

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO — WEST VIRGINIA EXTENSION
2020 COS 521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

Dates: **2020 (to be determined)**

Place: Spring Heights Center, Spencer, West Virginia

Instructor: **Joseph Jarrett**

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Email Address: umpastorjoe@msn.com Put **“2020 COS 521”** first in the **Subject** line of your emails.

- Attendance requirements and grading guidelines are described in the *Course of Study Student Handbook*.
- In the nature of Course of Study weekends, much is required to be completed before the class sessions. **START EARLY!**
- The Instructor may modify course content and assignments at will, in keeping with Course Objectives.
- Class sessions will include presentations, videos, discussions, question-and-response, and in-class writing.

COS 521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

This course focuses on the content and context of these writings, and the theological emphases of their writers. In addition to *Acts* and *Revelation*, *Romans*, *1 Corinthians*, *Hebrews*, *James*, and *1 John* will receive special attention. Students will articulate a theology of scripture.

Course Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Distinguish these genres of biblical literature, and understand the major theological themes in these writings.
2. Faithfully exegete these forms of biblical literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.
4. Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

NOTE: *The above Course Description and Course Objectives are specified by the Course of Study School of Ohio, in addition to Required books #2 and #3 and Recommended books #2, #3, and #4 listed below. This Instructor has added Johnson’s Writings as a Required Textbook and Fee’s NT Exegesis as a Recommended book.*

Required Textbooks:

(available from Cokesbury, Amazon.com, Amazon Kindle, Google Books, and other booksellers)

1. Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 3rd Edition, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2010; 9780800663612.
2. Carter, W., Levine, A.J. *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2013; 9781426741906.
3. Basser, Jouette. *Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts*, Westminster Press, Louisville, 2006; 9780664227418.

Recommended Optional Texts:

1. Fee, Gordon. *New Testament Exegesis, Third Edition: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 2002; 0664223168. [Note: A model by this Instructor, adapted from Fee’s *Exegesis* and “Short Guide for Sermon Exegesis” will provide the step-by-step pattern that you will use for your exegesis for this course. The outline is printed in this Syllabus, and will be discussed in class on the first weekend.]

Other good books and models for Exegesis are available, and you may have used some other models in other courses. Nevertheless, the model adapted from Fee’s book will be basic for this course.

2. Furnish, Victor, *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues*, 3rd Edition. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2009; 9780687332939.
3. Wright, N.T., *Revelation (N. T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guides)*. Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, 2012; 9780830821990.
4. Powell, Mark Allen, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*, Second Edition. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 2018; Print: 9780801099601; Kindle ASIN: ...B0752SZSWZ. [Fully revised and expanded, in response to feedback by professors and students.]
or First Edition. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 2009; Print: 9780801028687; Kindle ASIN: ...B00ARGXHF2.

Required Bible:

A **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Study Bible** with annotations and introductions (Examples: *Oxford*, *Interpreter’s*, *Wesley*, or *HarperCollins*). The **NRSV** will be the basis for study and for your work of **Exegesis and Sermon**. Other versions, in print or online, may be consulted and cited in your research and preaching. Nevertheless, the **NRSV** will be our “common” version for classwork, although you may prefer another version for ordinary use in your pastoral setting.

A MODEL FOR SERMON EXEGESIS (adapted by this Instructor from Fee's *Exegesis*)

You may use the *Short Guide* in Fee's *Exegesis*, or you may learn to apply and adapt that step-by-step model, such as in the manner of the model below, as approved by the Instructor (with apologies to Gordon Fee).

Quoted material is from Fee's *Exegesis*. Notes in [brackets] are added by this Instructor.

New Testament Exegesis by Gordon Fee, especially *Chapter III*. *Short Guide for Sermon Exegesis*. Adapted

A. The Exegetical Task [approx. 5 hours]

1. Getting Started [approx. 1 hr 20 min]

1. "The best way for you to become acquainted with the paragraph and to discover what in the paragraph needs special study is to read the paragraph through ... [several] translations." [i.e., NRSV, NIV, KJV, NASB, etc.]
2. "Mark well the differences between/among your translations. You may do this ... by making a list of the differences and supporting translations at every point."
3. "Determine ... which differences are merely synonyms or matters of taste and which make a genuine difference in meaning."

