is located?
  2. What is the date of composition?
  3. Who is the intended “external” audience? (ie: for whom is the book written?)
  4. What is the “life setting” of the audience?
  5. What are the purposes for the writing of the book?
  6. What are the themes of the book?
  7. What implications does this information have for understanding your pericope?
2. Read Fee/Stuart (... *All Its Worth*) chapter 7 (Gospels). Write a 1 – 2 page essay in which you consider the implications of what you have read for your exegesis. (5%)
3. Read Fee/Stuart (... *All Its Worth*) chapter 8 (Parables). What are the main points to remember when exegeting a parable? (1 page) (5%)
4. Write out the key words needing further study in your pericope.

## WEEK FOUR

1. Making use of critical commentaries, identify the form or genre of your pericope. Discuss the implications of that for your exegesis. (1 – 2 paragraphs) (5%)
2. Read the passages in any of the other gospels that are parallel to your pericope. How do they differ? Discuss some possible implications of those differences for your exegesis. (1 page) (5%)
3. For at least four of the key words in your pericope, write a short word study in which you:
  1. Identify the Greek word behind the translated term.
  2. Note how it is translated variously in other Bible translations of your pericope, and in other places in which the word occurs in scripture.
  3. Identify the lexical form of that word and synopsise its lexical meaning, making use of Bauer, Walter, Frederick Danker, William Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). If the most recent edition is unavailable, earlier editions will serve adequately.
  4. Synopsise the discussion of the word in either Brown, Colin *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78) or Kittel, Gerhard and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76). For purposes of this exercise, you may substitute Verbrugge, Verlyn, ed. *The NIV Dictionary of New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) or Bromiley, Geoffrey *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985)

Make sure to properly cite the sources you used for this study.  
(10%)

4. Read your pericope slowly, a line or phrase at a time. At each phrase, and based on the information you have developed, consider how the original readers would have understood that phrase. Consider what responses or reactions they might have had to it. Write down your observations. (5%)

## WEEK FIVE

1. Write a rough draft of your exegesis paper following this outline:

Introductory comments (1 page)

- what are you going to do in this paper
- orient your readers to the task

Introductory matters (2 – 3 pages)

- author
- time of writing
- audience
- purpose
- historical setting of audience

Verse by verse exposition (What did it say?) (depending on pericope, 4 – 5 pages)

- write out the verse you are discussing
- unpack its meaning, including any relevant informing data from the historical or literary contexts
- including any relevant word studies

Synthesis (What did it mean?) (1 – 2 pages)

- in a paragraph or two, write what the pericope means to the audiences, giving attention to the purposes for which the book was written
  - the audience(s) indicated by the pericope itself
  - the audience to whom the book was written

Application (What does it mean?) (1 page)

- in a paragraph or two, write out the meaning of the pericope for your readers

Works cited or Bibliography

(5%)

**LOGISTICS CHART**

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Hour 1	Spiritual Formation  Introduction	Spiritual Formation  Meditative Exegesis	Spiritual Formation  Content Analysis (Textual)	Spiritual Formation  Hearing the Word	Spiritual Formation  Issues in Writing
Hour 2	Foundational Matters	Historical Context	Content Analysis	Interpreting the Text	Moving From Text to Sermon
Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
Hour 3	Basic Tools for Exegesis  Choosing a Pericope	Historical Context  Literary Context	Content Analysis (Lexical)	Interpreting the Text	Exegetical Limitations and Cautions
Hour 4	Organizing Your Research  Initial Approach	Literary Context	Content Analysis (Lexical) Continued	Writing an Exegesis Paper	Limitations and Cautions  Module Evaluation

## APPENDICES

## Appendix One

# MLA Style Sheet

This handout is intended only as a brief guide, not a substitute for the Handbook. Furthermore, your instructor's requirements ALWAYS take precedence.

Although examples of both parenthetical in-text citation and endnote methods are given, most Seminary faculty prefer (or may require) endnotes/footnotes for research papers.

See the MLA Handbook for examples and guidance on more complex citations. The Handbook does not cover every case. Follow principles of common sense, clarity, and consistency. Consult your instructor if in doubt.

