

# Erskine Theological Seminary

*Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning*

**NT750**

**Romans**

**Spring Term 2008**

**Thursdays, 8:00 –11:00 A.M.**

**Erskine Seminary 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 its students “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. **TEXTBOOKS.** The required textbooks for this course may be ordered from the Erskine Theological Seminary Virtual Bookstore at [www.ecampus.com/erskine](http://www.ecampus.com/erskine) from January 4, 2008.

**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.

Westerholm, Stephen, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

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

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. Any student who misses more than *three class sessions* (Thursdays) will not pass the course.

Students are expected to be adequately prepared for each class session, including reading assignments, biblical analysis and written work due. Classroom discussion will constitute an important element of our learning together, and will be adversely affected by poor preparation.

All work must be submitted on time, and the test(s) must be taken on the assigned date(s). Late work will be penalized at least one letter grade. The semester will include the following exercises and assignments:

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. 36, *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 Due West campus on Thursdays from 8-11 A.M. See class schedule below. Please note Spring Break (Holy Week), March 17-21!

- 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 2007-2008 *Catalog* for important information regarding drop/add procedures and deadlines (p.4, "Academic Calendar," 48), class withdrawal (p. 33), as well as the correct manner of dealing with the grade status of "incomplete" (p.36). 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. 36f. A brief summary of these policies is as follows:

A grade of "**incomplete**" is not a privilege if 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 Spring semester is August 1, 2008. 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 Catalogue stands as an example of recommended usage.

All papers presented for course credit must be typed and fully documented (footnotes and full bibliography) according to Erskine Seminary's "Style and Form Standards for All Masters Level Programs". The papers will follow the format discussed in class. These papers must be well-researched, well-written and fully documented adhering to the above-mentioned style (cf. Kate Turabian, *A Guide for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition). The student must be especially careful regarding citation of sources in all Seminary course work. 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, February 7, 14, 21 and 28:

**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 **March 6**. This will be administered during the first hour of class.

### Weeks 5-8, March 6, 13, (20) and 27: Note: No class during Holy Week (March 20)!

**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 **March 27**.

**Weeks 9-12, April 3, 10, 17 and 24:**

**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.

**Note that the 2008 Spring Conference Lecture will affect this class meeting from 10:00-10:45 a.m. on April 17.**

**Work due:** Book Review, Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, **April 24**.

**Week 13 and 14: May 1 and May 8: Final Class Sessions**

In our final class sessions, 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.