[Note: There are helpful online versions, *BibleHub* for example, that point to word backgrounds and many alternative translations, including Greek-English "interlinear" versions.]

2. Matters of Content [approx. 1 hour]

1. "Look specifically for textual variations that would affect the meaning of the text for your congregation in the English translation." [*These appear as footnotes that indicate alternative translations or omissions*]
2. "Note any grammar that is unusual, ambiguous, or otherwise important."
3. "Make a list of key terms."
4. "Do a mini-word study for any crucial terms."

3. Contextual Questions [approx. 1 hour]

For Epistles, Acts, and Revelation

"Most people in a congregation are usually helped when you explain some of the historical-cultural matters that are truly significant to the meaning of the text."

▪ Examine the historical context

1. "Since the Epistles are all occasional documents (i.e., they were occasioned by some special circumstance, either from the reader's side or from the author's), it is important to try to reconstruct the nature of the situation to which your major subsection of the letter is a response."
2. "Read the subsection through several times. As you read, pay close attention to the details of the text. As best you can, try to imagine what it would have been like to be sitting in an early Christian community hearing the letter read for the first time."
3. "Make a list of everything that tells you something about the recipients and their situation."
4. "Make another list of key words and repeated phrases that indicate the subject matter of the section."
5. "Try at this point, in a tentative way, to write a paragraph that puts all these data into a coherent expression of the problem or situation of the readers."

▪ Examine the literary context

1. "For your specific text, you have now come to the absolutely essential exegetical question. What is the point of this passage? How does it fit into the overall scheme of the letter? And, more important, how does it fit right at this point in the author's argument or exhortation?"
2. "On the basis of what the author has said up to here, why does he now say this?"

4. Secondary Literature [approx. 50 min]

"There are three reasons for reading the commentaries at this point:

1. To look at the options of scholars for some of the difficulties you had at various points in your exegesis. At times, of course, you will consult the commentaries when you meet the difficulty as you exegete the text.
2. To listen to at least three other interpretations of the text, with which you can compare your own and make adjustments if another turns out to be more convincing.
3. To be alerted to issues or options that you overlooked in your exegesis that may prove crucial for your sermon."

5. Biblical-Theological Context [approx. 30 min]

1. "What is this passage similar or dissimilar to? Is it one of many similar types, or is it fairly unique? What gaps does it fill? Does anything hinge on it elsewhere? Do other Scriptures help make it comprehensible? How? Where does it fit in the overall structure of biblical revelation? What value does it have for the student of the Bible? In what ways is it important for your congregation?"
2. "To what theological doctrines does the passage add light? What are its theological concerns? Might the passage raise any questions or difficulties about some theological issue or stance that needs an explanation? How major or minor are the theological issues on which the passage touches? Where does the passage seem to fit within the full system of truth contained in Christian theology?"

6. Application [approx. 45 min]

1. "List the life issues in the passage."
2. "Clarify the possible nature and area of application."
3. "Identify the audience and categories of application."

B. From Exegesis to Sermon [approx. 5 hours]

7. Spend time in reflection on the text and in prayer.
8. Begin with a sense of purpose.
9. Decide on the introduction and conclusion.
10. Construct an outline.
11. Construct the sermon.

COS 521 NOTE: Your exegesis and sermon are separately considered for grading purposes.

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Assignments before the FIRST weekend

Student Name: _____

Much of your work is **reading**, some involves **written essays**, which invites serious **study and reflection**, with your own written **Study Notes** to help you remember for class discussion. **Written Essays** will follow guidance given by the Writing Coach on the COS website. Copies of your **Study Notes** will also be submitted to the Instructor to view. **MAKE A COPY of this page and write on the line next to each assignment (A–F and 1-7) the date each was completed, and submit this log at class time.** Letters A-J are reading assignments, and numbers 1-11 are questions and tasks.

