

Erskine Theological Seminary

Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning

NT750CO

Romans

Fall Term 2010

Mondays, 1-4 P.M.

Erskine Seminary Columbia Campus

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- I. **Course Description:** This course deals with the historical background and other introductory matters pertaining to Romans as a basis for a detailed interpretation of the Epistle. Emphasis is placed upon the theological ideas of Romans in relation to the whole of Pauline thought. Bibliography and methodology of interpretation are given attention. **A Note regarding exegesis papers:** *Prerequisite: In order to receive exegesis credit for this course, students must have successfully completed BI 102 Principles of Exegesis (and, where applicable, Greek I and II) prior to taking this class. Please see Course Requirements below.* Required. Three hours.

- I. **Course Objectives:** The mission statement of Erskine Seminary indicates that its purpose is to educate persons “for service in the Christian Church”, in particular, the study of the Bible “in its own literary, historical and theological settings”, so that the student may “interpret it with relevance and meaning applicable for today.” This course examines the literary and historical aspects of the book of Romans, with particular emphasis upon critical examination and interpretation of the biblical text. In addition to the close exegesis of the text and its historical context, theological issues connected with the interpretation of Romans are treated. Students will be expected (see Course Requirements below) to demonstrate a familiarity with the backgrounds, message and critical issues related to the study of the book of Romans.

- II. **Required Textbooks:** The following texts will be used in this course, and are required reading of each student:

Moo, Douglas J., *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. ISBN # 0-8028-2317-3.

Westerholm, Stephen, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. ISBN # 0-8028-4809-5.

Gathercole, Simon J., *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. ISBN # 0-8028-3991-6.

The NIV Bible text (Barker, Kenneth, general editor, *The NIV Study Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), notable for its affordable price, popular translation and excellent notes and maps, will be used in this course, and is suggested reading of each student. The selection of a Bible translation, however, will be left to the individual student.

In addition, there will be small reading assignments and/or handouts throughout the course to help the student organize and understand the relatively large amount of material to be learned.

III. Course Requirements: Students are expected to attend every class meeting. If a student must be absent due to an emergency or illness for all or part of a session, the student is responsible for all work done and due for that session. *No more than three sessions may be missed*. Due to the nature of the course, missing classroom discussion will almost certainly adversely affect the student's performance on the scheduled exams.

Students are expected to be adequately prepared for each class session, particularly the Biblical translation assignments due. Classroom discussion will constitute an important element of our learning together, and will be adversely affected by poor preparation.

One objective exam will be administered, and will be related to the biblical, background and critical material covered in the introductory sessions. The test must be taken on the assigned date. See Course Outline for the test date.

Each student will be required to present the results of an **exegetical exercise** based on a portion of the text of Romans. Those who wish to expand this exercise into a full exegesis paper (for the portfolio), may do so. Please consult the professor for details and exegesis guidelines. A guide sheet will be provided for the preparation and presentation of this exercise. These presentations will be due at the time the particular selected is treated in class (see Course Outline below).

Finally, there will two required book reviews of *Where is Boasting?* and *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*. These reviews will be an analysis of the

individual chapters/subjects contained in the volumes. Guide sheets will be provided for these papers.

- IV. Evaluation:** The Seminary grade scale (p. 46, *Catalog*) will be used in determining a letter grade. The student's final grade will be calculated as follows:

Test = 25%

Book reviews = 25% each; = 50%

Exegesis Exercise (written/oral) = 25%

Note: Completed and graded tests and papers will be returned to the student in a subsequent class period. Papers and tests tendered at the end of the semester (where impossible to return in class) will be held by the professor for pick-up by the student. Alternately, if the student wishes, the paper/test may be placed in the student's campus mailbox, or mailed to the student. In such cases, the student should indicate the mailbox number on the paper/test, or, when mailed, supply a SASE.

- V. Class Meeting Dates:** This course will meet on the Columbia campus on Monday afternoons from 1-4 P.M. See class schedule below.

- VI. Seminary Policies:** Once the student has completed, signed, and submitted the registration to the Registrar for this class, it is considered a binding contract. The student is encouraged to read the Erskine Seminary 2009-2010 *Catalog* for important information regarding drop/add procedures and deadlines (p. 4, "Academic Calendar"), class withdrawal (pp. 35, 37), as well as the correct manner of dealing with the grade status of "incomplete" (p.44). Please consult the Student Handbook for policies re. writing style and ethics, e.g., inclusive language and plagiarism, as well as the Seminary *Catalog*, p. 43f. A brief summary of these policies is as follows:

A grade of "**incomplete**" is not a privilege of the student. It is the prerogative of the professor. It can be given as a final grade only when (1) the student has completed most of the assigned coursework and (2) when the student has been providentially hindered from completing the rest. The student and professor must complete the appropriate form before an "incomplete" can be given. The final date that an "incomplete" can be changed to a grade for the Fall term is March 1, 2011. After this date, the grade of "incomplete" will automatically become an "F", and cannot be altered. Note that there is a fee associated with "incompletes."

If the student needs to **withdraw from a course**, a withdrawal form may be procured from the Registrar's office. A professor cannot withdraw a student from a class. A student who fails to go through the proper withdrawal procedure will be charged full tuition for the course, regardless of attendance.

The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is **inclusive** rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary *Catalog* stands as an example of recommended usage.

Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

Papers submitted in this class should be submitted in typed, double-spaced format, and written according to Erskine Seminary's "Style and Form Standards for All Master's Level Programs". The student must be especially careful regarding citation of sources in all Seminary course work, including both footnotes and a full bibliography. Failing to cite a reference, or claiming other's material as one's own constitutes a type of fraud known as **plagiarism**. A charge of plagiarism is serious, and can result in the student's expulsion from the Seminary.

Course Outline

Weeks 1-4: August 30, September 6, 13 and 20 (1-4:00 P.M.)

Introduction/Lectures: An overview of Romans. Issues regarding the integrity of the letter, intended audience, occasion, history of interpretation etc. will be treated. Please read Moo, *Romans*, 1-35 (Introduction) in preparation for these classes.

Exegetical Work: Romans 1-4:25. In these sessions, we will begin our exegetical examination of the letter. Student presentations drawn from these passages will be presented in class. Please read Moo, *Romans*, 39-290 in preparation for this period.

Test: Weeks 1-4 will be evaluated by means of an objective test on **September 27**. This will be administered during the first hour of class.

Weeks 5-8: September 27, October 4, 11 and 18 (6-9:00 P.M.) Please note that Fall Break (Thanksgiving) will be from Nov. 20-28!

Discussion: *Where is Boasting?*

Exegetical Work: Romans 5:1-8:39. In these sessions, we will continue our close exegesis of the text, including student presentations of selected pericopes touching upon these chapters. Please read Moo, *Romans*, 290-547 in preparation for these classes.

Work due: Book Review, Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?*, due on **October 11**.

Weeks 9-12: October 25, November 1, 8 and 15 (1-4:00 P.M.)

Discussion: *Perspectives Old and New on Paul.*

Exegetical Work: Romans 9:1-11:36. Student presentations from this section of the text will continue. Please read Moo, *Romans*, 547-744 in preparation for this class.

Work due: Book Review, Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, **Nov. 15.**

Week 13: November 29 (6-9:00 P.M.)

In our final class session, we will hear any outstanding student presentations, and discuss the ethics of the book of Romans, 12:1-15:13. Please read Moo, *Romans*, 744-911 in preparation for these classes.