## Books

### Three Basic Examples

For style discussion, a list of all elements (in order) and punctuation, see MLA 4.6.1, etc. For endnotes/footnotes see MLA B.1. For in-text citation option, see MLA 5.

#### **Bibliography** {basic citation):

Coppa, Frank J. *The Modern Papacy since 1789: An Ecclesial Perspective*. London: Longman, 1998.

#### *Endnote or footnote:*

<sup>12</sup> Frank J. Coppa, *The Modern Papacy since 1789: An Ecclesial Perspective*, (London: Longman, 1998) 120.

#### Subsequent reference (*ibid.* and *op cit.* not recommended in MLA):

<sup>16</sup> Coppa 210.

#### *In-text citation:*

(Coppa 120) or simply (120) if author clearly indicated in your paper.

#### **Bibliography** {book in a numbered series):

Guelich, Robert A. *A Commentary on Mark's Gospel*. Word Biblical Commentary. 34. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.

#### *Endnote or footnote:*

<sup>15</sup> Robert A. Guelich, *A Commentary on Mark's Gospel*, Word Biblical Commentary 34 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990) 199.

#### Subsequent reference:

Single work cited: <sup>15</sup> Guelich 234.

Several works cited: <sup>15</sup> Guelich, Commentary 234.

#### *In-text citation:*

(Guelich 199) or (199)

## Parts of Books

### **Encyclopedia entry** (Authors often listed at end of article – cite unsigned articles only by title):

Note quotations around entry title. Record publishing data and editor from title page of the whole work. Also note the word order of the editor element.

### **Bibliography** (entry author, set editor, multi-volume):

Klauck, Hans-Josef. "Lord's Supper." *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Ed. David Noel Freedman. Vol. 2. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

### *Endnote or footnote:*

<sup>8</sup> Hans-Josef Klauck, "Lord's Supper," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 485.

### *In-text citation:*

(Klauck 485)

## **Essay in a collection:**

### **Bibliography** (authors, editor, multi-volume):

Ewbank, Michael B, and H. Aityni. "The Difference Diversity Makes." *Saints, Sovereigns, and Scholars*. Ed. Robert A. Herrera. Vol. 2. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

### *Endnote or footnote:*

<sup>11</sup> Michael B. Ewbank and H. Aityni, "The Difference Diversity Makes," *Saints, Sovereigns, and Scholars*, ed. Robert A. Herrera, vol. 2. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) 13-14.

### *In-text:*

(Ewbank 16-17)

## **Bible Commentary in a larger work** (See *Books* above for series volume by individual author)

In a larger work, individual commentaries are often by separate contributors, not the set editor.

### *Bibliography:*

Weems, Renita J. "Song of Songs." *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Vol. 5. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

## **The Bible**

Simply cite by Scripture abbreviation and chapter/verse parenthetically in the text. Do not use an endnote. In the bibliography list the Bible as given on the title page, making sure the version/translation is indicated. If citing more than one Bible version, consult your instructor. Follow Bible abbreviations in MLA 6.7.1.

IN PAPER: (Gen 22:10) (1 Cor 13:5)

IN BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. New York: Oxford University,  
1996.

## Periodical articles

For style discussion and list of all elements (in order) and punctuation, see MLA 4.7. For endnote/footnote, see MLA B.1. For in-text citation option, see examples at MLA 5.4. For rules on citing non-continuous pagination, weekly magazines, and other cases, see MLA 4.7 and B.1.6.

### Two Basic Examples

#### **Bibliography** (scholarly article):

Dommel, F. William, and Duane Alexander. "The Convention of Human Rights and Biomedical Ethics." Kennedy Institute for Ethics Journal 7.3 (1997): 259-77.

#### *Endnote or footnote:*

<sup>67</sup> F. William Dommel and Duane Alexander, "The Convention of Human Rights and Biomedical Ethics," Kennedy Institute for Ethics Journal 7.3 (1997): 261.

#### *In-text:*

(Dommel 261)

## Book review

List by reviewer, not the author of book reviewed. Note "Rev. of" style. Author of reviewed book listed after title of book, with "by" added.

