

# ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**NT 602 CO**  
**New Testament II**  
**Spring, 2009**  
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**Columbia Campus**

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## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course explores the background, literary art, theological teaching, and contemporary message of Romans through Revelation. Attention is given to the canonical significance of these writings and to their value for ministry.  
 REQUIRED. Three hours credit.

## II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Seminary Mission Statement maintains that "The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church." (ETS 2008-2009 *Catalog*, p. 5) The ministry of the church is grounded in an understanding of the life, work, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus as well as a knowledge of the experiences of those who first followed Him. This course is a direct expression of the Seminary's mission.

**More specifically, by the end of this course, the student should be able to:**

1. Sketch the major important events in the Roman Empire that affected the Christian church in the first century A.D.;
2. List the historical facts that can be known with reasonable certainty about Paul;
3. Describe the major sources for our information about Paul and the problems with using each one;
4. Describe the major influences on the thinking of Paul;
5. Show how the letters of the New Testament are like and

- unlike first-century Greco-Roman letters;
6. Describe the circumstances behind and basic contents of each of the Pauline letters in the New Testament;
  7. Describe the general conditions of the Christian church during the last three decades of the first century A.D.;
  8. List the arguments for and against the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Letters;
  9. Describe the situation addressed, unique features, and major themes of Hebrews, James, First and Second Peter, First, Second, and Third John, and Jude;
  10. Define Gnosticism and show why it was such a threat to the early church;
  11. Define apocalyptic literature and the apocalyptic movement in Israel and demonstrate how the book of Revelation is both like and unlike apocalyptic literature;
  12. Describe the different methods that have been used to interpret the book of Revelation;
  13. Describe the historical circumstances behind the book of Revelation, its structure, and its major themes;
  14. Give a brief historical account of the process by which the New Testament came to be canonized;
  15. List and describe the major tools available for studying the New Testament.

**III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (Note: Required textbooks may be purchased from the Erskine Theological Seminary Online Bookstore at <http://www.ecampus.com/erskine>.)**

Each student must purchase the following textbooks for the course:

Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*.  
New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Richards, E. Randolph. *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing*.  
Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005.

Soulen, Richard N. and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. Third Edition. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

Wilken, Robert Louis. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*.  
Second Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

In addition, the student will need a copy of the New Testament in a translation of his/her choice. Students who are proficient in Greek are encouraged to use the Greek New Testament.

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each student must satisfactorily complete the following course requirements.

1. Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. If the student must be absent from all or part of a class session, he/she is responsible for all work missed and for any work that is due. **A student who misses more than one class meeting for any reason will automatically fail the course.**
2. The student must be adequately prepared for each class session. Adequate preparation consists of reading all required assignments and being able to participate intelligently in classroom discussions. Notice that in addition to textbook reading assignments, the student is also assigned reading from the New Testament. This latter reading should not be neglected.
3. **Three one-hour tests will be given.** The professor will indicate prior to these tests the nature of the questions, the proper way to prepare, etc. See the **COURSE OUTLINE** for the dates and contents of these tests.
4. **Two papers will be required.** The first paper will be an analysis of *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing* by E. Randolph Richards. **This analysis is due no later than Session 2.** The second paper will be an analysis of *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* by Robert Louis Wilken. **This paper is due no later than Session 4.** Guide-sheets will be provided for both of these papers.
5. Papers may be penalized at least one letter grade if received after the due dates.
6. The student is encouraged to keep a loose-leaf notebook for the course. He/she can use it for class notes, reading notes, hand-outs, sermon ideas, bibliographical

information, etc. If done properly, this notebook can be a helpful resource for further study, teaching, and preaching from the New Testament.

7. The student should review the Seminary policy on "Incompletes." 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 (1) when the student has completed most of his/her course work and (2) when the student has been providentially hindered from doing the rest. The student and professor must complete a form before an "Incomplete" can be given. **The absolute final date that an "Incomplete" can be changed to a grade for the Spring semester is August 1, 2009. After this date, the grade "Incomplete" will automatically become an F and cannot be changed. Note that there is a processing fee associated with "Incompletes."**
  
8. Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

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.

