

Bible Study Methods
True^North
Disciple-making in the Word

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Course is on Zoom Mondays 6-9 PM, September 7, 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12, 19

Post-course Work due October 26

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of assumptions, procedures, and guidelines to be used in interpreting the Bible.

Emphasis is upon refinement of the student's skills in (1) prayer, (2) observation, (3) interpretation and (4) application. The course is designed to develop the student's ability to study the Scriptures accurately, systematically, and independently as a basis for all further personal and professional use of the Bible.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

There are dual goals for this class. First, for the student to be able to integrate the basic skills of biblical interpretation into a life-long discipline of study of God's Word. The second objective is to equip the student with the skills to teach others how to study the Bible themselves. To that end, upon completion of this course,

Together, we will seek to:

1. Describe in detail the steps of *True^North* Bible Study: (1) Prayer, (2) Observation, (3) Interpretation, and (4) Application.
2. Develop **Prayer** as the essential first step of Bible Study
3. Develop **Observational** skills.
 - a. Identify major themes, divisions, and structural relationships within a given biblical passage or book;
 - b. Make detailed observations and ask probing questions of a given biblical passage;
4. Develop **Interpretation** skills.
 - a. Use the tools and resources of biblical scholarship to answer questions from the biblical text that pertain to the geographical, historical, linguistic, cultural, and theological contexts of a particular biblical passage or book;
5. Develop **Application** Skills.
 - a. Describe how to evaluate biblical passages in light of the larger witness of the biblical canon and the dynamics of progressive revelation;
 - b. Learn to Use Questions to Trigger Application Answer Questions

6. Commit to a lifelong of equipping others how to Pray, Observe, Interpret, and Apply the Word for the sake of building up the Church to pursue one's personal discipleship and righteousness, ministry in the church, and service to the world.
7. To read, interpret, and apply the Scriptures "sacramentally" for the rest of life.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Smith, David, *True^North: Disciple-making in the Word* (2022).
<https://www.truenorthbiblestudy.com/workbook-1>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Bauer, David., and Robert Traina. *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011.

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

Hendricks, Howard G., and William D. Hendricks. *Living by the Book*. Chicago: Moody, 2007.

Kaiser, Walter C., and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

Klein, William W., Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word, 2017.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2007.

Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*. 3rd Edition. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2014.

Traina, Robert A. *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, KY, 1952.

Wald, Oletta. *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975.

Grades

Class Participation: 20%

Participation grade will be awarded based upon attendance and active engagement in the class sessions. Reading of the workbook will provide the material with which to engage.

Teaching Reflection: 20%

A weekly one-page reflection regarding the wins and challenges experienced in teaching and discipling one's small group or an individual is required.

Methods Practice: 40%

Each of the following is worth 10%, making 40% total:

Mark 1st & 2nd reading, paragraph and sentence observation

Ruth 1st & 2nd reading, paragraph and sentence observation

Interpretation context page, word study, 3 commentaries list

Review + Application set of questions 1 & 2

Post-course work: 20%

Prayer, observation, interpretation, application of Mark 8-10 or Mark 14-16

Evaluation/Grade Scale

A final grade of 76% is needed to meet the academic requirements for credentialing in The Wesleyan Church.

At the completion of the course, numerical grades are submitted to the Division of Education and Clergy Development and converted to letter grades using the following grade scale (Note: A grade of C or higher is required to pass the course):

100 to 97	A	87 to 85	B-	70 to 68	D
96 to 94	A-	84 to 81	C+	67 & below	F
93 to 91	B+	80 to 76	C		
90 to 88	B	75 to 71	C-		

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

For simplicity, please note all reading is from *True^North:
Disciple-making in the Word Workbook*

Homework is due each week before class. Please note there is pre-course work and the first two weeks have less work than the remainder of the course.

September 7 - Week 1 Introduction

Read Preface and Chapters 1-4 for class discussion.

Recruit a small group or disciple-in-the-making with whom you will share the course content each week.

September 14 – Week 2 Prayer and Observation

Teach the course contents and write a one-page reflection regarding the experience of teaching and discipling others. Focus in the reflection on the wins and challenges of the teaching.

Read Chapters 5-6 for class discussion.

September 21 - Week 3 Observation

Read the entire book of Mark and make basic big picture observations. In the end (according to chapter 6), write a 250 words summary of what you encountered in Mark. This is what True^North calls your “First Reading.”

Read the entire book of Mark once again. Provide the details for each chapter as you read. Remember, you are doing this to grasp the meaning and contents of Mark and so you can grasp the process in order to teach it to your Disciple-in-the-making.

Teach the course contents and write a one-page reflection regarding the experience of teaching and discipling others. Focus in the reflection on the wins and challenges of the teaching.

Read Chapter 7 for class discussion.

September 28 - Week 4 Observation and Interpretation

Paragraph Observation of Mark 4:35-5:43. Mark the passage with as many observations as you can based upon its structures and contents. Then write at least 10 observations and shape them into questions from as many categories discussed in class as possible. Finally, look again and see if there is anything else you might include.

