



Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form.



Moody Distance Learning

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

TH4471 Topics in Systematic Theology: Theology and Hermeneutics, 3 credit hours

Course Description

An investigation of selected topics in systematic theology, topics will be chosen in accord with the professor's interests and competencies, student interest, and the consent of the department. The course may be repeated for credit if the topic of study differs. Topics recently offered include "Sin and Salvation," "Spiritual Theology," and "Ecclesiology." This course can be credited as a Theology elective.

Prerequisite: TH-3340 Systematic Theology II

Course Objectives

By the completion of this course you should be able to:

1. Articulate the larger hermeneutical tradition
2. Analyze prevailing modern biblical hermeneutics
3. Think theologically about Scripture, hermeneutics, and the world engaging the text
4. Defend a robust account of distinctly Christian, theological biblical hermeneutics

Content Expectations

Required textbooks for all Moody Online classes can be found on the [Required Textbooks](#) section of the Moody website.

NOTE: Additional content or links to Internet content may be required and will be provided in the course.

Assignments

See the Syllabus page in the Blackboard course for general assignment instructions.

All assignments are due according to the schedule listed on the Course Schedule.

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Active participation is expected in this online course. Participation includes two main areas: discussion boards and reading. **Class Participation** accounts for between 25% and 40% of final course grade.
 - a. **Discussion Boards: DO THE CLASS INTRODUCTION. Otherwise,** discussion boards are **not applicable** for this course.
 - b. **Course Expectations:** The completion of the course reading, audio/video reviews, online articles, etc. is an important part of the course. You are expected to complete the weekly expectations prior to your discussion boards each week so you are able to discuss the concepts with others in the course.
2. **ASSIGNMENTS:** There will be several projects in this course requiring skills learned that include work with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Specific assignment instructions are provided under the Assignments menu. The assignments in the course are:

COMPARISON ESSAYS (Lessons 2-7)

For each comparison essay, you will engage in analysis of the readings for the week, comparing and contrasting the authors' understandings of the hermeneutical process.



- How does each develop on a tradition, and
- How does each go its own way?

As you progress through the comparisons, this will include analysis relative to previous weeks' readings, **but comparatively**, this should be **only a small portion** of your paper (exception: the Westphal Comparison Essay [IV] should be situated vis-à-vis Augustine and Kaiser). The goal is to do the hard work of determining what the currently read weekly essays and book add to the discussion. You should directly cite, whether through paraphrase or quotation, though paraphrase is preferable: analyze in your own words, bringing out the main ideas in the reading. These essays **are not summaries** of the readings. You should be answering the general question:

- How do these essays shape the hermeneutical enterprise, and
- What are their distinctives?

These papers will be **4-5 pages, double-spaced**. See below for additional assignment details.

SPECIAL HERMENEUTICS ESSAYS (Lessons 10-14)

These papers will mirror the comparison papers but will consist of evaluating the reading topic of the week to the theological task of biblical hermeneutics. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches to distinctly Christian hermeneutics in their various settings.

- What are the gains / losses of the assigned readings to the task of understanding Scripture as a living text and divine instrument of sanctification for the church in all times and places, not simply the original audience?
- How might the considerations during these weeks' readings challenge the existing paradigm of biblical hermeneutics?
- Must the solution be either the existing paradigm of modern biblical hermeneutics or these various appropriations of theological hermeneutics? Elaborate.

These papers will be **4-5 pages, double-spaced**. See below for additional assignment details.

a. **Assignment 1-1: GENERAL/SPECIAL HERMENEUTICS ESSAY**

“What is Hermeneutics?”

Before doing the readings, write a paragraph on what you believe hermeneutics to be:

- What is its task, and
- How do you undertake the completion of this task?

This will be the opening paragraph of your essay. *After you complete this paragraph, proceed to the readings.*

This essay will be **3-pages**, double-spaced. You **should** include your original paragraph on what you believed hermeneutics to be. You will answer the following questions in your essay:

- In your own words and upon reflection from the readings, describe hermeneutics.
- Upon comparison to your opening paragraph, is this the way you thought of hermeneutics prior to doing the reading? Describe the similarities and/or dissimilarities.
- What do you understand the difference to be between general and special hermeneutics?
- Under which kind of hermeneutics do you understand your initial paragraph to lie?
- How about biblical hermeneutics as you understand it (if there has been a shift, explain how and why)?

In addressing this last question, find the hermeneutics text that you used for your Hermeneutics course at Moody, and evaluate its approach with regard to your understanding of general and special hermeneutics (cite specific methodological commitments mentioned in the text).

Submit before moving on to Lesson 2

b. **Assignment 2-1: COMPARISON ESSAY I: AUGUSTINE / KAISER**
Assigned Lesson 2

In your comparison essay, you will engage in analysis of the readings for Lessons 2 and 3. Comparing and contrasting the authors' understandings of the hermeneutical process:

- How does each develop on a tradition, and
- How does each go its own way?

