



**BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY
UNIT OUTLINE**

**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY
GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY**

UNIT TITLE	STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES I: METHOD & HERMENEUTIC
UNIT CODE	A/B73014
UNIT STATUS	Core
HOST FIELD	A/B
PREREQUISITE/S	-
INCOMPATIBLES	A/B51014 for A/B73014
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13-week semester, plus an additional 3 seminars each of 1 hour.
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Annually — Semester 1
PREPARED BY	Revd Dr Ray Barraclough
UNIT COORDINATOR	Revd Dr Ray Barraclough
TEACHING STAFF	Revd Dr Ray Barraclough
DATE PREPARED	10 February 2004

Rationale

The rationale for this unit is grounded in the need for students to be well acquainted with a wide range of hermeneutical approaches being utilised in contemporary biblical scholarship. As well, the students need to consider the various methodologies employed in these hermeneutical approaches. The students' awareness of the methodological and hermeneutical frameworks that shape their own as well as more extensive scholarly study of the scriptures is essential for any scholarly endeavour in this field. A number of the hermeneutical approaches (e.g. liberationist, feminist, post-colonial) will challenge the students to consider the inter-relation of interpretation of the scriptures with dimensions of socio-economic, political and gender relationships in the contemporary world.

Postgraduate students will be expected to demonstrate more extensive knowledge and use of both the methodological and hermeneutical options available to scholars in the study of the scriptures.

Relation to Program

This unit will make a significant contribution not only to the student's subsequent scholarly study of scripture but will also equip and alert the student to the important methodological and hermeneutical principles and practices employed across a whole range of interpretative studies. Thus this unit will help equip the student in study of scriptural writings, theological and historical documents, liturgies and other fields where methodology and hermeneutics shape the process, content and interpretative responses of written and oral material.

Students will be expected to show mastery of a range of hermeneutical approaches in interpreting the scriptures.

Aims

This unit aims to explore the hermeneutical and methodological issues central to contemporary scholarly study of scripture in order to provide an introduction to these areas of study and a foundation for further study within this field. It aims to sketch both the historical and philosophical contexts that produced these methodological and hermeneutical approaches. As well, the unit encompasses the application of the methods of interpretation to selected scriptural texts.

It is expected that postgraduate students will undertake more creative research in regard to the tutorial and essay presentations that they make, and will be expected to exhibit a more self-conscious use of various hermeneutical approaches to interpretation of the scriptures.

Learning Outcomes	
At the end of this unit the student should be able to:	
1.	Work with primary sources
2.	Compare and analyse parallel primary sources, especially through redactional study
3.	Distil the main points from academic journal articles, monographs or other required reading
4.	Access relevant material from internet sources
5.	Lead and facilitate discussion in an academic study group
6.	Present an academic paper or presentation in a tutorial group context.
7.	Produce a major essay related to methodological and hermeneutical study
8.	Engage positively with different interpretations of the primary texts
9.	Initiate research topics and titles in regard to extended essay/s on chosen academic topic/s

Content

The areas to be studied as regards contemporary hermeneutical and methodological approaches to the interpretation of the scriptures include the following:

1. Historical criticism - Source Criticism
- Form Criticism
- Redaction Criticism
2. Literary Criticism - Storytelling and Narrative Criticism
- Rhetorical Criticism
3. Reader Response
4. Social Science Criticism
5. Liberationist Hermeneutic
6. Feminist Hermeneutic
7. Canonical Criticism
8. Textual Criticism
9. Evangelical Hermeneutics
10. Post-Colonial Hermeneutic
11. Ecological Hermeneutics

Postgraduate students, in additional seminars, will canvas particular topics that will require more extensive and detailed study, especially in regard to the students' methodology and presentations of their research work.

Organisation and Teaching Strategies

The contact time for all students of three hours per week over a period of thirteen weeks will include both lectures and tutorials. Media used will be lecture handouts, overhead projection material, power-point presentations and appropriate audiovisual resources.

There will be three additional seminars, each of one hour duration, encompassing methodology and the major research project.

Assessment

	Type of assessment	No of words	Weighting %	Due date	Learning Outcomes covered
1	Three Tutorial Papers: Each to indicate scholarly treatment of the primary texts and secondary literature.	1,000 1,000 1,000	Total of 50%		
2	Major research project which will focus on a significant theme from the list of Contents.	3,000	50%		

Generic Skills

- Advanced skills in research, including the use of primary and secondary texts.
- Advanced skills in the integration of a variety of research material.
- Advanced skills in use of electronic catalogues, data bases and search engines.

Bibliography

Required

The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deutero-Canonical Books New Revised Standard Version [NRSV], Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1999 or
McKenzie, Steven L. and Haynes, Stephen R. eds, *To Each Its Own Meaning – An introduction to biblical criticisms and their application*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1999.

