



Syllabus for
GTHE 658—Biblical Authority

3.0 Cr./6p

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Analyzes the issue of the authority of the Bible in modern theology. The course provides a historical overview of the role of Holy Scripture in Christian theology and explores such concepts as inspiration, authority, infallibility, and inerrancy. Investigates related concerns such as canon, tradition, translation, hermeneutics, biblical criticism, the witness of the Spirit, and proclamation as these impinge upon one's view of the authority of the Scriptures.

II. COURSE GOALS

The purpose of this course is to enable the student to do the following:

- A. Gain historical perspective as to the use of Scripture in Christian theology.
- B. Explicate the relation between the authority of the Bible, the church, and the Holy Spirit.
- C. Explore the nature of the inspiration of the Bible.
- D. Characterize the clarity and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture.
- E. Evaluate the effects of biblical criticism of the authority of the Bible.
- F. Explore the current debate among evangelicals over the term „inerrancy.“
- G. Obtain greater reverence for the Bible as God's Word.
- H. Communicate the Scriptures effectively, accurately, and authoritatively in a post-modern world.
- I. Apply biblical interpretation to contemporary issues.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- A. Trace the historical uses of Scripture in Christian theology.

- B. Describe the nature of the inspiration of the Bible.
- C. Define and discuss the concepts of “infallibility“ and “inerrancy“ as related to Holy Scripture.
- D. Explain the importance of the witness of the Spirit in relation to biblical authority.
- E. Depict both sides of the inerrancy debate among evangelicals fairly, stating personal views and the basis for those views clearly.
- F. Explain personal view of biblical authority.
- G. Explain the importance of using sound principles of biblical interpretation.

IV. TEXTBOOKS

Required Textbooks:

Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Kaiser, Walter C. *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Saucy, Robert L. *Scripture: Its Power, Authority and Relevance*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001.

Recommended Textbooks:

Fee, Gordon. *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991.

Packer, J. I. *God Has Spoken: Revelation and the Bible*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979, 1993.

V. COURSE PROCEDURES

A. Course Prerequisites: None

B. Evaluation Procedures:

1. Grading Scale

A = 90-100	D = 60-69
B = 80-89	F = below 60
C = 70-79	

2. Assignments

Quizzes	21%
Assignments	18%
Research Paper	20%

Mid-Term Exam	16%
Final Exam	<u>25%</u>
TOTAL	100%

- a. Quizzes: There will be seven quizzes with true/false and/or multiple choice questions (units 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13). They will be objective in form, focusing on the facts of the material covered in the respective unit.
- b. Assignments: Read the weekly unit assignment in the course books. Take notes. There are also lectures to listen to. Every other week, you are supposed to answer the questions accompanying the material of the last two units. The questions are scheduled for unit 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 14.
- c. Research Paper: The paper on a given topic in the field should be 10-15 double-spaced pages long. More instruction will be given in the class.
- d. Midterm Exam: An online test covering the first 8 units. More instruction will be given in the class.
- e. Final Exam: A comprehensive online test covering units 1-15. More instruction will be given in the class.

VII. COURSE CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Unit 1	The General Revelation	Saucy 3-42
Unit 2	The Special Revelation	Saucy 45-85
Unit 3	The Problematics of Bibl. Interpretation	Bray 14-76
Unit 4	The Inspiration of Scripture	Saucy 89-161
Unit 5	Patristic Interpretation	Bray 77-128
Unit 6	The Canonization and Sources of Authority	Saucy 165-248
Unit 7	Medieval Interpretation	Bray 129-164
Unit 8	The Renaissance and Reformation MID-TERM EXAM	Bray 165-220
Unit 9	The Historical-Critical Method	Bray 221-269
Unit 10	The OT Research in the 19 th Century	Bray 270-320
Unit 11	The NT Research in the 19 th Century	Bray 321-375
Unit 12	Hermeneutics	Bray 539-583

Unit 13	The OT Research in the 20 th Century	Bray 376-421
Unit 14	The NT Research in the 20 th Century	Bray 422-460
Unit 15	The Contemporary Scene	Bray 461-538 584-588

FINAL EXAM