_____ **A. BIBLE:** Preparation for the first weekend requires reading completely *1 Corinthians*, *Acts*, and *Revelation*.

_____ **B. Read** Johnson’s **EPILOGUE: THE NT AS THE CHURCH’S BOOK**; Johnson’s **INTRODUCTION**; also **PART 1: SYMBOLIC WORLD**; and **PART 2: CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE**.

_____ 1. **Study Notes:** From Johnson’s **INTRODUCTION**, be prepared to name and briefly describe the four dimensions of the *Experience-Interpretation* model in Johnson, print **pp. 4-6**; to describe briefly the interplay of Experience that calls for *Interpretation and Interpretation* (symbolic world) that helps make sense of our *Experience*; then be able to list the four basic steps of the “framework for investigation” in Johnson, print **p. 14**.

_____ **C. Read** Johnson’s **CHAPTER 4: CLAIMS OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS**; **CHAPTER 5: THE RESURRECTION FAITH**; and **CHAPTER 6: JESUS IN THE MEMORY OF THE CHURCH**

_____ 2. **Written Essay #1**, 3-5 pages. Consider carefully these questions: (1) What is the foundational claim of the first Christians and the effects they experienced? (2) What is the “resurrection faith” and how is it relevant to the Church at its beginning—and now? (3) What does it mean to say that the resurrection was (is) “a new way of experiencing Jesus”? (4) How and why was the symbol of the Holy Spirit so central to the early followers of Jesus? [**Cite any quotes!**]

_____ 3. **Written Essay #2**, 2-3 pages. How did Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross, followed by a singular resurrection, create “cognitive dissonance” (See Glossary)—especially for the Jews who were the first Christians—and what did they do about it?

_____ **D. Read** Johnson’s **PART 4: PAULINE TRADITIONS** (Introduction), **CHAPTER 10: PAUL’S MINISTRY AND LETTERS**; **CHAPTER 12: CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE**. Read Bassler’s **NAVIGATING PAUL**, **CHAPTER 1: GRACE** and Carter&Levine’s **CHAPTER 7: 1 CORINTHIANS**.

_____ 4. **Study Notes:** Sourced by Paul’s letter and the textbooks, how does 1 Corinthians 1–4 work out a “theology of the cross” (and the ethics/behavior derived therefrom) and 1 Corinthians 15 develop a “theology of resurrection” (and the appropriate ethics/behavior)?

_____ **E. Read** in Johnson’s **CHAPTER 4: LUKE-ACTS**, the section beginning **THE ACTS NARRATIVE** (print, p. 209ff.) and continuing through **THE PICTURE OF PAUL IN ACTS**. Also read Carter&Levine, **CHAPTER 5: ACTS**.

_____ 5. **Study Notes:** Be prepared to describe some of the differences between what Paul writes about himself in his own letters and the portrayal of Paul by Luke in Acts, especially the accounts of Paul’s interactions with leaders in Jerusalem and his relationship with Peter. What does this mean when attempting to use Acts (or Paul’s letters) as *biography* in the modern sense? ...when using both Paul’s letters and Acts in interpreting Paul in preaching and teaching?

_____ **F. Read** Johnson’s **CHAPTER 26: REVELATION** and Carter&Levine’s **CHAPTER 21: REVELATION**.

_____ 6. **Study Notes:** How would you answer the Study Questions 3 and 5 at the end of the Johnson’s **CHAPTER 26**?

_____ 7. **Study Notes:** From Carter&Levine, be able to explain the difference between *prediction* and *proclamation* as modes used for interpretation of Revelation. (Johnson speaks of this topic as well, using different language.)

_____ **G. Written Essay #3A**, approx. 5 pages. Prepare a **first draft of an Exegesis** (G. 8, described next page), using the **Model for Sermon Exegesis** in this syllabus. This Instructor should receive your draft Exegesis **by email or postal mail 2 weeks before the first weekend**. You can revise after discussion on first weekend, and then develop your sermon (G.9).