9. If the student needs to withdraw from the course, he/she must complete a withdrawal form available through 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 the full tuition for the course even if he/she does not attend class.
10. The student must be careful about plagiarism. Plagiarism means that the student uses someone else's work as his/her own without giving proper credit. A charge of plagiarism is a serious one which can result in the student's being expelled from the Seminary.
11. My spring office hours are posted on my office door (Office 20). It is advisable for the student to make an appointment with the professor before coming.

## V. EVALUATION

The Seminary grade scale (*ETS 2008-2009 Catalog*, p. 42) will be used. The student's final grade will be determined as follows:

Three one-hour tests	=	70%
Analyses of 2 books	=	30%

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Session 1: Saturday, January 31

Course introduction, requirements, etc.

#### I. An Introduction to the Pauline Literature

- A. The quest for the historical Paul and a review of the book of Acts
- B. The place of Paul in the early Christian church
- C. Paul as a missionary

- D. Paul as the church's first great theologian
- E. Paul as a letter writer
- F. Paul's letters as "response" letters
- G. Basic resources for the study of Paul
- H. Major influences on Paul
- I. Tensions in first-century church life
  - 1. Hostility from Judaism and Rome
  - 2. The Jew-Gentile issue
  - 3. The delayed parousia
  - 4. The death of the eye-witnesses
  - 5. The peril of false teaching
  - 6. The influence of pagan thought and lifestyles

## II. Paul's Letter to the Romans

- A. Introduction
- B. The historical circumstances behind and purpose of Romans
- C. The structure of Romans
  - 1. Paul's introduction of himself (1:1-17)
  - 2. The universal need of salvation (1:18--3:20)
  - 3. God's provision of salvation (3:21--4:25)
  - 4. The results of God's salvation (5:1--8:39)
  - 5. Jews and Gentiles in God's plan (9:1--11:36)
  - 6. Christian faith in action and attitude (12:1--15:33)
  - 7. Personal greetings (16:1-27)
- D. Major problems in interpretation in Romans
- E. The themes of Romans

### ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 1:

1. Read carefully Romans 1-16 in a translation of your choice. Note peculiar and interesting features of the letter.
2. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 409-555, 559-584.
3. Read the following articles in Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*: "Letter" (p. 102); "Paraenesis" (pp. 132-133).

## **Session 2: Saturday, February 21**

### **TEST # 1 ON I AND II ABOVE (11:30 a.m.)**

#### **III. Paul's Letters to the Corinthians**

- A. Introduction
- B. The number of Corinthian letters?
- C. The city of Corinth
- D. The circumstances behind the Corinthian letters
- E. The structure of First Corinthians
  - 1. Paul's introduction of himself (1:1-9)
  - 2. Problems in the Corinthian church (1:10--6:20)
  - 3. Questions raised by the Corinthian church (7:1--14:40)
  - 4. Teaching about the resurrection (15:1-58)
  - 5. Conclusion (16:1-24)
- F. The structure of Second Corinthians
  - 1. Paul's greeting (1:1-2)
  - 2. Paul's thanksgiving (1:3-11)
  - 3. Paul's defense of his travel plans (1:12--2:13)
  - 4. The nature and purpose of Paul's ministry (2:14--7:4)
  - 5. Titus' report (7:5-16)
  - 6. Paul's instructions about the collection (8:1--9:15)
  - 7. Paul's defense of his ministry against false apostles (10:1--13:13)
- G. The major themes of the Corinthian letters

#### **IV. Paul's Letter to the Galatians**

- A. Introduction
- B. The identity of the Galatians
- C. The circumstances behind Galatians
- D. Paul's opponents in Galatia
- E. The structure of Galatians
  - 1. Paul's defense of his apostleship (1:1--2:21)

2. Paul's defense of the gospel of grace (3:1--4:31)
  3. The life of faith (5:1--6:18)
- F. The major themes in Galatians

### **ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 2:**

1. Read carefully 1 Corinthians 1-16 and 2 Corinthians 1-13. Note your impressions and any peculiar features of each letter.
2. Read carefully Galatians 1-6. Note especially the tone of the letter and imagine its effects on the hearers. Note any unusual features.
3. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 467-482, 511-558.
4. The analysis of *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing* by E. Randolph Richards is due in this session.

