

# Biblical Interpretation Course

## Course Description

Courses in Biblical Interpretation are designed to highlight the historic commitment of the Presbyterian tradition to the Scriptures, tying together an understanding of the "word of God written" (Confession of 1967, I.C.2) with "the true word of God" (Second Helvetic Confession 5.001-2). Presbyterian Christian Educators need a foundational comprehension of Scripture as well as the tools to appropriately exegete and interpret the Bible for the context in which they are serving. Courses will teach the basic principles of biblical interpretation through the lens of the Reformed Tradition and teach at least one exegetical method. Exegetical models will encourage historical and cultural readings of texts, and instructors will encourage and equip educators to do research using resources from various reputable sources, modern and historical. The goal of these courses is to ground educators in the method required to make them servants "rightly handling the word of truth" in accordance with the certification standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## Course Standards

<b>Competencies</b> <b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Theoretical Perspective</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Contextual Awareness</b>	<b>Self-Critical Awareness</b>
<b>Historical Dimension</b>	Possess working knowledge of at least two approaches to interpreting the Bible	Ability to analyze interpretive principles at work in Reformed historical documents (e.g. curriculum, catechisms)	Show understanding of Reformed biblical interpretation in a variety of historical contexts (e.g. slavery, gender, nationalism)	What are your strategies of interpretation? Where do they stand in relation to Reformed interpretative principles?
<b>Contemporary Dimension</b>	Demonstrate awareness of several current approaches to biblical interpretation	Use two or more interpretive principles to teach a particular biblical text or theme	Convey the ability to see the interaction between text and a particular setting	How does your social location inform the reading of a biblical text and how aware are you of these influences while interpreting a text? Give examples.
<b>Reformed Identity Dimension</b>	Familiarity with five main ways that Presbyterians understand the authority of Scripture	Articulate several distinctive themes of a Reformed approach to interpretation of Scripture	Compare teaching of biblical texts in 2 or more Reformed congregations	How do you apply the Reformed biblical principles in your interpretation?

<b>Educational Dimension</b>	Identify direct or implicit aspects of particular books and texts	Develop learning experiences for particular texts	Assess operative interpretive principles in a context	How do your interpretive commitments and biases of the key texts shape your reading of these texts?
<b>Theological Implications Dimension</b>	Articulate themes to connect biblical interpretation to theological reflection	Analyze ways that theological convictions arise from biblical texts	Bring biblical principles to theological commitment in context	How does your own theological understanding influence your reading of the texts?

### Suggested Resources

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Ferguson, Duncan S. *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1986.

Mayfield, Tyler D. *A Guide to Bible Basics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018.

*Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture and Biblical Authority and Interpretation*. Louisville: Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1999.

Webster, John. *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch*. New York: Cambridge, 2003.