



**TYNDALE**  
• SEMINARY •

## **Course Syllabus**

**FALL 2018**

**INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE FROM A MENNONITE BRETHREN PERSPECTIVE  
ANAB 0670**

**NOVEMBER 5 – 8, 2018,  
9:00AM – 4:00PM**

**LOCATION: NEW HOPE CHURCH, 2360 FIRST STREET LOUTH, ST. CATHARINES**

**INSTRUCTOR: MARK WESSNER, PHD**

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Access course material at <http://classes.tyndale.ca/>

Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

[Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.](#)

The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this introductory course, students will develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the historical, literary, theological, and confessional value of both the Old and New Testaments. Included will be a discussion of political and religious contexts, theological themes, and the varied literary styles found within the biblical texts. Special attention will be given to the interpretation of the Bible in the Mennonite Brethren tradition: major issues and controversies, influential scholars, contemporary situation and trends. Students will discover how to explore, interpret, and contextualize Scripture.

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the main historical, literary and theological elements of the Old and New Testaments,
2. Effectively interpret each of the various sections of the Bible,
3. Articulate and critique various contemporary hermeneutical methods, and apply such methods and tools,
4. Describe the history and relevance of the original manuscripts of the Bible, and
5. Describe how Mennonite Brethren interpretations of scripture are applied in the current Canadian context.

Real learning takes place as you carefully process information through higher-order thinking skills. Your performance in this class will be based on your demonstration of your engagement and learning, not by simply repeating back basic facts (your knowledge of the facts will become clear as you demonstrate higher-order thinking skills). In all that you do in this class, you should always remember to use higher-order thinking skills, as described below:

- *Comprehension*: demonstrates the ability to grasp meaning, explain, and restate ideas,
- *Application*: demonstrates the ability to use learned material in new situations,
- *Analysis*: demonstrates the ability to separate material into component parts and show relationships between parts,
- *Synthesis*: demonstrates the ability to put together the separate ideas to form a new whole, to establish new relationships, and
- *Evaluation*: demonstrates the ability to judge the worth of material against stated criteria.

## III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. REQUIRED READING:

Dueck, Abe J., Bruce L. Guenther, and Doug Heidebrecht. "Sola Scriptura and the Mennonite Brethren." In *Renewing Identity and Mission: Mennonite Brethren Reflections After 150 Years*, 155-164. Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2011.

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Heidebrecht, Doug. "[People of the Book: the significance of Mennonite Brethren biblicalism and hermeneutics](#)." *Direction* 40, no. 2 (2011): 219-231.

Jost, Lynn, Angeline Schellenberg, Jon M. Isaak, Elenore Doerksen, Andrew Dyck, and Connie Faber. "People of the Word." In *Family Matters: Discovering the Mennonite Brethren*, 22-28. Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2017.

Old and New Testaments (read Exodus, Proverbs, Habakkuk, Mark, and Revelation).

## **B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS:**

Klassen, A J (Abram John). "[The Bible in the Mennonite Brethren Church](#)." *Direction* 2, no. 2 (1973): 34-55.

Martens, E. A. *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015.

Meadors, Gary T., Walter C. Kaiser, Daniel M. Doriani, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and William J. Webb. *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

"Resolution on Inerrancy." *Yearbook: General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 57th Session, 44-46*. Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1987.

"Resolution on the Interpretation of Scripture." *Yearbook: The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 67th Convention, 12-15*. Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1978.

Tyndale recommends [www.stepbible.org](http://www.stepbible.org) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

## **C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### **Class Participation (8%)**

Throughout the duration of the course, you are required to engage both the instructor and other students with appropriate and relevant comments and questions.

Grading will be based on both quantity and quality of insightful, substantive dialogue.

High-quality comments reflect keen insight and analytical skills as well as original thinking and interpretation of the issues. Don't be afraid to disagree with someone but be sure to explain your own reasoning behind your disagreement. Better yet, take someone else's observations to the next level – apply your own contribution to the points being made, add something beyond what someone else has said.

## **Discussion Papers (30%)**

Three brief assignments of a minimum 750 words each in which you express your personal thoughts and insights regarding each of the questions below. Be sure to post your Discussion Papers in the online classroom (classes.tyndale.ca).

