Interpreting Christian Scripture
(M.A. in Christian Ministry)
BIB 6037 (3 units)

Point Loma Nazarene University
Fall 2026
Online: Aug. 31 through Oct. 25, 2026
*In-person Gathering Days: Oct. 19-21, 2026

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Course Description
An introduction to diverse ways of reading Christian scripture, from ancient to modern, with an emphasis on its theological significance for ministry.

Course Learning Outcomes
The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:
1) exegete a passage of scripture using contextual, literary, and theological analysis
2) encounter the history and terminology of biblical interpretation, including the basics of Bible content, the formation and literary diversity of the canon, and traditional and non-traditional methods for biblical study
3) explore diverse ways that scripture has been received and interpreted within various cultural, ethnic, and social contexts and the impact of those interpretations within their settings

Course Texts

1. Greg Carey. *Using Our Outside Voice: Public Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020).

2. Michael J. Gorman, ed. *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017). ***This is a multi-authored collection with contributions from authors representing different races, genders, ethnicities, backgrounds, and perspectives.*

3. A Bible of the student's choice (preferred: NRSV; do not use KJV or a free translation [e.g., *Living Bible*, *Message*, etc.])

4. The instructor will provide various readings representing diverse voices and perspectives related to trauma interpretation of biblical texts (see weekly assignments).

PLNU Mission: To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be

a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3-unit class delivered over 8 weeks. Specific details about how the class meets the credit hour requirement can be provided upon request.

Course Requirements
(see the course schedule below for the specific due dates and content of the assignments)

1. Weekly Reading Discussion Assignments: In each week of the course (except the Gathering Days), each student will post (to the course Canvas site) **three** observations drawn from the overall batch of assigned readings for the week (400 words total) *and* post responses to **two** other students and the observations they have submitted for the week's readings (200 words total). *Be sure to draw your observations from the readings (**not the lecture videos**) and to spread your observations among the assigned readings (in other words, make sure all three of your observations do not come from only one reading).* The observations and responses are worth a combined 20 possible points each week. *[course learning outcomes 2 and 3]*

*The *three reading observations* are due each Friday by 11:59pm PDT.

*The *responses to two other students* are due each Sunday by 11:59pm PDT

++***More Specific Instructions*:**

a. By each Friday at 11:59pm:

*Post **3** observations from the assigned readings for the week (400 words)➔ Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned textbook readings and explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant.

*NOTE: Should be a total of **400 words** for all 3 observations combined

b. By each Sunday at 11:59pm:

*Post on Canvas **responses** to ***two*** classmates' observations that they posted from the week's readings (**ca. 200 words** total for the two responses combined). Thoughtfully engage what they posted and offer some responses that examine their observations or ask questions of them or even add to what they observed.

2. Weekly Scripture Passage Assignments: In most weeks of the course, each student will post (to the course Canvas site) an assignment based on a specified biblical passage. Instructions and the specific biblical passage will be provided under each week's assignment. Each assignment submission is worth 20 points as a whole, should be ca. 500-800 words in length, and is due by Friday at 11:59pm PDT. *[course learning outcomes 1 and 2]*

3. Select a "Focus" Biblical Text: By the third week of the course, each student should select a biblical passage that they wish to use as their "focus text" for some assignments to be submitted on the Canvas site in the weeks following. The passage should be a self-contained unit (i.e., not a patchwork of texts from different passages), with an identifiable beginning and ending, and should be about 10-15 verses in length (depending on the nature of the passage). *Each student should be prepared to identify their chosen focus text in week 3.*

4. Final Integrative Essay: As the culmination to the course, each student will submit (through the course Canvas site) a final integrative essay. The essay should be approximately 1,500-2,000 words (or about 8-10 pages, typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides). Students do not have to have the final essay completed by the time we meet for the Gathering Days. However, you should have enough of it done to present a synopsis of your findings to the whole class during those class meetings. Be prepared to do that during our time together.

The paper is worth 100 possible points and is due by Sunday October 25, 2026 by 11:59pm PDT. *[course learning outcomes 1, 2, 3]*

****More Specific Instructions:** The final essay will be in two parts (distributed roughly equally in the total paper length):

Part 1: In the first part of the paper, the student should respond to the question, *"What have you learned about your focus biblical text by working through the exegetical guide and methods we have explored in the course?"*

a. In answering this question, the student should offer specific insights gained about their passage (with details!) from the different steps of the exegetical guide. There is no need to cover every step in the guide. Rather, answer the question given above by giving specific examples from your work with the guide on your passage.