Pray for me, please, as I will for you —and for our class.

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Assignments before the SECOND weekend

Student Name: _____

MAKE A COPY OF THIS PAGE to submit to the Instructor at class time with the date each assignment was completed written on the line next to the assignment (8-11 and G-J).

G. (continued) Exegesis and Sermon.

8. **Written Essay #3B**, approx. 5 pages. Using the **Model for Exegesis** in this syllabus, adapted from Fee's *Short Guide*, develop an **Exegesis** of a passage of your choice from 1 Corinthians, Acts, or Revelation. **NUMBER AND NAME each "major step" as given in the model. [1. Getting Started, 2. Matters of Content, 3. ... etc.]**

Use what Carter&Levine call the *proclamation mode of interpretation*. Give due attention to the *experience and symbolic world of its original author and audience* as the basis for interpretation in our time and place. Properly **use** and **cite sources, especially from the assigned texts for this course!**

NOTE—The first draft of your Exegesis (Written Essay #3A) is due before the first weekend. It may then be revised and re-submitted (as Written Essay #3B) with your Sermon (Written Essay #4) before the second weekend. You can also revise and re-submit your Sermon after the second weekend.

9. **Written Essay #4**, approx. 5 pages. Using your **Exegesis**, develop a **Sermon** of approximately 5 pages that you could (and, hopefully, will!) preach. No rambling around with what comes off the cuff—and no plagiarism (uncited sources written as if it's your own thought). Do the hard work! Study and listen for the Word of God; then deliver it, to the best of your God-given ability.

Your final **Exegesis** and **Sermon** will follow MLA writing form and rules, which you should already have learned from the Course of Study Writing Class and Coach. See the Writing Instructions on the COS website (coswv.org).

Email and Postal Mail:

1. You are encouraged to submit your Exegesis and Sermon as soon as they are ready, separately or together. I must receive your written final Exegesis and Sermon a full two weeks prior to the class weekend, by email or by postal mail. In either case, be sure you have two printed "backup" copies for class (one for you, one for me).

2. Email is preferred when available, because you can send your work as "attachments." All computer files must be in Microsoft Word format ("Save as" .doc or .docx.) *or* as PDF (Portable Document Format).

H. BIBLE: Preparation requires reading carefully and completely *Romans, Hebrews, James, and 1 John*.

I. Read Johnson's **CHAPTER 14: LETTER TO THE ROMANS**; Bassler's **NAVIGATING PAUL, CHAPTER 3: FAITH**; and Carter&Levine's **NEW TESTAMENT METHODS AND MEANINGS, CHAPTER 6: ROMANS** (for an interestingly different approach to Romans).

10. **Written Essay #5**, 3-5 pages. In what way is Romans 1:16-17 the thesis of the entire letter? How does Romans 3:21-31 "re-state" and elaborate on this thesis? How is the righteousness (or, justice) of God revealed to—or received by—faith and faithfulness ("obedience of faith"), without allowing for human faith or faithfulness to be the causative factor in God's saving activity ("All this is God's gift")?

J. Read Johnson's **CHAPTER 20: HEBREWS; CHAPTER 23: JAMES; CHAPTER 25: 1, 2, 3 JOHN**. Also read Carter and Levine, **CHAPTER 16: HEBREWS; CHAPTER 17: JAMES; and CHAPTER 20: 1, 2, 3 JOHN**.

11. **Study Notes:** When studying Johnson and Carter&Levine, consider and make Study Notes of some of the **unique qualities of each writing** (Hebrews, James, and 1 John) in which you find opportunity and challenge for preaching and teaching. Be prepared to describe and discuss these in class.

Now, just in case you haven't noticed, **you have done a lot of work!** —reading, thinking, praying, reflecting, writing, seeking and finding. Your faithfulness to your tasks and to your sharing in the Body (church and class) will be noticeable. May the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, be with you always, to the end of the age and beyond.

Pray for me, please, as I will for you —and for our class.