#### **Bibliography:**

Lefebure, Leo D. Rev. of The Divine Matrix: Creativity of East and West, by Joseph Bracken. New Theology Review. 10.1 (1997): 120-22.

## Electronic sources

Online guide: <[http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.2/inbox/mla\\_archive.html](http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.2/inbox/mla_archive.html)>. See MLA Handbook 4.8 and 4.9. Practical rules of citation are still forming. If not all elements can be found, provide as many as possible. In any case, if available, it is easier to cite the hard copy version of an article.

#### *Article* (used exclusively from a full-text source)

Holtzman, Henry. "The Birth of the Messiah." Catholic Biblical Quarterly. 45 (1998): 799-807. Religious Periodicals. ProQuest. University of St. Thomas Libraries. 5 March 2001. <[http://www.proquestcompany.com/division\\_il.html](http://www.proquestcompany.com/division_il.html)>.

#### *World Wide Web document* (add document date and date accessed by user)

John Paul II. Letter to Families. 1994. 23 Nov. 2000. <<http://listserv.american.edu/jpii/docs.htm>>.

#### *Material from a CD-ROM* (add version, format, and producer)

"Logos Bible Map: Old Testament Israel." Logos Bible Software. Vers. 2.0b. CD-ROM. Logos Research Systems, 1995-96.

## Appendix Two

### Considerations for Word Studies

(written by Jerry Camery-Hoggatt)

As with technical literature in other disciplines, there is a more or less standard format for reporting the results of lexical study. One will often see variations of this format, but almost all of the variations are made for reasons of style. Certain elements appear to be standard, though, and these should always be incorporated into the word study:

- A. The English word under discussion
- B. The Greek or Hebrew word which is translated by that English word.  
You can cite the original Greek or Hebrew in either of two ways:
  1. You can use the original Greek or Hebrew characters.
  2. You can transliterate.
    - it is relatively easy to identify a transliterated form of the word; simply look up the word in Strong's Concordance
    - transliterations should always be underlined or italicized

Do not attempt to mix English and Greek characters to form a hybrid word. That only confuses the reader.
- C. Some mention of the distribution of the word. (How often and where it is used)
- D. A discussion of the range of possible meanings of the word (this is called its "semantic field").
- E. A discussion about what the word means in the pericope under discussion, together with the considerations which lead to that decision.
- F. An evaluation of the implications that this translation makes for our understanding of the sentence and the passage as a whole.

These elements can be treated quite economically. The following discussion is of the meaning of the word "fulfill" in Matthew 5:17. (It will be helpful to have the text open in front of you for this discussion – as well as, if available, an interlinear NT.)

The word translated "fulfill" (*pleroo*) in Matthew 5:17 appears in the Greek New Testament 48 times, 15 of them in the Gospel of Matthew. Of the 15 occurrences in Matthew, 12 clearly bear the idea of "realization" as it relates to the fulfillment of prophecy because they appear in the Matthean fulfillment formula, "this happened to fulfill what had been spoken by the prophet." Twice *pleroo* occurs in the sense of "filling up:" of a net (13:48) and of a measure

(23:32). In 3:15 the infinitive form of *pleroo* explains Christ's baptism as an act "to fulfill all righteousness," though its meaning there remains unclear.

References outside of Matthew suggest that *pleroo* may also mean "to set forth in its true meaning," and thus "to complete." Such a rendering accords with this context, since Jesus appears to be challenging the force of the rabbinic tradition (5:209, cf vv. 21-48). It balances the force of *katalusai* with which it is set in parallel here (v. 17b), and it allows for the immutability of the law "until all things come to pass" (v. 18).

If this rendering is correct, Jesus is telling the crowds that he is in favor of the law, but not legalism. In fact, the critical implication here seems to be that it is the legalism of the Pharisees which is destructive to the law. He has not destroyed the law; they have.

Make sure to properly cite your sources. Remember, Kittel and Brown are editors – they probably did not write the article on which your word study relies. The author of an article in a dictionary is cited the same way the author of an article in a journal is. Usually, the author will be identified at the end of the article or section they have written.