Part 2: In the second part of the paper, the student should respond to the question, *"What have you learned about contextual interpretation/reception from the different readings and discussions of our course?"*

a. In answering this question, the student is free to take whatever approach they like. However, each student should discuss what they learned about contextual interpretation/reception of the Bible in general terms, as well as with regard to at least one or two specific examples of contextual approaches (exs: Latino/a interpretation, feminist interpretation, African-American interpretation, etc.). The student should also show evidence of using the textbook readings from the course (be sure to cite things from the assigned readings to show your use of them).

Course Policies

1. Grading: The student's grade will be based on a combination of the following:

Possible Points	Assignment
140 (7 at 20 pts each)	Reading Discussion Assignments
120 (6 at 20 pts each)	Scripture Passage Assignments
100	Final Integrative Essay

*Total: 360 (possible points)

*Grading Scale:	94-100 A	84-86 B	74-76 C	64-66 D
	90-93 A-	80-83 B-	70-73 C-	60-63 D-
	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	50s F

2. PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy: Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade. Students who anticipate being absent for an entire week of a course should contact the instructor in advance for approval and make arrangements to complete the required coursework and/or alternative assignments assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor and does not waive attendance requirements. Refer to Academic Policies for additional detail.

3. Late Work Policy: In order not to be considered "late," all assignments must be submitted by the day and time listed as the due date. *Grace Period:* If the student "forgets" or otherwise misses an assignment, she or he may submit it *up to one week after the due date with a penalty*. **The late work penalty is a deduction of *two points per day* until one week after the original due date.** *No assignment will be accepted for credit of any kind more than one week after the original due date*. (NOTE: Any *extra-credit* assignments must be submitted on or before the due date and will not be accepted late for credit of any kind).

4. Language and Belonging: Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.
If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

5. Academic Honesty: Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when

in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See Graduate Academic and General Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

6. PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy: PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request. PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes. Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

7. PLNU Copyright Policy: Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

8. State Authorization: State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

9. PLNU Recording Notification: In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel. Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

10. Use of Technology: In order to be successful in the online or hybrid environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the *Technology and System Requirements* information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible) to complete exams online. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Aug. 31-Sept. 6
A) Starting Points: Introduction to the Course
B) What Is Biblical Interpretation?
Assignments:
1. Watch Dr. Kelle's course introduction video
2. Watch Dr. Kelle's video lecture, "Starting Points: What We're Doing and Where We're Going"
3. Watch Dr. Kelle's video lecture, "What Is Biblical Interpretation?"
4. *If* you need an overall refresher for Bible content, watch the video, "What Is the Bible" at https://thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/
5. Take some time to familiarize yourself with two websites you will want to use as resources throughout the course and your work: a) www.bibleproject.com and b) www.bibleodyssey.org
6. Read Carey, "Preface," and pp. 1-43
7. Read Gorman ch. 10
8. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Scripture Passage Assignment*** (500-800 words) (Note: you can always look at www.bibleproject.com and www.bibleodyssey.org for possible resources on your assignments):

**Read Luke 15:11-32: This is the so-called parable of the "Prodigal (Lost) Son." Traditionally, readers have interpreted the meaning of this parable by reading it from the perspective of the son who went away. But parables can communicate more than one message when viewed from different perspectives. Try interpreting the parable in different ways by focusing on different characters. Respond to these three questions:*

a) What is the message of this parable if you read it by focusing on the "prodigal son"?

b) What is the message of this parable if you read it by focusing on the "older brother"?

c) What is the message of this parable if you read it by focusing on the "waiting parent"?

9. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Reading Discussion Assignment*** (approx. 400 words total)

> *Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned textbook readings for the week and explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant. *Be sure to draw your observations from the readings (not the lecture videos) and to spread your observations among the assigned readings (in other words, make sure all three of your observations do not come from only one reading).*

10. **By Sunday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas **your responses to two classmates' observations** that they posted from the week's readings (approx. 200 words total)

> *Thoughtfully engage what *two* classmates posted and offer some responses that examine their observations, ask questions of them, or even add to what they observed.