You should directly cite, whether through paraphrase or quotation, though paraphrase is preferable: analyze in your own words, bringing out the main ideas in the reading. This essay **is not summaries** of the readings. You should be answering the general question,

- How do these essays shape the hermeneutical enterprise, and
- What are there distinctives?

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 2-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 4

c. **Assignment 4-1: COMPARISON ESSAY II: SCHLEIERMACHER / BULTMANN**

In your comparison essay, you will engage in analysis of the readings for Lesson 4. Comparing and contrasting the authors' understandings of the hermeneutical process:

- How does each develop on a tradition, and
- How does each go its own way?

As you progress through the comparisons, this will include analysis relative to previous Lessons' readings, **but comparatively**, this should be **only a small portion** of your paper. The goal is to do the hard work of determining what the present (Lesson 4) essays add to the discussion.

You should directly cite, whether through paraphrase or quotation, though paraphrase is preferable: analyze in your own words, bringing out the main ideas in the reading. This essay **is not summaries** of the readings. You should be answering the general question,

- How do these essays shape the hermeneutical enterprise, and
- What are there distinctives?

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 4-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 5

***** Assignment 7-1: HERMENEUTICAL CHART *****

See directions below and begin working on this assignment. This will be **submitted before you begin Lesson 8**.

d. **Assignment 5-1: COMPARISON ESSAY III: GADAMER / RICOEUR / WOLTERSTORFF**

In your comparison essay, you will engage in analysis of the readings for Lesson 4. Comparing and contrasting the authors' understandings of the hermeneutical process:

- How does each develop on a tradition, and
- How does each go its own way?

As you progress through the comparisons, this will include analysis relative to previous Lessons' readings, **but comparatively**, this should be **only a small portion** of your paper. The goal is to do the hard work of determining what the present (Lesson 4) essays add to the discussion.

You should directly cite, whether through paraphrase or quotation, though paraphrase is preferable: analyze in your own words, bringing out the main ideas in the reading. This essay **is not summaries** of the readings. You should be answering the general question,

- How do these essays shape the hermeneutical enterprise, and
- What are there distinctives?

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 5-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 6

e. Assignment 6-1: COMPARISON ESSAY IV: WESTPHOL
Assigned in Lesson 6

In your comparison essay, you will engage in analysis of the readings for Lesson 4. Comparing and contrasting the authors' understandings of the hermeneutical process:

- How does each develop on a tradition, and
- How does each go its own way?

As you progress through the comparisons, this will include analysis relative to previous Lessons' readings, **but comparatively**, this should be **only a small portion** of your paper (**exception:** the Westphal Comparison Essay [IV] should be situated vis-à-vis Augustine and Kaiser). The goal is to do the hard work of determining what the present (Lesson 4) essays add to the discussion.

You should directly cite, whether through paraphrase or quotation, though paraphrase is preferable: analyze in your own words, bringing out the main ideas in the reading. This essay **is not summaries** of the readings. You should be answering the general question,

- How do these essays shape the hermeneutical enterprise, and
- What are there distinctives?

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 6-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 8

f. Assignment 7-1: HERMENEUTICAL CHART

Using the **Assignment 7-1 Hermeneutical Chart** template provided, you will make a chart with the top (x) axis consisting of three rows: "Author/Behind the Text," "Text/World of the Text," "Reader/In Front of the Text." The vertical (y) axis will consist of rows labeled according to the hermeneuticians that you are reading. Fill in the chart by explaining what each author says the role or place of each of the three fields is in the hermeneutical task.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 8

g. **Assignment 8-1: JACOBS ESSAY**

Assigned in Lesson 8

Alan Jacob's book, *A Theology of Reading*, begins the transition from general to special hermeneutics in that it seeks to reflect the biblical mandate to love God and neighbor upon reading in general. Jacobs specifically turns his attention to reading literature theologically, yet his aim most certainly is to consider how being Christian and thinking like a Christian influences attentiveness to the subject matter of a text as an *other*. This paper moves from comparison to reflection, functioning as an essay on the gains of Jacobs's argument upon Christian interaction both with texts generally and the biblical text in particular. In this essay, you should feel free to make connections to previous readings for the course, but the large portion should be **an evaluation** of Jacobs's argument:

- Is he compelling?
- How does Jacobs rely upon yet further Augustine's program in *On Christian Teaching*?
- How might thinking about reading theologically matter to the Christian's presentation to the world and to the Christian's approach to Scripture?

And in your evaluation,

- What does this add to or detract from thinking about biblical hermeneutics as method and a collection of tools?

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 8-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 10

h. **Assignment 10-1: SUPERIORITY OF PRE-MODERN EXEGESIS ESSAY**

This paper will mirror the comparison papers (Assignments 2-1 to 6-1) **but** will consist of **evaluating the readings** (Steinmetz and *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Chapters 1-3)) to the **theological task of biblical hermeneutics**. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches to distinctly Christian hermeneutics in their various settings.