## **Session 3: Saturday, March 21**

### **TEST # 2 ON III AND IV ABOVE (11:30 a.m.)**

#### **V. Paul's Prison Letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon)**

- A. Introduction
- B. The time and place of Paul's imprisonment
- C. Paul's letter to the Ephesians
  1. The Pauline authorship of Ephesians
  2. The circumstances behind Ephesians
  3. The structure of Ephesians
    - a. Paul's greeting (1:1-2)
    - b. God's perfect workmanship (1:3--3:21)
    - c. The worthy life (4:1--6:20)
- D. Paul's letter to the Philippians
  1. The circumstances behind Philippians
  2. The unity of Philippians
  3. The structure of Philippians
    - a. Paul's greeting (1:1-11)

- b. Paul's response to his present situation (1:12-26)
    - c. Living the worthy life (1:27-2:18)
    - d. Paul's recommendation of Epaphroditus (2:19-30)
    - e. Various reflections and admonitions (3:1--4:20)
    - f. Benediction (4:21-23)
  - 4. The major themes in Philippians
- E. Paul's letter to the Colossians
  - 1. The city of Colossae
  - 2. Historical circumstances behind Colossians
  - 3. The Colossian heresy
  - 4. The structure of Colossians
    - a. Paul's introduction (1:1-14)
    - b. The supremacy of Christ (1:15--2:7)
    - c. The problems faced by the Colossians (2:8--3:4)
    - d. Practical instructions (3:5--4:6)
    - e. Epilogue (4:7-18)
  - 5. The major themes of Colossians
- F. Paul's letter to Philemon
  - 1. The identity of Philemon
  - 2. The identity of Onesimus
  - 3. The circumstances behind the letter to Philemon
  - 4. The major theme of Philemon

## **VI. Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians**

- A. Introduction
- B. The church at Thessalonica
- C. Interpretative problems with the Thessalonian letters
- D. The circumstances behind the Thessalonian letters
- E. The structure of First Thessalonians
  - 1. Paul's thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (1:1-10)
  - 2. Paul's work with the Thessalonians (2:1-12)
  - 3. Paul's thanksgiving and concern for the Thessalonian church (2:13--3:13)

4. The worthy Christian walk (4:1-12)
5. The Second Coming (4:13-18)
6. Walking in the light (5:1-22)
- F. The major themes of First Thessalonians
- G. The structure of Second Thessalonians
  1. Paul's thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (1:1-12)
  2. Paul's continued teaching about the Second Coming (2:1-12)  
*Excursus: The Man of Sin (Lawlessness)*
  3. Paul's encouragement of the Thessalonians (2:13--3:5)
  4. Paul's command for radical discipline (3:6-18)
- H. The major themes of Second Thessalonians

## **VII. The Pastoral Letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus)**

- A. Introduction
- B. The Pauline authorship of the Pastorals
- C. The condition of the church presupposed in the Pastorals
- D. The structure of 1 Timothy
  1. Salutation (1:1-2)
  2. An attack on the doctrine of the false teachers (1:3-20)
  3. Instructions about church order (2:1--3:16)
  4. An attack on the behavior of the false teachers (4:1-10)
  5. Further instructions about church order (4:11--6:19)
  6. Conclusion (6:20-21)
- E. The structure of 2 Timothy
  1. Salutation (1:1-2)
  2. Encouragement to bear witness (1:3--2:13)
  3. Encouragement to good behavior in all respects (2:14--4:8)
  4. Paul's personal situation (4:9-18)
  5. Closing greetings (4:19-22)
- F. The structure of Titus
  1. Salutation (1:1-4)
  2. Instructions about ordained ministry (1:5-9)
  3. An attack on false teaching (1:10-16)