Week 2: Sept. 7-13, 2026

A) Methods for Biblical Interpretation
B) Interpreting the Genres of Biblical Literature
C) Preparing to Engage "Reception/Contextual Interpretation"

Assignments:

1. Watch Dr. Kelle's lecture video, "Methods for Biblical Interpretation"
2. Watch Dr. Kelle's lecture video, "The Genres of Biblical Literature"
3. Read Carey, pp. 44-124
4. Read Gorman ch. 8
5. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Scripture Passage Assignment*** (500-800 words) (Note: you can always look at www.bibleproject.com and www.bibleodyssey.org for possible resources on your assignments):

> **Read Jeremiah 29:1-11: For this assignment, you are going to apply some of the methods for interpretation that we have learned to Jeremiah 29:1-11. After reading this passage, respond to the following questions:*
>
> *a) Using clues you find in the passage, what is the historical situation/context of this passage? Be as specific as possible. And what impact does this have on how you understand the message of this text?*
>
> *b) What is the genre (type of literature) of this passage? What difference does that make for how you interpret the meaning of the text?*

6. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Reading Discussion Assignment*** (approx. 400 words total)

> *Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned textbook readings for the week and explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant. *Be sure to draw your observations from the readings (not the lecture videos) and to spread your observations among the assigned readings (in other words, make sure all three of your observations do not come from only one reading).*

7. **By Sunday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas **your responses to <u>two</u> classmates' observations** that they posted from the week's readings (approx. 200 words total)

*Thoughtfully engage what *two* classmates posted and offer some responses that examine their observations, ask questions of them, or even add to what they observed.

Week 3: Sept. 14-20, 2026

Exploring Exegetical Method (Using the Exegetical Guide)

<u>Assignments:</u>

1. Watch Dr. Kelle's video lecture, "Exploring Exegetical Method"
2. Watch Dr. Kelle's video lecture, "African-American Biblical Interpretation"
3. Read Carey, pp. 124-141
4. **Choose a biblical passage that you will use as your "focus text" for assignments in future weeks. The passage should be a self-contained unit (i.e., not a patchwork of texts from different passages), with an identifiable beginning and ending, and should be about 10-15 verses in length (depending on the nature of the passage).
5. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Scripture Passage Assignment*** (500-800 words) (Note: you can always look at www.bibleproject.com and www.bibleodyssey.org for possible resources on your assignments):

**Read Amos 5:18-24: For this assignment, you are going to engage this passage as an example of the genre of biblical prophecy. Respond to these questions:* *a) Based on what was discussed in the previous video lectures, how does this passage represent the genre of biblical prophecy?* *b) What do you notice about the historical context and literary features of this text that might impact your interpretation of it?* *c) Based on what you see in this passage, what does "justice" (or living a life of justice) mean for the community of God's people?*

6. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Reading Discussion Assignment*** (approx. 400 words total)

*Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned textbook readings for the week <u>and</u> explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant. *Be sure to draw your observations from the readings (not the lecture videos) and to spread your observations among the assigned readings (in other words, make sure all three of your observations do not come from only one reading).*

7. **By Sunday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas **your responses to <u>two</u> classmates' observations** that they posted from the week's readings (approx. 200 words total)

*Thoughtfully engage what *two* classmates posted and offer some responses that examine their observations, ask questions of them, or even add to what they observed.

Week 4: Sept. 21-27, 2026
Reception/Contextual Interpretation
Assignments:

1. Watch Dr. Kelle's video lecture, "Feminist Biblical Interpretation"
2. Read Carey ch. 4
3. Read Gorman ch. 18 (Latino/Latina Biblical Interpretation)
4. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Scripture Passage Assignment*** (500-800 words) (Note: you can always look at www.bibleproject.com and www.bibleodyssey.org for possible resources on your assignments):

> **Use your chosen focus biblical text: For this assignment, you are going to engage your chosen focus passage using a few elements from the "Exegetical Guide" provided in syllabus (and on Canvas under "Files"). Using your biblical passage, type out and submit your exegetical notes to the following steps listed on the guide:*
> *Step 1 (Engaging the Text)*
> *Step 2 (Translate Your Text)*
> *Step 3 (Outline Your Text)*
> *Step 4 (Putting the Text in Literary Context)*

5. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Reading Discussion Assignment*** (approx. 400 words total)

> *Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned textbook readings for the week and explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant. *Be sure to draw your observations from the readings (not the lecture videos) and to spread your observations among the assigned readings (in other words, make sure all three of your observations do not come from only one reading).*

6. **By Sunday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas **your responses to two classmates' observations** that they posted from the week's readings (approx. 200 words total)

> *Thoughtfully engage what *two* classmates posted and offer some responses that examine their observations, ask questions of them, or even add to what they observed.

