BS 503 Introduction to Inductive Bible Study

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Welcome

Welcome to BS 503: Introduction to Inductive Bible Study! Teaching and living God’s word is my passion. I hope that my passion is contagious – that you catch it and become skilled interpreters of scripture with the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. I am happily married to Anne who trains ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers at Indiana Wesleyan University. We have two children: Pascal (2 years) and Soren (4 years). I have my Ph.D. in NT from Emory University focusing on the gospel of Luke. Online learning is flexible but filled with new types of challenges, so will be learning about the Bible and online learning together. I invite you to head forward with me as we explore God’s word together.

I. Course Description

This course offers a concise introduction to inductive Bible study for students enrolled in the Masters of Arts programs other than those specializing in Bible. The purpose is to introduce students to a systematic and comprehensive approach to Bible study. The course will treat the entire Bible study process from initial observation and interpretation of texts in their literary, historical, and canonical contexts to the contemporary appropriation of these texts. In accord with the principle that students can best understand hermeneutical issues and develop exegetical skills as they engage in rigorous study of specific texts, the course will focus upon the application of Bible study method to two biblical books (Luke and Micah) that represent both testaments and a range of literary forms and theological perspectives. Attention will be given to the significance of the interpretation and appropriation of the biblical text within the Wesleyan tradition for the ministerial vocations represented in the various Masters of Arts programs (missions, counseling, etc.)

II. Prerequisites & Course Relationships

There are no prerequisites for BS 503. It is designed to be an introductory course in inductive Bible study for students in M.A. degrees (other than Biblical Studies) at ATS.
III. Course Objectives

The student will acquire a basic understanding of biblical hermeneutics and will demonstrate the ability to observe, interpret, and engage in contemporary appropriation of the biblical text and to discuss in specific and concrete ways the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text for his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will be able
1. To articulate and employ a method of interpretation based on the inductive reading of biblical texts;
2. To identify the macrostructure of a biblical book by characterizing its contents, defining its units, and describing its major structural relationships and then show the significance of these insights for the interpretation of individual passages within the book;
3. To apply this method to short, specific passages in order to make detailed observations useful for interpretation;
4. To ask probing questions of the biblical text and answer those questions (that is, to interpret) by employing various kinds of exegetical determinants, e.g., literary context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, and the history of interpretation;
5. To evaluate the contextuality and applicability of a biblical passage in light of the larger witness of the biblical canon, the history of interpretation, and the dynamics of contemporary life;
6. To employ insights and conclusions from the interpretation of biblical passages for specific and creative contemporary appropriation that can be integrated into the following domains: personal discipleship, the life of the community of faith, and study and practice relating to one’s vocation;
7. To begin to grapple with discuss some hermeneutical issues and demonstrate the ability to make use of these hermeneutical insights in the observation, interpretation, evaluation, and appropriation of the biblical text.

IV. Guidelines & Expectations for Online Learning

A. Online Support: For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the ExL program contact Dale Hale at ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu or phone 859-858-2393. For technical support, library research support, library loans, and ExL media contact Information Commons at Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu or phone 859-858-2233 toll-free 866-454-2733

B. Technology and Communication: You can access your class online at http://exl.asburyseminary.edu. Please limit all online posts to 50-75 words. Use the following links on the web interface for their stated communication purposes (most are also found under “Forums” in the Activities section):

Course Related: contains items related specifically to the course.
  1. Course News and Announcements: contains news items for the course like due dates and recent announcements.
  2. Syllabus: the updated version of the syllabus can be found here.
  3. To Professor: click here for private communication between student and faculty. (Identical to the “Dialogue” link in the Activities section)
  4. Course Questions: repository of questions and discussions related to the course (please limit postings to 50-75 words).

Community Related: contains items related to community building and social connection.
1. **Prayer Forum:** We understand that real life happens while you are taking this class. Please use this forum to support, pray, and care for each other.

2. **Open Forum:** Use this forum to discuss anything from sports, to doctrine, to jokes to personal information.

**Assignments:** Please submit your responses to the appropriate folder. When submitting online assignments, please name the file in the following way: Last Name (or last names for group assignments), Module # (fill in the Module #), and a brief description of the assignment (e.g., Luke survey). That will help me to keep and orderly record of assignments.