Academic and General Resource Requirements

Books

- Barton, John, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Bible Study*, Revised ed'n, Westminster/John Knox, Louisville, 1996.
- Barton, John, "Historical-Critical approaches" in *The Cambridge Companion to Bible Interpretation*, John Barton ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, 9-20
- Bird, Phyllis A, Sakenfield, Katharine Doob and Ringe, Sharon H. eds, *Reading the Bible as Women – Perspectives from Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Semeia, 78, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 1997
- Carter, Charles E and Myers, Carol L *Community, Identity and Ideology: Social science approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, 1996.
- Cheek, Alison M "Shifting the Paradigm: Feminist Bible Study" in Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Searching the Scriptures – A Feminist Introduction*, SCM, London, 1994, 338-350
- Childs, Brevard S *The New Testament as Canon – An Introduction*, Trinity Press International, Valley Forge, 1994.
- Donaldson, Laura E ed., *Postcolonialism and Scripture Reading*, Semeia, 75, , Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 1996.

- Dube, Musa W ed, *Other ways of Reading – African Women and the Bible*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, and WCC Publications, Geneva, 2002.
- Dube, MW and Staley, JL eds, *John and Postcolonialism: Travel, Space and Power*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 2002.
- Gillingham, Susan, *One Bible Many Voices – Different approaches to biblical studies*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1999.
- Gottwald, Norman K *The Hebrew Bible – A Socio-Literary Introduction*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1985.
- Kwok Pui-lan, "Response to the *Semeia* volume on Postcolonial Criticism" in *Postcolonialism and Scripture Reading*, Laura E Donaldson ed., *Semeia* 75, 1996, 211-217.
- Lategan, Bernard C "Hermeneutics" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary – Vol. 3*, David Noel Freedman ed., Doubleday, New York, 1992, 149-154.
- Lategan, Bernard, C "Reader Response theory" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 5 O – Sh*, David Noel Freedman ed, Doubleday, New York, 1992, 625-628.
- Malina Bruce, J *The New Testament World – Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1993.
- Malina, Bruce J and Rohrbaugh, Richard I *A Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 1992.
- Malina, Bruce J and Rohrbaugh, Richard I. *A Social Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 1998.
- Neill, Stephen and Wright, Tom. *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988.
- Perrin, Norman, *What is Redaction Criticism?* Fortress, Philadelphia, 1968.
- Pregeant, Russell, *Engaging the New Testament – An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1995.
- Schneiders, Sandra M *The Revelatory Text – Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, Harper, San Francisco, 1991.
- Segovia, Fernando F ed., *What is John? - Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel* Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1996.
- Stansell, Gary, "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives" in *Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible*, Matthews, Victor H and Benjamin, Don C eds. *Semeia*, 68, 1994, 55-79.
- Stibbe, Mark GW. *John as storyteller – Narrative criticism and the fourth gospel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992
- Thiselton, AC *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The theory and practice of transforming bible reading* Harper/Collins, 1992.
- Van Seters, John. *The Pentateuch: A social science commentary*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1999.
- Van Wolde, Ellen, "Intertextuality: Ruth in Dialogue with Tamar" in *Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine eds, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1997, 426-451.
- Wainwright, Elaine, "Rachel Weeping for Her Children: Intertextuality and the Biblical Testaments" in *Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine eds, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1997, 452-469.
- West, Gerald and Dube, Musa W, "Reading With" – *African Overtures*, *Semeia*, 73, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 1996.

For an example of a historical-critical commentary on a gospel note: Brown, Raymond E, *The Gospel According to John - Vols. I and II*, Doubleday, New York, 1966.

References – Journal Articles

- Moloney, FJ, "Who is the Reader in/of the Fourth Gospel?", *Australian Biblical Review*, 40, 1992, 20-33.
- Ruiz, Jean-Pierre, "New Ways of Reading the Bible in the Cultural Settings of the New World" *Concilium* 1, 1995, 73-84.
- Staley, JL, "Subversive Narrator/Victimised Reader: a Reader-Response Assessment of a Text-Critical Problem, John 18.12-24", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 51, 1993, 79-98.
- Thiel, John H, "Pluralism in Theological Truth", *Concilium*, 6, 1994, 57-69.
- Young, Frances, "Interpretative Genres and the Inevitability of Pluralism", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 59, 1995, 93-110.

For a comparison of a historical-critical and narrative study of a gospel passage note A K Jenkins, “The Case of Malchus’ Ear: Narrative Criticism and *John* 18:1-12’, *Expository Times*, 112, 2000, 8-11.

References – Online and Other IT Resources

The New Testament Gateway. <http://www.ntgateway.com>

Religion-Online. <http://www.religion-online.org>

Resource Pages for Biblical Studies. <http://www.torreys.org/bible>