Teach the course contents and write a one-page reflection regarding the experience of teaching and discipling others. Focus in the reflection on the wins and challenges of the teaching.

Read Chapter 8.

October 5 - Week 5 Interpretation

Sentence Observation. Choose 1-2 sentences/verses from Mark 4:35-5:43. Slowly move word by word or phrase by phrase, making a range of observations. Next, reshape your observation into the form of a question in the column next to your observation. Finally, you may be able to make a possible inference into the answer to your question. YES, this can seem tedious. But it is the best way to keep focused on the sentence(s) and not to bring yourself into the conversation. OBSERVATION is about "What the text says." If you want to do this by hand, that is just fine. If you prefer to do this electronically, wonderful.

Teach the course contents and write a one-page reflection regarding the experience of teaching and discipling others. Focus in the reflection on the wins and challenges of the teaching.

Read Chapter 9

October 12 - Week 6 Application

Word study on Mark 15:25-39

Read Mark 15:25-39 from 3 commentaries and write a one-page list of notes from each.

Teach the course contents and write a one-page reflection regarding the experience of teaching and discipling others. Focus in the reflection on the wins and challenges of the teaching.

Read Chapter 10

October 19 – Week 7 Application

Construct your step by step walk through the text, citation of the evidence, and the full answer to your Interpretive question.

300-word answer to each of the following questions

1. How do the OT voices help prepare us for the teachings in Mark 1, 8, 15? Are these prophetic words now fulfilled in Jesus? If so, how?

2. Are the NT voices in complete agreement with the OT? Does the story of Jesus as told by Mark (or John or Paul) alter our understanding of the inbreaking Kingdom of God? If so, specifically in what ways?
3. Directly related to question #2 is this additional one. If there is not complete agreement on the meaning of a topic, is this because the NT has called us to recalibrate our Spiritual compass based upon the voice of Jesus? A more technical way of putting this question: What issues were raised in your interpretation that are not for all times and for all cultures? For example, the chapter on Application (chapter 10) in *True^North* discusses the topic of Jewish food laws? Are they for all people in every setting at all times?

Answer 4 of the 7 Application questions in chapter 10 of the workbook.

Pray about the answer and share the answer and the other course contents with your small group.

October 26- Post Course Work

Prayer, Observation, Interpretation and Application of Mark 8-10 or Mark 14-16

Week	Homework Due	Class Time
9/7	<i>True^North</i> : Preface & Chap 1-4	<i>True^North</i> Introduction
9/14	<i>True^North</i> : Chapter 5-6	Pray: First and Always
9/21	<i>True^North</i> : Chap 7 Assignment: Entire Book of Mark 2 times	Observation: What Does the Text Say? Part 1-2 Start with the Big Picture Identifying Literary Structures
9/28	<i>True^North</i> : Chap 8 Paragraph Observation: Mark 4:35-5:43	Observation: What Does the Text Say Part 3 How the Parts Fit into the Whole

Week	Homework Due	Class Time
		Interpretation: What Did the Text Mean? Part 1 CIE – Context Is Everything <i>True^North</i> : Chap 9 Assignment: Mark's Literary Context & Mark's Cultural Context
10/5	<i>True^North</i> : Chap 9 Sentence Observation	Interpretation: What Did the Text Mean? Part 2-3 Word Studies Reading with the Community of Faith Assignment: Commentaries and "What is Your Final Answer?"
10/12	<i>True^North</i> : Chap 10 Word Studies 3 Commentaries	Application: What Does the Text Mean to Me?
10/19	Application Questions	Let's Put It All Together Assignment: Mark 8-10 or Mark 14-16 1: Prayer 2. Observation 3. Interpretation 4. Application

Plagiarism

Students are expected to exhibit honesty and integrity in their personal, professional and academic life, and work. As Christians, we are called to a high standard of honesty.

Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Copying all or part of a theme, exam, paper, reading report, or other written work from another person;
- Submitting as one's own work that which was wholly or partially done by another;
- Quoting material from any source without clearly indicating it is someone else's work;
- Summarizing or paraphrasing from any source without clearly indicating it is someone else's work;
- Misrepresentation of documentation or resources
- Submitting workbook answers copied from another person or working in a group and submitting an identical set of answers for each member of the group without explicit permission from the professor;

- Cheating on a test by getting answers in an unauthorized manner;
- Submitting the same work for more than one course without the prior approval of the instructor.

An instance of plagiarism will result in an automatic “F” for the specific assignment and may also result in an automatic failure of the course.

Repeat offences will result in an automatic failure of the course.

Additional Policies

Attendance is required in Zoom sessions. One missed class will be allowed.

Giving of extensions is up to the professor and are limited to extenuating circumstances. Students should let professors know before an assignment is considered late why the extension is needed. Merely being busy is not reason for an extension.