Week 5: Sept. 28-Oct. 4, 2026
A) Introducing Trauma Interpretation of the Bible
B) Reception/Contextual Interpretation
Assignments:

1. Watch Dr. Kelle's video lecture, "Introducing Trauma Interpretation of the Bible"
2. Read Frechette and Boase, "Defining Trauma as a Useful Lens for Biblical Interpretation," pp. 1-25 (under "Files" on Canvas site)
3. Read Carey ch. 5
4. Read Gorman ch. 17 (African American Biblical Interpretation)
5. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Scripture Passage Assignment*** (500-800 words) (Note: you can always look at www.bibleproject.com and www.bibleodyssey.org for possible resources on your assignments):

> **Use your chosen focus biblical text: For this assignment, you are going to engage your chosen focus passage using a few elements from the "Exegetical Guide"*

provided in syllabus (and on Canvas under files). Using your biblical passage, type out and submit your exegetical notes to the following steps listed on the guide:
Step 5 (Putting the Text in Historical Context)
Step 6 (Analyze Your Text)

6. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Reading Discussion Assignment*** (approx. 400 words total)

***For this assignment, focus especially on the readings related to trauma interpretation of the Bible:** Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned readings for the week and explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant.

7. **By Sunday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas **your responses to two classmates' observations** that they posted from the week's readings (approx. 200 words total)

*Thoughtfully engage what *two* classmates posted and offer some responses that examine their observations, ask questions of them, or even add to what they observed.

Week 6: Oct. 5-11, 2026
A) Reception/Contextual Interpretation
B) Continuing Trauma Interpretation of the Bible
Assignments:
(No lecture video to watch this week)

1. **CHOOSE ONE** to read: a) Brent A. Strawn, "Trauma, Psalmic Disclosure, and Authentic Happiness," pp. 143-160 (under "Files" on Canvas site) **OR** b) L. Juliana M. Claassens, "Trauma and Recovery: A New Hermeneutical Framework for the Rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13)," pp. 177-192 (under "Files" on Canvas site)
2. Read Carey ch. 6
3. Read Gorman ch. 19 (Asian and Asian American Biblical Interpretation)
4. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Scripture Passage Assignment*** (500-800 words) (Note: you can always look at www.bibleproject.com and www.bibleodyssey.org for possible resources on your assignments):

**Use your chosen focus biblical text: Look back at your focus text through the lens of trauma interpretation as we have presented it so far. What possible reference to or elements of trauma do you see reflected in your focus text, if any? Do you see anything in your text that looks like an attempted response to trauma? How could you imagine your text functioning in a context of trauma today?*

5. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Reading Discussion Assignment*** (approx. 400 words total)

*Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned textbook readings for the week and explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant. *Be sure to draw your observations from the readings (not the lecture videos) and to spread your observations among the assigned readings (in other words, make sure all three of your observations do not come from only one reading).*

6. **By Sunday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas **your responses to <u>two</u> classmates' observations** that they posted from the week's readings (approx. 200 words total)

> *Thoughtfully engage what *two* classmates posted and offer some responses that examine their observations, ask questions of them, or even add to what they observed.

Week 7: Oct. 12-18, 2026
Continuing Trauma Interpretation of the Bible
<u>Assignments:</u>

(No lecture video to watch this week)

1. Read Brad E. Kelle, "Is Hosea Also among the Traumatized? The Book of Hosea and Trauma Hermeneutics of the Prophets" (under "Files" on Canvas site)
2. Read Jennifer M. Matheny and Amy E. Hale, "The Raging Prophet: Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) as a Pathway Forward Through Pain" (under "Files" on Canvas site)
3. Read Ruth Poser, "No Words: The Book of Ezekiel as Trauma and a Response to the Exile," pp. 27-48 (under "Files" on Canvas site)
4. **NO *Scripture Passage Assignment*** this week.
5. **By Friday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas ***Reading Discussion Assignment*** (approx. 400 words total)

> *Select 3 significant statements or points made or things you observed in the assigned textbook readings for the week <u>and</u> explain briefly for each one of your 3 observations why you thought it was significant. *Be sure to draw your observations from the readings (not the lecture videos) and to spread your observations among the assigned readings (in other words, make sure all three of your observations do not come from only one reading).*

6. **By Sunday at 11:59pm PDT:** Submit on Canvas **your responses to <u>two</u> classmates' observations** that they posted from the week's readings (approx. 200 words total)

> *Thoughtfully engage what *two* classmates posted and offer some responses that examine their observations, ask questions of them, or even add to what they observed.