**C. Format and Communication:** All of the Modules have "forums" which are set up to start and facilitate class discussion. I will start each forum with an initial post. You must "reply" to my post within the forum. Please do NOT start a new discussion topic as that will create a separate conversation. You may reply to later posts, but keep it all in one discussion topic.

**D. Ethics and Communication:** I expect myself and you to aim to live by the faith, ethos, and mission statements of Asbury Theological Seminary. These can be found at www.asburyseminary.edu. This online course is part of our pursuit of personal and social holiness and training for ministry. A crucial element of this course is the dialogue that we enter into with each other, a dialogue that should reflect our discipleship and calling. All discussions are to be in the vein of respect, encouragement, gentleness, patience, persistence, and hope. This does not mean that we will not challenge, confront, or question each other. It does mean that these things will be undertaken for the purpose of growth and stimulation to think and understand the subject at hand more deeply and more intimately. In light of this, the course has the following expectations.

**What you can expect of me:**
1. A well prepared course interface and clear learning modules
2. Prompt and honest replies to questions and postings (usually within 36 hours).
3. Interaction, participation, and direction in online discussions.
4. Prompt feedback and assessment on assignments (within 1 week).
5. Occasional bloopers as I continue to learn this mode of teaching and interact with the class.

**What I expect of you:**
1. Approximately 7-9 hours of time devoted to the class each week.
2. Participation in online discussion forums.
3. On time completion of assignments.
4. Your honest questions when you do not understand the material or the instructions.
5. Your patience as we work together in this medium.

**E. Example Study Projects:** Most Modules will contain two example IBS projects. Some of these will be an example from a student who has taken this course in the past. These examples have been marked by me so that you can see the kind of work to aim for and errors to avoid. Some will please read and learn from the IBS examples provided on Moodle. They might be your best "textbook" for this course.
be a study that I have done myself. These are mean to provide you with a "clean" (unmarked) project that you can read through and use as a model for your own work. Some Modules will contain both types of examples. These are meant as examples to learn from, not templates to copy, so do not feel completely bound to them. I welcome any comments or questions about these examples in the discussion forums, and I believe that they are some of your best resources as you lean the IBS method.

V. Accessing Information Commons (Library) Materials:

A. General Questions: The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/hours.shtml.

B. Materials Requests: To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml. ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary’s Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests. ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

C. Research Questions: ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help choosing a paper topic, determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

D. Online Databases: To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0’s to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

E. Copyright Guidelines: The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

VI. Course Texts

A. Required: We will use the NRSV Bible in order to facilitate our study of the Bible together. Your interpretation projects should be based on this translation. You will be reading all of Thompson’s book (abbreviated as BSTW), and most of Traina’s book (abbreviated as MBS). The bibliography by Bauer will provide you with a resource to find quality study resources for your interpretive work, and we will read selected articles from DTIB (it is also an excellent reference book to own).

1. English Bible: (NRSV)


5. **Dictionary:** Vanhoozer, Kevin, ed. *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 0-8010-2694-6 (Abbreviated **DTIB**)

**B. Recommended:** You will need to access references and commentaries as part of your interpretation, evaluation, and appropriation projects. I will recommend the following resources.

1. **Dictionary:** The following dictionary will be very useful for your work in Luke. It can be accessed through the *Prolepsis* database on Asbury Scholar at the ATS Info Commons. You can also purchase a copy. You can also use other (reputable) sources in your study projects.

2. **Commentary:** You will need access to a good, recent (published within the past 20 years) commentary on Luke. You can find some of these through the *iPreach* database on the Asbury Info Commons, or you can get them through the library. I will also recommend the following if you would like to purchase them.

**VII. Assignments for Achieving Course Objectives**

**A. Book Review (40 points):** The first assignment for the course will be to read through and write a book review (700-800 words) about *Bible Study That Works.* This will give you an overview of the IBS process and solid start for the course.

**B. Module Discussion Forums (60 points total):** The format of an online class requires active learning and discussion on your part. This is the online equivalent to attendance and participation in a traditional classroom. All modules have required discussion sections, but you are also welcome to post questions and comments beyond these in the “Course Questions” forum. I will largely grade your participation by checking to see that you have participated in each required forum and noting the quality of your postings (insight, relevance, responsiveness, etc.)