1. *Discussion Paper #1* (6 points):
  - a. Introduce yourself and describe your learning goals and/or expectations for this class.
  - b. Describe your previous experience in reading the Bible. At a minimum, be sure to answer: When did you start? Why did you start? How has your understanding of the Bible changed over time? What have been the hardest parts to read? What have been the easiest parts to read? Why are some parts harder/easier than others?
  - c. Describe your favourite method of communicating "biblical truth" in your current life and ministry context.
2. *Discussion Paper #2* (6 points):
  - a. Without looking at your favorite English translation of the Bible, write down:
    - i. The name of the translation,
    - ii. The year in which it was translated, and
    - iii. The method of translation.
  - b. In your personal experience, how has the language of the Bible (words, phrases, etc.) been either a help or a hindrance in your ability to understand its meaning and message? Describe two or three examples.
3. *Discussion Paper #3* (6 points):
  - a. Based on your own experience, describe your understanding of the relevance (both theoretical and practical) of Old Testament law to your life and ministry contexts.
  - b. At a minimum, be sure to address how Old Testament law has been presented to you by others, and how that presentation has affected your receptivity to the law. What have been some of the personal challenges and rewards of reading the Old Testament law sections? Give specific examples.

For each Discussion Paper, you are to post a 400 word reply to another student. That is, you are to post one reply for *Discussion Paper #1* (4 points), one reply for *Discussion Paper #2* (4 points), and one reply for *Discussion Paper #3* (4 points).

## **Research Paper (40%)**

A 15-20 page paper on either a poetic or narrative passage (it must be one of these two styles) found within either the Old or New Testament. You can choose any passage you want,

provided that I have approved both the passage and your draft bibliography prior to the writing of the paper. At a minimum, the paper will consist of:

1. The correct identification of the passage (where the passage starts/stops, its placement within the book, its placement within the Bible, etc.), giving specific reasons for each of your conclusions (6 points),
2. An analysis of the literary style and characteristics of the passage (citing specific references) (7 points),
3. A detailed and thoughtful application of the appropriate exegetical / hermeneutical approach suggested during the course (18 points),
4. A concluding section on the modern relevance and/or application of the passage (8 points), and
5. Specific references from at least five sources (1 point):
  - a. Sources must be in addition to the Required Texts, and
  - b. Although Wikipedia.com can be a good starting point to look for other web sites, it is not an acceptable academic resource as authorship is anonymous.
6. All conclusions/opinions must be supported and documented with relevant and appropriate evidence and/or examples.

### **Ministry Curriculum Project (22%)**

Using the Research Paper as the foundation, you are to create either a small group study guide or a classroom curriculum based on the Research Paper passage. The study guide / curriculum must reflect the content and principles discussed in this course, and it is to include a section on life and ministry application for the participants. You are to work through the study guide / curriculum with a small group of at least four people (one meeting). The assignment report will consist of:

1. The study guide / curriculum itself (12 points), and
2. A 1,500 word summary of your small group / classroom experience (10 points).

### **D. EQUITY OF ACCESS**

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

## E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Class Participation	8 %
Three Discussion Papers	30 %
Research Paper	40 %
Ministry Curriculum Project	22 %
Total Grade	100 %

## F. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

There are no extra credit assignments available.

Writing Expectations:

1. All assignments must be submitted online through *classes.tyndale.ca*.
2. Papers must be uploaded as .doc, .docx, or .pdf files, and must adhere to the following format:
  - 11 or 12 point font in either Arial, Times New Roman, or Calibri style,
  - Top, bottom and side page margins of 2.5cm (1 inch),
  - Double-spaced, and
  - Current Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian guidelines.

Late Assignments:

1. Manage your time well. Review the required assignments and identify a realistic schedule for completing each assignment's research and writing.
2. Assignments can be submitted prior to their due dates (often, it is better time management to do so).
3. Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day, to a maximum of five days. Any assignment submitted more than five days late will not be accepted.
4. Please note that any assignment submitted after the last day of class will not be counted toward your final grade – there will be no exceptions. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments are submitted on time. If you have requested and been approved for a formal course extension, it is your responsibility to submit all assignments before the expiry of the extension.

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.46 to 10.51](#) and [14.253 to 14.254](#).

### Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of

the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [writing resources](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

### **Research Ethics**

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Office (Room B302; [aau@tyndale.ca](mailto:aau@tyndale.ca)) before proceeding.

## **G. COURSE EVALUATION**

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

## **IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS**

### **Pre-Class (due October 29, 2018)**

1. Assignments: Discussion Papers 1, 2, and 3
2. Assignments: Read "People of the Book" and "People of the Word"

### **During Class (November 5-8, 2018)**

Monday, November 5

1. Introduction

2. Being Mennonite Brethren
3. Personal experience with Scripture
4. History, genre, and development of the biblical texts
5. Language translations
6. Canon

Tuesday, November 6

1. Organization and categorization
2. Poetry
3. Wisdom
4. Narratives

Wednesday, November 7

1. Gospels
2. Parables
3. Law
4. Prophecy

Thursday, November 8

1. Letters
2. Apocalypse
3. Being Mennonite Brethren
4. Conclusion, Next Steps

#### **Post-Class (due December 6, 2018)**

1. Assignment: Research Paper
2. Assignment: Ministry Curriculum Project
3. Course Evaluation

#### **V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

(Tyndale Library supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)