1-1-2005

NT 740 Exegesis of General Epistles

Ruth Anne Reese
Description: A close reading of the General Epistles (James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude) with special attention given to literary, socio-historical, and theological understandings of the epistles. May include readings from any or all of the General Epistles in a given semester.

Prerequisites: NT 501/502; NT 520; and, NT(IBS) 510 or 511.

Objectives: By the end of the course, students should be able to:
- Employ a range of exegetical approaches relevant to the interpretation of the General Epistles and 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 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, homiletic, and devotional commentaries; and
- Evaluate critically the usefulness of secondary literature in the study of the NT.

Comprehensive Greek Students should be able to:
- Diagram passages in the Greek New Testament;
- Translate with minimal lexical assistance any passage from the General Epistles assigned for the course;
- Perform rudimentary exercises in text criticism.

Course Requirements and Reading:
- Class preparation, attendance, and participation (10%): Each student should prepare for each class by (1) translating 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. The attendance policy is that any more than 6 absences will result in a failing grade.

- **Translation:** Once during the semester the student will lead the class in a discussion of the translation of the text. This discussion should note the following aspects of translation: 1) significant text critical issues 2) significant translation issues (i.e., multiple word meanings, multiple grammatical possibilities, etc.) 3) significant theological issues generated by the translation with particular attention to the theological tradition (e.g., Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley et al.). (25%)

- **Commentary Review (15%):** Write a critical review comparing and contrasting two of the required commentaries below (both commentaries must address the same biblical text). The commentary review should be between 5-6 pages in length (i.e., approx. 1,250-1,500 words). General guidelines on book reviews are available in my folder on the Intranet.

- **Final Paper or Project (30%):** A research paper or project on a topic of your choosing related to Jude, 2 Peter, or James. The paper may address a theological or exegetical topic or some combination of the two. If you would like to turn in a project in some other form besides that of a paper, please talk to me about what you would like to do and how we can go about doing that. For details about what is expected for a research paper, please see the document in the course folder.

- **Final Translation Exam (20%):** Be prepared to provide a translation of any passage from Jude, 2 Peter, or James. The translation should contain appropriate notes related to the translation. A small lexicon will be the only allowable resource.

**Required Reading:**
Reese, Ruth Anne. *Jude and 2 Peter.* [This will be available via the Intranet, details to be provided in class.]

**Required: pick one for this epistle**
**James**

**2 Peter & Jude: pick one for this epistle**

**Recommended Reading/Bibliography:**
— “On Patience” Sermon 83. Available at [http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/sermons/083.htm](http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/sermons/083.htm)

**Instructions for Assignments, Due Dates, and Grading Criteria**

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

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives
B= Good work: substantial 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 of course work

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

**Course Schedule**

Week 1  Introduction to Exegesis:
Thurs  Further Introduction to Exegesis
Required: Begin reading Chester & Martin on Jude

Week 2  Exegetical Approaches to the General Epistles: Demonstration in Jude
Required: Finish Chester & Martin on Jude and begin Reese
Recommended: Neyrey’s Introduction pp. 1-20

Thurs  Exegetical Approaches to the General Epistles: Demonstration in Jude

Week 3  What Constitutes a Theological Approach? Praxis in Jude
Required: Finish Reese; Finish Chester and Martin

Thurs  A Theological Approach to Jude
Due: Commentary Review

Week 4  Introduction to 2 Peter
Required: Begin Commentary

Thurs  2 Peter 1
Required: Commentary

Week 5  2 Peter 1
Required: Commentary

Thurs  2 Peter 2
Required: Commentary

Week 6  2 Peter 2
Required: Commentary

Thurs  2 Peter 3
Required: Commentary

Week 7  2 Peter 3
Required: Commentary

Thurs  Theology of 2 Peter
Required: Chester & Martin

Week 8  Introduction to James
Required: Begin Commentary; begin Maynard

Thurs  James 1
Required: Commentary

Week 9  James 1
Required: Commentary

Thurs  James 2
Required: Commentary

Week 10  James 2
Required: Commentary
Thurs  James 3  
   Required: Commentary

Week 11  James 4  
   Required: Commentary

Thurs  James 4  
   Required: Commentary

Week 12  James 5  
   Required: Commentary  
   Due: Major Paper or Project

Thurs  James 5  
   Required: Commentary

Week 13  Theology of James  
   Required: Chester & Martin; Maynard

Thurs  Theology of the General Epistles

Final Exam: Monday, May 16th 1-3pm