Week 8: In-person Gathering Days at PLNU (or on Zoom for Distance Students) October 19-21, 2026:

*1. *Be sure to bring all your textbooks and course materials to class with you each day.*

2. The assignment that is due this week (at the end of the week on Canvas) is your **Final Integrative Essay**. You do not have to have it completed by the time we meet for the Gathering Days. However, you should have enough of it done to present a synopsis of your findings to the whole class. Be prepared to do that during our time together.

3. Most of our in-person time will be spent exploring trauma interpretation of the Bible expanding on the readings you have already done in the course thus far. Be sure to bring your Bible with you!

Gathering Days Schedule:
-Mon. Oct. 19, 2026: 8:00am-5:00pm (PST)
-Tues. Oct. 20, 2026: 8:00am-5:00pm (PST)
-Wed. Oct. 21, 2026: 8:00am-12:00pm (PST)

***Final Integrative Essay** due on Canvas by Sunday October 25, 2026 by 11:59pm PDT. See instructions given above under the Course Requirements section.

Interpreting Christian Scripture (Dr. Kelle)
EXEGETICAL GUIDE

STEP 1: ENGAGING THE TEXT
Initial questions on which to make some notes:
a. What drew you to this text for an exegetical paper? What interests you about it?
b. What do commentaries and your other sources say about why this text is significant?

STEP 2: TRANSLATE YOUR TEXT
Read and compare at least four different translations (e.g. NIV, NRSV, NAB, etc.) of your text. Note any textual problems in margins or footnotes. Note words that seem significant or problematic.

STEP 3: OUTLINE YOUR TEXT
Divide your text into main units and subunits based on content. Make an outline of the text using your division (note: you will organize the body of your paper by offering exegetical analysis of each section [as you have divided the text] in turn)

STEP 4: PUTTING THE TEXT IN LITERARY CONTEXT
a. Formulate a summary of the unit or section that *immediately precedes* your text.
b. Formulate a summary of the unit or section that *immediately follows* your text.
c. Make notes on how your text fits and functions in this literary context (e.g., is it a transitional passage? Is it the climax? Is it the beginning? Etc.)

STEP 5: PUTTING THE TEXT IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT
Using outside resources such as commentaries and histories of Israel, compile notes on the following:
a. what is the historical context of this passage? That is, what is the context in which it was composed? What historical background does the text presume? How do you see that in the text itself?
b. what *type* of literature ("genre") is your text (ex: is it a narrative? sermon? poem? speech? prayer? etc.)? What technical genre, if any, do commentaries suggest for this text? How does knowing the genre change the way you understand the text?

STEP 6: ANALYZE YOUR TEXT
a. Within the text itself, what literary artistry do you see? What rhetorical devices are used? How do these devices affect the meaning of the text? Look for and note:

Repetition	Anaphora (repeated use of initial word)
Hyperbole (exaggeration for effect)	Irony
Simile (one thing likened to another)	Rhetorical Questions
Metaphor (implied comparison)	Dialogue Between Characters

b. Note key words, names, and places which seem significant. Use Bible Dictionaries and Concordances to explore the significance of these words.
c. Address the theological issues in the text: What appears to be the major theological affirmations in this text? What is being said about God? about humanity? about salvation?

STEP 7: RESEARCH YOUR TEXT
At this point you should work through a number of commentaries and other outside sources to supplement the initial notes you have taken on each of the steps above. From the commentaries, pull out additional items on the elements above, grab some quotations to use, look for insights or especially technical items that you missed, etc. You should find things to plug into each of the research categories above.
Specifically: Research your text using at least **five scholarly commentaries. Highly recommended are the following series: a. Word Biblical Commentary, b. The New Century Bible Commentary, c. New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, d. Anchor Bible Commentary, e. International Critical Commentary, f. Old Testament Library, g. The Interpreter's Bible, h. Hermeneia, i. Continental Commentary, j. Berit Olam, k. New International Commentary on the OT (NICOT), l. Tyndale OT Commentaries, m. The Cambridge Bible Commentary.

STEP 8: FORMULATE A THESIS FOR YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT
Now that you have completed your research, come up with a single thesis statement that succinctly states *your reading/interpretation* of the text at hand (that is, a statement that says what this passage is in your view).

[*Example: "Hosea 2 is a metaphorical and theological commentary on the events in Samaria at the close of the Syro-Ephraimitic War (ca. 731 BCE)."]

STEP 9: APPLY YOUR TEXT
How could you bring this text to bear on human need? How could you apply this text in a setting of preaching, teaching, etc.? What would a sermon or lesson based on your exegesis of this text look like?