

## COS 521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

**Dates:** August 19-21, October 21-23

**Place:** Spring Heights Center, Spencer, WV

**Instructor:** Jonathan Dierdorff

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- 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.

### Course Description

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 should 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 #1 and #2. The instructor has added books #3 and #4.

### Required Texts:

1. Carter, W. and Levine, A.J. *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*. 2013. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
2. Bassler, Jouette. *Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts*. 2006. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

3. Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 1997. New Haven: Yale University.
4. Hayes, John H. & Holladay, Carl R. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. 2007. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

### **Recommended Reading (not required!)**

1. Dunn, James D. G. *The Theology of Paul*. 2006. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

The late James Dunn was one of the world's leading Pauline scholars at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. This volume systematizes Paul's theology. Although it is a helpful resource, keep in mind that Dunn's style is academic and dense.

2. Gaventa, Beverly. *When in Romans*. 2018. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Gaventa is a leading Pauline scholar. This little volume approaches critical issues in Paul's letter to the Romans in a way that is accessible and relevant for pastoral ministry.

3. Gorman, Michael. *Reading Revelation Responsibly*. 2010. Eugene: Cascade Books.

This volume addresses the many common misconceptions about the Book of Revelation. Highly commended!

4. Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. 1996. New York: HarperOne.

If it is not yet classified as such, this volume will be considered a classic in New Testament studies. Hays is one of the most respected Pauline scholars living and in this work he addresses how we can faithfully appropriate the New Testament to modern ethical challenges.

5. Witherington III, Ben. *The Paul Quest*. 2001. Westmont: InterVarsity Press.

Witherington is considered one of the leading Evangelical New Testament scholars, especially within the Wesleyan Methodist tradition. The Paul Quest is a biographical sketch of Paul in light of available socio-historical research.

6. Wright, N.T. and Bird, Michael F. *The New Testament in Its World*. 2019. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic.

A thorough introduction to the social, historical, and theological dimensions of the New Testament written by two leading New Testament scholars.

## Assignments

### **In preparation for August 19-21, complete the following assignments:**

- A. Read Hebrews, James, 1 John, and Revelation in their entirety. The following translations are acceptable for academic study: RSV, NRSV, NIV, NASB. Preferred translations can be used to supplement, but not replace, these accepted translations.
- B. Read chapters 4, 5, 32, 34, and 37 in Brown
- C. Read chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6 in Hayes and Holladay
- D. Read chapter 16, 17, and 20 in Carter and Levine
- E. Students must evidence their completion of course reading by submitting a reading report at each in-person gathering. The report should include name, dates that assigned chapters and biblical texts were completed, along with the student's signature. Failure to submit a reading report at the in-person gatherings will result in grade reduction.
- F. Watch "Developing an Exegetical Method for Preaching" by Jonathan Dierdorff. A video link will be sent prior to the beginning of the course. Take notes and submit a two-page report outlining the methodology described in the video.
- G. After completing the required reading for our first gathering, submit a three-page report of what you learned about Hebrews, James, 1 John and Revelation in terms of their literary features, as well as their unique theological contributions. You may also include relevant insights gained about exegesis and methods for studying the New Testament.
- H. All assignments for this particular gathering are due no later than 11:59pm August 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **In preparation for October 21-23, complete the following assignments:**

- A. Read Acts, Romans, and 1 Corinthians in their entirety. The following translations are acceptable for academic study: RSV, NRSV, NIV, NASB. Preferred translations can be used to supplement, but not replace, these accepted translations.
- B. Read chapters 10, 15, 16, 17, and 24 in Brown
- C. Read chapters 1 and 3 in Bassler
- D. Read chapters 5, 6 and 7 in Carter & Levine
- E. Read chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13 in Biblical Exegesis by Hayes and Holiday
- F. Students must evidence their completion of course reading by submitting a reading report at each in-person gathering. The report should include name, dates that assigned chapters and biblical texts were completed, along with the student's signature. Failure to submit a reading report at the in-person gatherings will result in grade reduction.
- G. After completing the required reading for our second gathering, submit a three-page, double space report of what you learned about the literary and theological features of Acts, Romans, and 1 Corinthians.
- H. Employing the knowledge gained from the course materials, submit a four-page sermon on the topic of justification in light of your study of Romans and James. The first page should be a report of exegetical insights, and the remaining three

- pages (minimum), should include a sermon manuscript that fleshes out the theological and practical implications of these biblical texts. Special attention should be given to the concept of justification within the Wesleyan tradition.
- I. All assignments for this particular gathering are due no later than 11:59pm October 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Submission**

1. Assignments submitted more than one week after the due date will result in an automatic "F" with no written feedback from the instructor. Assignments submitted late will be reduced ½ letter grade for each day that it is late. The instructor **will not** contact students to remind them of deadlines. You are always welcome to contact the instructor via email with questions about the course assignments. Assignments received in a timely manner will be graded and returned to students prior to our in-person gatherings.
2. All assignments should be double spaced and follow the MLA format. Use the font of your choice as long as it is readable.
3. All assignments must be typed and sent as an attachment using Microsoft word—not Microsoft Works or Wordperfect. ("Save as" .doc or .docx.)

### **Grading**

Attendance and participation: 20%

Reading: 40%.

Written Assignments: 40% (10% each)