- What are the gains / losses of the assigned readings to the task of understanding Scripture as a living text and divine instrument of sanctification for the church in all times and places, not simply the original audience?
- How might the considerations during this week's readings challenge the existing paradigm of biblical hermeneutics?
- Must the solution be either the existing paradigm of modern biblical hermeneutics or these various appropriations of the theological hermeneutics? Elaborate.

Your essay is to be **three to four (3-4) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the three to four (3-4) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 10-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 11

i. **Assignment 11-1: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS ESSAY**

This paper will mirror the comparison papers (Assignments 2-1 to 6-1) **but** will consist of **evaluating the readings** (Treier and Poythress) to the **theological task of biblical hermeneutics**. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches to distinctly Christian hermeneutics in their various settings.

- What are the gains / losses of the assigned readings to the task of understanding Scripture as a living text and divine instrument of sanctification for the church in all times and places, not simply the original audience?
- How might the considerations during this week's readings challenge the existing paradigm of biblical hermeneutics?
- Must the solution be either the existing paradigm of modern biblical hermeneutics or these various appropriations of theological hermeneutics? Elaborate.

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 11-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 12

j. **Assignment 12-1: THEOLOGICAL AND GENERAL HERMENEUTICS ESSAY**

This paper will mirror the comparison papers (Assignments 2-1 to 6-1) **but** will consist of **evaluating the readings** (Treier and the two (2) Vanhoozer articles) to the **theological task of biblical hermeneutics**. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches to distinctly Christian hermeneutics in their various settings.

- What are the gains / losses of the assigned readings to the task of understanding Scripture as a living text and divine instrument of sanctification for the church in all times and places, not simply the original audience?
- How might the considerations during this week's readings challenge the existing paradigm of biblical hermeneutics?
- Must the solution be either the existing paradigm of modern biblical hermeneutics or these various appropriations of theological hermeneutics? Elaborate.

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 12-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 13

k. **Assignment 13-1: THEOLOGY AND SPECIAL HERMENEUTICS ESSAY**

Assigned in Lessons 13 / 14

This paper will mirror the comparison papers (Assignments 2-1 to 6-1) **but** will consist of **evaluating the readings** (Vanhoozer, Bowald, Treier and Yeago) to the **theological task of biblical hermeneutics**. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches to distinctly Christian hermeneutics in their various settings.

- What are the gains / losses of the assigned readings to the task of understanding Scripture as a living text and divine instrument of sanctification for the church in all times and places, not simply the original audience?
- How might the considerations during this week's readings challenge the existing paradigm of biblical hermeneutics?

- Must the solution be either the existing paradigm of modern biblical hermeneutics or these various appropriations of theological hermeneutics? Elaborate.

Your essay is to be **four to five (4-5) pages double-spaced**. Don't forget that there should be a Works Cited page which is not part of the four to five (4-5) page essay. You can also see **Assignment 13-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Submit before moving on to Lesson 15

I. **Assignment 15-1: ESSAY ON THEOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS – FINAL ESSAY**

This is your opportunity to make your case. As Christians reading Scripture as a *Christian* text, what are the issues to which we should attend, and how should our Christian faith influence our reading for the Church?

In **8-10 pages, double-spaced**, and generously using the readings assigned throughout the course, provide your take on Christian hermeneutics of Scripture.

- Do you favor a general or special hermeneutics approach?

Develop your view, and anticipate potential objections by those in other camps, responding to those as you go.

This is an argumentative paper, meaning that you should have a **clearly discernable** thesis that directs your essay from introduction to conclusion. Each element of the essay should work toward furthering your thesis. For this final assignment it would benefit your paper to be familiar with actual theological commentaries in order to see what difference various hermeneutical emphases make to the interpretative process.

You can also see **Assignment 15-1 Description and Rubric** document for further instruction.

Due at the end of Lesson 16



Assessments

Your grade for this course will consist of:

Assessments	Percent
General and Special Hermeneutics	5%
Comparison Paper I: Augustine/Kaiser	25%
Comparison Paper II: Schleiermacher/Bultmann	
Comparison Paper III: Gadamer/Ricoeur/Wolterstorff	
Comparison Paper IV: Westphal	
Hermeneutics Chart	10%
Jacobs Paper	10%
Superiority of Pre-Modern Exegesis?	25%
Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics	
Theology and General Hermeneutics	
Theology and Special Hermeneutics	
Essay on Theology and Hermeneutics	25%
	100%

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent
A	96% or higher	C	73 - 76.9%
A-	90 - 95.9%	C-	70 - 72.9%
B+	87 - 89.9%	D+	67 - 69.9%
B	83 - 86.9%	D	63- 66.9%
B-	80 - 82.9%	D-	60 - 62.9%
C+	77 - 79.9%	F	Below 60%