**B. Module Reading Posts (60 points total):** Every week will have approximately 60-80 pages of textbook reading. These readings will either contribute to your understanding of the IBS method, provide background material on the books we are studying, or offer material about scripture and hermeneutics for your reflection. I will expect you to post about your reading. Start of by stating what percentage of the reading you have finished. Then, write 2-3 sentences about the most important or helpful part of the reading and ask at least one question about something that is unclear or that you want to know more about. We will have better discussions about the reading if you respond to previous posts in your own post.

**C. Group Study Projects (no penalty):** There will be two group study projects. I will assign you to a group of 3-4 students at the very beginning of the course. These group projects are only
graded on a credit/no credit basis. If you do not turn in or fail one of these assignments it will lower your final grade by 25 points (one half a letter grade). These assignments have three interrelated purposes:

1. To lighten your workload by working together.
2. To give you the opportunity to cooperate with and learn from other classmates.
3. To allow you to practice some of the harder tasks of IBS before having to turn in a graded assignment.

More specifically, you will have a group project on survey and a group project on interpretation. More specific guidelines for each group project will be provided on Moodle.

C. Study Projects (50 points each for a total of 250 points): The careful and close reading of scripture using the inductive method is the foundation of this course. There are 5 graded assignments devoted to specific steps of the inductive bible study method that will enable you to practice and demonstrate what you are learning. The comments on returned assignments will aim to indicate where you have done well and where you can improve in future work. We will begin broadly with the survey of books, then focus down toward smaller units and then broaden out again to canonical synthesis and appropriation.

D. Final IBS Portfolio (90 points): The final portfolio will be your own study on a portion of the gospel of Luke that has not been covered in this class (you may not study any part of 14:1-25 or 18:35-19:48). This portfolio will have 5 parts: a segment survey, a detailed observation, an interpretation, and an evaluation & application. The segment survey and detailed observation should be short and basic, providing only what you need to move on to the interpretation. You should spend the greatest amount of your time and effort on the interpretation and then follow it up with a good evaluation and application. Thus, this final portfolio is meant to prepare you for your own study of a particular passage in the future. You must submit a preliminary plan for your final portfolio BEFORE Module 7 begins so that I can give you some guidance.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Forums</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Reports</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Projects</td>
<td>(no penalty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graded Assignments (5 at 50 points each)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam/Graded Assignment</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
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VIII. Grading Policies

A. Grade Calculations: There are 500 points available for the class. Each graded assignment will be given a numerical score and a corresponding letter grade. The ATS Catalog's description of grades and their values will apply (see pp. 30-31). The final numerical average will be assigned a final letter grades according to this range of values:
B. Exceptional work will exhibit these characteristics: Precision, accuracy, specificity, depth, insight, clarity, creativity, thoroughness, and balance. Simply “good and accurate” work does not merit an “A”. Also, exceptional work must engage the Biblical texts in their original languages (to some degree), focus on matters central to the text, and demonstrate conclusions with valid evidence. The following list provides general descriptions of grades:

- **A**: Excellent, outstanding, insightful work that goes one step beyond course expectations
- **B**: Good work, fulfills most or all course expectations
- **C**: Adequate work, meets basic course expectations
- **D**: Inadequate work that does not fulfill most course expectations
- **F**: Failing work that does not grasp basic course elements

C. Lessons Entirely Omitted: If a graded lesson is omitted entirely, then it will be calculated as a “0” in the numerical averaging of the final grade.

D. Late Projects and Responses: Graded projects may be turned in up to three (3) days after the due date. The grade of late graded assignments will be reduced by one full letter grade (B+ to C+). Credit assignments may NOT be turned in late (late assignments will be considered failing). Of course, if there is an appropriate reason (serious illness, family emergency), assignments may be turned in late with the instructor’s permission.

E. Independence and Plagiarism: Individual assignments must reflect the independent work of each student. Collaboration is encouraged but exercise special care to preserve the independence of each student. Group projects naturally included group cooperation, but each student is expected to contribute equally. Plagiarism is defined as employing the words and/or ideas of a specific source or person without appropriately citing that source in final work. Students should avoid plagiarism at all costs and check with the instructor if they are uncertain about citing a source.

IX. Course Schedule

Be sure to check the academic calendar in the most recent catalog to find the dates for the first day of class, drop/add, last day to withdraw, and the end of the semester. You should keep track of these dates. Specific due dates for assignments will be provided on Moodle.

