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NT 640 Exegesis of General Epistles

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Course: NT640 X1 (SP 2009)
Title: Exegesis: General Epistles
Hours: 3.00
Published: Yes, on 12/05/2008
Prerequisites: NT500 and NT520

Department: New Testament
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Meetings:
During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 Online via ExL.

Maximum Registration: 22

Catalog Description: A close reading of the General Epistles with special attention given to literary, sociohistorical, and theological understandings of the epistles. May include readings from any or all of the General Epistles in a given semester. (May be taken by students in M.A. programs not requiring Greek by special arrangement with the professor.)

Objectives:

NT 640 Exegesis of General Epistles

Preliminary Version. Subject to Change.

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Spring 2009
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Office Hours: Other Times by Arrangement

First: The development of this extended learning syllabus is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by my permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the internet. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from the professor (RuthAnne Reese). Thanks for honoring these instructions.

Welcome to NT640 Exl. I am looking forward to teaching this course during which we will have an opportunity to study some of the General Epistles, to explore the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts out of which they arose, and to examine the theology of the text. It will be our goal to draw all of this together into a coherent way of understanding and proclaiming these epistles in the contexts where we live and work.

Prerequisites: Concise or Comprehensive Greek, IBS 1, and New Testament Introduction are all prerequisites for this class.

Work Load: This course has a steady workload. It requires careful reading of the biblical text using the Greek language to the best of your ability, commentary reading, and required textbook reading. It also requires regular postings. I recommend using the syllabus to help guide you as you prepare for the semester's workload.

Description: This is a course on the General Epistles, their content, their context, their interpretation, and their theology. In the course of the semester, we will study Jude and 1-2 Peter; the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts out of which they arose; various types of interpretative methods used to study the epistles; and theological themes in the epistles. We will work to draw this knowledge together into a means for thinking about the General Epistles in our contemporary context.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course you will be able to:

¥ Employ a range of exegetical approaches relevant to the interpretation of the General Epistles, and to apply those approaches to other
NT books of similar genre;

- Understand the General Epistles within their socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts;
- Identify central issues in the critical study of the General Epistles;
- Articulate the importance of one's own presuppositions in the task of interpretation;
- Articulate primary theological and ethical concerns of the General Epistles;
- Demonstrate awareness of how the theological and ethical concerns of the General Epistles contribute to those of the canon and of constructive theology and ethics;
- Differentiate between critical and homiletic/devotional commentaries and studies of the General Epistles and other NT books; and
- Evaluate critically the usefulness of secondary literature in the study of the General Epistles.

**Concise Greek Students should be able to:**

- Use Greek-based language tools to demonstrate proficiency in lexical semantics;
- Use Greek-based language tools to identify grammatical constructions (i.e., with regard to sentence structure and use of clauses);
- Use Greek-based language tools to engage in syntactical analyses (i.e., with regard to verbal aspect, mood, and voice; use of the genitive and dative cases).

**Course Guidelines:**

1. **Assignments:** Papers should be typed, double spaced in a 12 point font using one inch margins. All assignments are due by the stated due dates. These are outlined below for your reference. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade per day late. For example, a B paper turned in one day late becomes a B–, etc.

2. **Postings:** Individual postings in Forums should be clear and as concise as possible.

3. **Grammar:** I expect us (myself included) to use proper English grammar at all times. This includes complete sentences, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. For assistance in this area, consult a standard style guide such as Carole Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, and Theses* (11th ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999). Poor grammar will be taken into account in the final grade.

4. **Discussion:** A crucial element of this course is the dialogue that we enter into with each other. All discussions are to be in the vein of encouragement, gentleness, patience, persistence, and hope. This does not mean that we will not challenge, confront, or question each other. It does mean that these things will be undertaken for the purpose of growth and stimulation to think and understand the subject at hand more deeply and more intimately.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Class preparation, attendance, and participation (10%):** Each student should prepare for each class by (1) carefully reading the assigned texts, (2) making their own notes on the text, and (3) comparing their observations with those made in one of the required commentaries below. Participation grades will be based on comments and observations made in Forums.

2. **Interpretive Assignments (10% x 3 = 30%):** 3 times during the semester, prepare and turn in an interpretive assignment addressing one of the assigned passages. Interpretive assignments should be approximately 4-5 double spaced pages (i.e., approx. 1,000-1,250 words). For more information on these assignments see the document in the Assignments folder.

3. **Theology Assignment (15%):** details to be determined

4. **Commentary Review (15%):** Write a critical review comparing and contrasting at least two of the required commentaries below.

- General guidelines on book reviews are available in the Assignments folder in the Course Center.

5. **Final Research Paper or Project (30%):** a paper on a passage or topic of your choosing related to one of the General Epistles we have worked on this semester.

**GRADING**

I want to encourage both your own interpretive work on the General Epistles as well as dialogue with other members of the class around your work. I have asked that you post the answers to many of the participation assignments in the forum. The most effective way to do your work will be to do your own work and post it to the forum PRIOR to reading your teammates' work.

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

- A = Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives
- B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
- C = Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives
- D = Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
- F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

A plus (+) or minus (–) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C– = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

**Important Notes on My Grading Policies:**

1. Interpretive Assignments are never accepted late
2. Other late papers are marked down 1/3 of a letter grade per day late.
3. Poor grammar figures into the final grade.
4. Papers that are too long (over the word limit) or too short (under the word limit) are marked down. (I don't count words, so if you are over or under by 50 words that isn't going to matter, but if you have many pages or almost no pages, then you need to rewrite your paper before you submit it.)
5. Participation grades are based on quality and responsiveness of contribution.
6. You may complete as many of the 6 interpretive assignments as you would like (I take the 3 highest grades to count towards your final grade).
7. You may consult with me before turning in papers and projects to see if you are on the right track.
8. You may seek my direction or input on your final research paper at any stage before you turn in your final paper. Take advantage of this; it will be to your benefit.

**Using Greek Fonts**
It is important to me to encourage you to use both Greek and Hebrew. Please follow these instructions so that you may use Greek fonts in the papers that you submit. Download the Bwgrkl font that is in the Resource Center in our Course Folder onto your hard drive. Then load this font into your word processing program. Use this font for all your Greek work. This should guarantee that I will be able to read all of the Greek that you type in, and there should not be a compatibility problem.

**Required Reading:**

**Buy ONE of the following commentaries (Hints below)**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Schedule**

**Module 1 (Feb 9-27)**
**Introduction with Practice in Jude**
Week 1: Introduction to Exegesis
Week 2: Jude
Week 3: Jude and Theology

**Module 2 (Mar 2-Apr 17)**
1 Peter
Week 4: Intro to 1 Peter & ch. 1
Week 5: 1 Peter 2
Week 6: 1 Peter 3
Week 7: 1 Peter 4
Week 8: READING WEEK (Mar 30-Apr 3)
Week 9: 1 Peter 5
Week 10: 1 Peter and Theology

**Due Dates:**
Module 3 (Apr 20-May 15)
**2 Peter**
Week 11: 2 Peter 1
Week 12: 2 Peter 2
Week 13: 2 Peter 3
Week 14: 2 Peter and Theology

**Due Dates:**
Apr 15, Interpretive Assignment #4
Apr 26, Interpretive Assignment #6

**Week 15: FINALS**
Due Date: Final Research Papers Due Tuesday, May 17

**Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines**

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into http://one.asburyseminary.edu and clicking on the Virtual Campus tab (upper right corner) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

**1. The Course Information Center** contains many features to be used throughout the semester:

a) **Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class;
b) **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
c) **To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
d) **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
e) **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
f) Open Forum, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

2. Modules, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.

Virtual Support Contact Information
For technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media contact Information Commons:

Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program, contact Dale Hale:

ExL.Office@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2393

Accessing Information Commons Materials
1. General Questions:
   a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm

2. Materials Requests:
   a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here:
      http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm
   b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary’s Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.
   c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:
   a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:
   a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0’s to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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