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NT 638 Epistle to the Romans

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I. General Description: This course aims, through studying Romans, to foster Bible study which is: methodical (following orderly procedure, rather than relying on chance), inductive (promoting direct personal study of the text prior to secondary sources), structural (observing logical connections as a key component of meaning), literary (recognizing the literary character of Scripture and the significance of literary context), historical (honoring the location of Biblical texts in their particular historical and cultural settings), theological (understanding the passage in the context of the Scripture and Christian doctrine), and reverent (pursuing Biblical study humbly, prayerfully, under the influence of the Spirit).

II. Course Objectives:

A. Method: As a result of fulfilling the requirements, a student should be able to:
   1. analyze, interpret, evaluate, and apply Biblical passages with reasonable skill;
   2. describe with clarity the fundamental principles of effective Bible study.

B. Content: As a result of fulfilling the requirements, a student should be able to:
   1. present a clear and thoughtful interpretation of each biblical passage examined by the class during the course of the semester;
   2. identify and explicate the purpose(s) and major themes of the epistle to the Romans;
   3. relate various passages and themes to the larger thought of the Apostle.

C. Attitude: It is our desire that through this instructional process a student will be:
   1. more deeply committed to the practice and refinement of sound Bible study as a lifelong personal and ministerial pursuit;
   2. more deeply committed to understanding, living, and proclaiming the truth taught within the epistle to the Romans and within Scripture as a whole;
   3. more deeply convinced of God's desire to address and transform the Church and the World by the power of his Spirit through his Word.

III. Course Texts:

A. Bibles: At least three different, modern English translations; and a Greek New Testament (either in the UBS or Nestle tradition).

B. Bibliography: Biblical Resources for Ministry. Revised Edition (a bibliography edited by David R. Bauer, especially useful for locating worthy commentaries.)

C. Secondary Resources (recommended for use, but not required for purchase)

[The texts with asterisks are especially recommended for regular use. Students should secure ways and means of having ready access to high-quality resources for their Lessons.]

IV. Requirements: Lessons must be:
A. On Time: Lessons must be finished by class time, on the dates given in this Syllabus.
B. Legible: Lessons may be typed or handwritten. If written, writing must be legible.
C. Stapled: Please do not turn in loose sheets, or sheets fastened "creatively".
D. With Cover Sheet: Fill out and use the provided Cover Sheet for each assignment.

V. Grading Policies:
A. Assignments
1. The ATS Catalog's description of grades and their values will apply.
   The final grade within this course will be calculated by averaging the letter grades given to the weekly assignments according the following numerical values below. The numerical average will then be rounded to the nearest grade/numerical value, which will stand as the final grade.
   A:100; A-:96; B+:92; B:88; B-:84; C+:80; C:76; C-:72; D+:68; D:64; D-:60; F:55 (if an assignment is completed, but at a failing quality); F: 0 (if no work is submitted).
   Each one of the ten (10) lessons will contribute 10% toward the final grade.
2. Exceptional work will exhibit these characteristics:
   • precision, accuracy, specificity, depth, insight, clarity, freshness, thoroughness, and balance. It must me remembered that merely “good and accurate” work does not necessarily merit an “A”.
3. Lessons: Omitted or Late: Students are to complete all of the 10 assigned lessons (A through J). There are no provisions for skipping or choosing among lessons. An Omitted lesson (one not turned in at all) will be calculated as a zero in the averaging of the final grade. If a student has not completed an assignment by the time it is due, four options remain: a) to receive a zero for the assignment; b) to turn in the incomplete assignment on time, with a lower grade as the likely outcome; c) if the lesson if at least 2/3’s complete at the time due, to complete and turn in the lesson at a later time, but to receive an automatic reduction of a full letter grade (e.g. from a B+ to C+) for lateness; or d) if the lesson is not yet 2/3’s complete, to complete and turn in at a later time an alternative assignment provided by the professor, with the full letter reduction for lateness. If there are extenuating circumstances (sickness, accident, legal requirement), the professor reserves the right to adjust the dates of assignments, and the grading arrangements. Generally, there are no allowances for “the normal demands of ministry.”
4. **Feedback**: Feedback will be provided by comments supplied on returned assignments, by daily class lectures, and by interaction with peers in small groups. Additional consultation with the professor after class, or during office hours is also available.

5. **Independence**: Assignments must reflect the independent, inductive work of each student. Therefore, **no resources of any kind (whether books, notes of others, conversations, etc.) may be consulted for the inductive portion of each assignment**. Study groups (which are encouraged) must exercise special care to preserve the independence of each member. Group members may encourage each other and provide accountability for study, but may not produce group projects, nor nurse each other along with content-related guidance and suggestions. **Violation of "Independence" constitutes cheating, and may result in loss of credit for the entire course.**

B. **Attendance**

Attendance of all class sessions is expected. Instruction, clarification, interaction, and encouragement are all supplied in significant amounts during class sessions. Any absence creates gaps in these aspects of class life for the student, and subtracts the input he or she might have contributed to peers.
VI. The Calendar of Due Dates

Lesson A
Lesson B
Lesson C
Lesson D
Lesson E
Lesson F
Lesson G
Lesson H
Lesson I
Lesson J

VII. Doing The Lessons

Advice Gathered from Many Students

*Don't do a whole lesson in a single sitting. Eight straight hours even of Gilligan's Island can be fatal.
   **Do work in several blocks of time.**

*Don't do your work during the worst hours of your day. When would you want your doctor operating?
   **Do your work during your peak production hours, if possible.**