Recall that I will expect you to devote 7-9 hours per week to our class. The modules vary in length to allow extra time for group work or more challenging material. Your time each week will typically be allotted in the following way: readings and example (1-2 hours), online lectures/presentation (1-2 hours), online discussions and posts (1 hour), assignments (4-6 hours). Of course, this will vary, but this provides you a general guide to help you plan your time.
Module 1: Intro to the Course and to Inductive Bible Study (2/11-17)
Reading: The Syllabus; All of BSTW
Online Presentations:
  1. PowerPoint and supplement on The Foundations and Characteristics of Inductive Bible Study
  2. Lecture on An Overview of the Steps of Inductive Bible Study
Online Discussions:
  1. Discussion Forum: Introduce yourself. Be sure to tell us hat experience interpreting the Bible you bring to this class, and how prepared (or unprepared) do you feel for this class.
  2. Reading Post: Please post any questions or comments (or corrections) regarding the syllabus.
  3. (Remember: feel free to post any other musings or questions about the IBS method in the Course Questions forum throughout the semester.)
Assignments:
  1. Book Review on BSTW

Module 2: Structural Relationships & How to Survey a Book (2/18-3/2)
Reading:
  1. MBS, 49-68
  3. Example Survey of Galatians
  4. Example Survey of the Gospel of Matthew
Online Presentations:
  1. Lecture on How to Survey a Book
  2. PowerPoint on How Structural Relationships Work
Online Discussions:
  1. Discussion Forum: What was it like to read an entire biblical book in one sitting and try to grasp it as a whole? How
  2. Reading Post
Assignments:
  1. Group book survey on Micah (credit project)
  2. Survey of the gospel of Luke (individual, graded project)

Module 3: Asking Probing Questions & How to Survey a Segment (3/3-12)
Reading:
  1. MBS, 68-72, 93-134
Online Presentation: PowerPoint and supplement on How to Ask the Best Questions Ever (and Survey a Segment)
Online Discussions:
  1. Discussion Forum: How is this study of the Bible affecting your view of the inspiration and authority of scripture?
2. Reading Post
Assignments:

Module 4: Improving our Observation & How to do a Detailed Observation (3/13 - 23)
Reading:
1. MBS, 31-49, 72-80
3. Example Detailed Observation of Galatians 5:22-26
4. Example Detailed Observation of Matthew 28:18-20
Online Presentation: Lecture on You Can’t Interpret What You Don’t See
Online Discussions:
1. Feedback: Midterm evaluation of yourself and the course
2. Discussion Forum: What is working well (or not so well) as you observe? What are you seeing or not seeing? And, what is it like to observe a story as we have in Luke?
3. Reading Post:
Assignments:

Module 5: Answering Questions with Exegetical Determinants & How to Interpret (3/31 - 4/20)
Reading:
1. MBS, 135-166, 181-89
3. Example Interpretation of Galatians 5:22-26
4. Example Interpretation of Luke 14:33
Online Presentation:
1. Lecture on Bringing It Together for Interpretation
2. PowerPoint and on How to Use the Most Important Determinants
Online Discussion:
1. Discussion Forum: How do you get meaning out of the biblical text?
2. Reading Post
Assignments:
1. Group Interpretation of Micah 7:18-20 (credit project)
2. Interpretation of Luke 19:1-10 (individual, graded project)

Module 6: How to Evaluate and Apply (4/21 - 5/4)
Reading:
1. MBS, 201-220
2. DTIB 321-23 “Imagination,” 617-21 “Preaching”
3. Example Evaluation & Application of Galatians 5:22-26
Online Presentation:
1. Lecture on Making the Rubber Meet the Road: Evaluating & Applying the Message of the Biblical Text
Online Discussion:
1. Discussion Forum: What are the best ways to make a justifiable and relevant appropriation of a biblical passage? Give some examples of the best and worst applications you have heard.
2. Reading Post

Assignments:
1. Contact the professor with your tentative plans (segment, specific passage, and possible question) for your final IBS portfolio on Luke.

Module 7: Enacting Your Perspective and Practice as an Interpreter (5/5 - 5/23)
Reading: None
Online Discussion: There are no required online discussions for this week. Please feel free to post comments and questions about your final projects in order to receive guidance and encouragement from the class. Also, feel free to contact me personally along the way.
Assignments: