

## **Faculty Information Literacy Stipend Final Report**

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**Course: NT 6301**

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### **Introduction**

Information literacy shapes each step of the multi-layered exegetical process that is scaffolded for students throughout the semester. Exegesis is the critical explanation and interpretation of a biblical text. There are two short assignments, each based upon a session with the librarian, that enable students to learn the basic steps of the process – primary source exploration and library skills. These prepare students for a final research paper that brings all the steps together.

In past versions of the final paper assignment, students have learned to tick the boxes for each step of the exegesis process but have a hard time really exploring the potentials of the text through work on the primary passage or through interpretations of it. This was the area we hoped to improve by better addressing “Research as Inquiry” and “Information Creation as a Process.”

### **Description of the information literacy assignment or activities**

Leslie led two class sessions. The first was on the development of and establishing the primary text by focusing on Text Criticism and Concordance work. The second focused on scholarly sources to put text in ancient context and current interpretive conversations.

Each session was followed by low-stakes assignments for students to try out their new skills. The text criticism assignment was the newest component, which focused on John 5:1-9. The Library Skills assignment focused on putting all the skills together based upon Mark 10:46-52. The course ends with a cumulative exegesis paper for which students can choose from three text options.

### **Method of assessment**

For the short assignment on text criticism, there was a fairly wide range in how students performed. Some students definitely “got it” and fulfilled expectations, while others struggle with writing in general and this exercise in particular. As an assignment that actually required them to do some textual criticism (which is really beyond what intro level students are ever expected to do), it was perhaps the only way for them to understand how complicated were the transmission process and resulting textual choices. It sparked curiosity in several of them about further implications of the development of the biblical text.

### **Results and impact on student learning**

Though the focus of this report is on the intermediate text criticism assignment, the final papers showed more of a basic awareness of textual variability. To do more with textual criticism would require

different assigned texts. Even when a detailed grasp of textual criticism was not achieved, students showed an awareness of the developmental process of the primary text in positive ways.

### **Summary and next steps**

Overall, this was a successful sequence of instruction and assignments. The text criticism component is very complicated to do with students who have no knowledge of Greek. In future semesters, it will be worth considering having them do an in-class activity replicating questions of textual criticism using an English text instead of the textual gymnastics required to work with the Greek. The history of the development of Greek text criticism is especially helpful, however, in explaining some of the differences between English translations. Students often miss this component if the scope of the discussion is limited to translation theory rather than the development of the text itself.

It would be very helpful to do a similar textual criticism assignment for the Greek class. With their familiarity with Greek, a pointed text-critical assignment should have same effect of exposing them to the variability of the text and seeing how complicated these questions are.

**Appendix** See attachments