*Don't do your work around proven distractions. Most minds are not like multi-task computer chips.
   **Do find a place conducive to reflective study.**

*Don't postpone work until the day before. Don't join the April 15th 11:59 PM crowd. It's depressing!
   **Do begin your work earlier in the week, allowing your thoughts to "percolate".**

*Don't wander through the week, just hoping you'll find an ideal time to do the assignment. You won't!
   **Do plan ahead in order to set aside good study time.**

*Don't forget to read the text carefully, first. How could you know much about a person without "dating"?
   **Do invest up-front time in careful reading of the text.**

*Don't treat these assignments as "just assignments".
   **Do pray for illumination, and expect to learn something life-transforming!**

The Time Factor in Doing Lessons

Each of the Lessons is designed to take from **nine to ten hours (9-10) to complete.** When multiplied over the ten (10) Lessons of the semester, that translates into ninety to one hundred (90-100) hours of student investment for this course. These figures are just below the range of hours recommended in the catalog for a three-hour course (97.5-117 hours, calculated as 7.5-9.0 hours of investment each week for a three-hour course, over 13 weeks of the semester, see p. 25 of the 2000-2001 catalog).

No one should interpret the 9-10 hour target for each Lesson as a “time limit,” or think that there would be a penalty for going beyond. I am not interested in penalizing anyone who has the time and desire to invest more than 9-10. However, no one should feel any pressure to do more than the expected. Grading is not based on a simple measure of hours invested. Do your best to complete the phases of each Lesson by the 10 hour target. If you have trouble getting to each phase of the Lessons, reflect on how you are spending you time. You may need to set the depth of your plow a little shallower, at places; or just “call it quits” on one phase of a Lesson that has gotten out of hand, time wise.

A nice correlation between the weekly investment of 9-10 hours in this course, and in the life of ministry, is to be found in Haddon Robinson’s suggestions about the preparation of sermons. In his view, 8 or 9 hours may be spent in working with the full interpretation of the Biblical text to be
preached, with 4 or 5 hours devoted afterwards to crafting the text of the sermon itself. The weekly investment in IBS Lessons, then, may help us develop the monthly rhythm that Robinson submits as a healthy pattern for sermon preparation.
Student Name___________________________________________________

Group Name___________________________________________________

Lesson #________________________

Time Invested____________________

Course_________________________

Time of Class____________________

******* Lesson handed in on time?******

Yes_______                                    No________

****If Late, have these items below filled in:

Date actually turned in:____________________

Professor’s signature_______________________
Book Survey Guide

(Independent work only; no resources. Time figures are only suggestive.)

1. Read: [2:30]
   • Read the entire epistle through in one sitting, aloud if possible. Resist the temptation to stop and do “research” or other detailed examination. Keep moving!

2. Entitle Chapters, or Chapter-like Segments: [0:30]
   • Give a title to each chapter in the book. If you feel that the traditional chapter divisions are disruptive or contrary to the sense of the text at various points, you may devise your own division of the text into “segments.” [Devise chapter titles which communicate something close to the central content or claim of the chapter. Steer clear of merely cute, attention-getting titles which offer little help in recalling a chapter’s message.]

3. Show Large Groupings of Material: [1:00]
   • Use brackets or diagrams of your own devising to show how chapters (or segments) may be grouped into larger sections.
   • As needed, use even larger brackets to show how sections may be grouped into major divisions.
   • Give descriptive titles to each these larger sections and divisions you have created.

4. Discover Significant Recurrences: [2:00]
   • Identify what you consider to be the five (5) most important recurrences (themes) in the book of Romans. Steer clear of vague generalities (“love”; “grace”), rather working to base your conclusions on the reading of the text you did in step #1 above, and the observation of specific terms, phrases, or concepts. For each one of the 5, show its distribution and frequency in Romans by charting its occurrence. [Not every single occurrence needs to be counted or plotted. A “dot” in a segment or chapter will suffice to show that it can be found there.]

5. Discover Significant Structural Relationships: [1:00]
   • Many scholars have concluded that Romans 1-11 constitute the “argumentative section” of Romans, with Romans 12-15 constituting the “ethical section” of Romans. If such is the case, what (logical-semantic) structural relationship might best describe the relationship between these two sections? [Express your conclusion with any accompanying insight in 100 words or less. You may, of course, dissent from the 1-11; 12-15 division and provide your own schematic.]
   • Are there two, three, or four other major structural relationships which function to bind the various major sections and subsections of Romans together? When you make your proposals, state clearly the structure, locate (with Scripture references) the components of the structure, and explain (in 40-50 words) how you think the relationship works.

6. Identify a Strategic Area: [0:30]
   • Identify a paragraph which may serve as a "lens" through which to view the entire book. To put it a different way, from what passage would you choose to preach if you were assigned to preach “the heart of the message of Romans”? [Not only identify such a passage, but defend your choice by writing a paragraph of 75-100 words explaining how it gathers up the message of the book, or how it expresses its primary structure or theme.]

7. Attend to the Historical Context: [1:00]
   Re-read 1:1-15, and 15:14-16:27. Collect and arrange the clues in these texts which clarify such questions as “Who was Paul?” (according to his self-characterization); “Who were the Romans?” (according to Paul’s perceptions of them); “What was the nature and history of the relationship between Paul and the Romans”; and “What did Paul hope for the future regarding
his own ministry and his relationship with the Romans”? [Use scripture references to add precision to your presentation. Arrange your data however you see fit.]

8. **Assess Progress:**
   
   • What were the three (3) most significant surprises, questions, or insights you encountered in this survey? Be specific, by appealing to specific texts. [Total report in 200-250 words.]