

Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

By Jens Zimmermann

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Hermeneutics is the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, a behaviour that is intrinsic to our daily lives. As humans, we decipher the meaning of newspaper articles, books, legal matters, religious texts, political speeches, emails, and even dinner conversations every day . But how is knowledge mediated through these forms? What constitutes the process of interpretation? And how do we draw meaning from the world around us so that we might understand our position in it?

In this *Very Short Introduction* Jens Zimmerman traces the history of hermeneutic theory, setting out its key elements, and demonstrating how they can be applied to a broad range of disciplines: theology; literature; law; and natural and social sciences. Demonstrating the longstanding and wide-ranging necessity of interpretation, Zimmerman reveals its signifiance in our current social and political landscape.

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Editorial Review

Review
This very readable and much needed introduction breaks new ground in that it is the first to demonstrate, with insight, wit and a trove of illuminating examples, the importance of hermeneutics in all fields of knowledge. Jean Grondin, Universite de Montreal Zimmerman offers one of the best short introductions to modern hermeneutics. The writing is at all times concise, clear and engaging. The author brilliantly evaluates the riches of this major intellectual tradition as well as revealing its ongoing creative influence on contemporary thought. Richard Kearney, Charles Seelig Professor at Boston College and author of Anatheism and Carnal Hermeneutics. An excellent introduction to that most characteristic of human activities, the attempt to understand. From the key figures in the development of the discipline to the application of their ideas in various fields, the reader is shown what it means to think hermeneutically and invited to do so as well. Fr. John Behr, Dean, St Vladimir's Seminary The Introduction clearly points to the major issues involved in hermeneutics. Jens Zimmermann writes excellently for a wide audience and the references to texting and to digital worlds gives it a contemporary feel. Graham Ward, Regius Professor of Divinity, Christ Church Oxford, Director of Graduate Studies New York

About the Author

Jens Zimmermann is Professor of English and Canada Research Chair for Interpretation, Religion and Culture at Trinity Western University, Canada. As well as speaking on the importance of hermeneutics and religion to lay audiences and graduate students, he has published books on theological hermeneutics in both English and German and has written articles on hermeneutics in academic journals. He is author of *Politics and the Religious Imagination* (Routledge, 2010) and *Humanism and Religion* (OUP, 2012).

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Ida Hamilton:

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