

CARIBBEAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Educating and training ministerial leadership



BIB152 Principles of Biblical Interpretation

Mission Statement

CST is committed to connect, serve, and train for Pentecostal ministry, leadership, and missions throughout the world.

Professor

Course Description

This course will cover the basic rules of Bible interpretation by stressing a pattern of explaining the rule, illustrating the principle, and allowing the student to practice interpretation. The course is divided into four units. In the first unit the student is exposed to basic definitions (presuppositions) that affect interpretation and a brief history of biblical interpretation. In the second unit the general rules of interpretation, applicable to all literature types, are outlined. In the third unit the rules that apply to specific genre types are explained. In the final unit the student will be given opportunity to apply all the rules on examples pages.

Resources

You will use Principles of Biblical Interpretation, an Independent-Study Textbook by Carl B. Gibbs as both the textbook and study guide for the course. The Holy Bible is also required. Bible quotations in the Independent-Study Textbook are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted. Most assignments require you to access the Global University Library Web site or other academic resources. Instructions for accessing the Library Web site are provided in the Undergraduate Writing Assignment Guidelines (UWAG) in the Student Packet. If you are enrolled in this course for three credits, the third credit will be earned by completing a collateral reading assignment (CRA). This assignment is based on two textbooks: How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, third edition, by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, and Hermeneutics and Interpreting Acts: A Pentecostal Perspective by Waverly (Wave) Nunnally. The instructions for completing the CRA are in the Student Packet.

Objectives

The key concepts presented in the lesson are derived from the objectives. Study each objective carefully as you begin each lesson. First, identify the key concepts presented in the objective, and second, identify what each objective is asking you to do with the key concepts. For example, in the objective, Assess the positive and negative ways that colonialism affected the spread of Christianity, the key concept is colonialism affected Christianity. In this objective you are asked to assess positive and negative ways—or show the good and bad effects colonialism had on the spread of Christianity.

Course Procedures

Classroom lectures, group discussion, audio-visual presentations, handouts, and case studies constitute some of the various methods that will be utilized in order to attain the course objectives.

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Course Introduction

On the first day of teaching a college course on hermeneutics, I overheard a student complain to the class that he wished the course were not required. If it were not, he would opt for more interesting subjects that directly studied the Bible. My response was that he would probably find the class in hermeneutics, the principles of biblical interpretation, foundational to every Bible study he would be involved in for the rest of his life. The class snickered, and my disgruntled student smiled and granted that “all professors think their subject is the most important of all.”

On the last day of class, the same student spoke up in class to apologize. He admitted that the course in principles of biblical interpretation had become a foundation for all his future Bible study. He was convinced that it was one of the most vital subjects a student of the Bible could master.

If you apply yourself to this course, I am confident that you will come to the same conclusion. I still remember the delight I experienced from my first course in principles of biblical interpretation. That course is still part of every study I make in the Bible.

In this study the key word is contexts. The course will begin with the smallest unit of study in Bible interpretation: individual words. From there it will progress to include the six enlarging circles of context that surround these words: the grammar, immediate, book, Bible, cultural/historical, and genre contexts. In the last unit we will give you an opportunity to apply your knowledge of all these contexts to interpreting various passages.

Before you begin, I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the List of Principles of Interpretation Cited and the Interpreter’s Chart in the appendix. As you study these resources, they will become clear and useful tools for a lifetime of Bible study.