4. Encouragement to proper Christian behavior (2:1--3:7)
5. A renewed attack on false teaching (3:8-11)
6. Personal notes (3:12-14)
7. Closing greetings (3:15)

### **ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 3:**

1. Read carefully Ephesians 1-6; Philippians 1-4; Colossians 1-4, and Philemon. Note any unusual features of these letters.
2. Read carefully 1 Thessalonians 1-5 and 2 Thessalonians 1-3. Note the significant differences between the two letters.
3. Read carefully 1 Timothy 1-6, 2 Timothy 1-4, and Titus 1-3. Note especially the characteristics of the life of the church that emerge from these letters.
4. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 456-466; 483-510; 585-589; 590-598; 599-637; 638-680.
5. Read the following article(s) In Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*: "Deuteropauline" (p. 47); "Pseudonymity" (p. 149).

## **Session 4: Saturday, April 25**

**TEST #3 ON V, VI, VII ABOVE (11:30 a.m.)**

### **VIII. The General Letters (Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, 1, 2, and 3 John)**

- A. Introduction
- B. The general characteristics of the church from A. D. 70-100
- C. The letter to the Hebrews
  1. The literary genre of Hebrews
  2. Authorship, date, and purpose of Hebrews
  3. The use of the Old Testament in Hebrews
  4. The structure of Hebrews

- a. Jesus as Son of God and Savior of Men (1:1--3:6)
  - b. Encouragement to approach God (3:7--4:13)
  - c. Jesus as High Priest (4:14--5:10)
  - d. Encouragement to become mature in the faith (5:11--6:20)
  - e. Jesus as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (7:1--10:18)
  - f. Practical instruction (10:19-39)
  - g. Jesus as the Pioneer and Perfector of faith (11:1-39)
  - h. The life of faith (12:1--13:17)
  - i. Closing benediction and greetings (13:18-25)
5. The major themes of Hebrews
- D. The letter of James
- 1. The literary form of James
  - 2. The alleged conflict between James and Paul
  - 3. Authorship, date, destination, and purpose of James
  - 4. The structure of James
    - a. The address (1:1)
    - b. Trials in the Christian experience (1:2-18)
    - c. Hearing and doing the Word (1:19-27)
    - d. Avoiding partiality and living by love (2:1-12)
    - e. Faith and works (2:13-26)
    - f. The tongue (3:1-12)
    - g. Heavenly wisdom instead of earthly wisdom (3:13-18)
    - h. God's peace (4:1-10)
    - i. Various warnings and encouragements (4:11--5:20)
  - 5. The themes of James
- E. The letters of Peter
- 1. Authorship, date, destination, and purposes of 1 and 2 Peter
  - 2. The authenticity of 2 Peter
  - 3. The structure of 1 Peter
    - a. Opening greetings (1:1-2)
    - b. A blessing (1:3-9)

- c. An exhortation to holiness (1:10--2:10)
    - d. An exhortation on Christian obligations (2:11--3:12)
    - e. Further exhortations (3:13--4:6)
    - f. The nearness of the End (4:7-11)
    - g. Suffering in the Christian life (4:12--5:11)
    - h. Closing greetings (5:12-14)
  - 4. The structure of 2 Peter
    - a. Salutation (1:1-2)
    - b. Exhortation to holy living (1:3-21)
    - c. An attack on false teachers (2:1-22)
    - d. The coming Day of the Lord (3:1-10)
    - e. Practical instructions and concluding doxology (3:11-18)
  - 5. The themes of 1 and 2 Peter
- F. The letter of Jude
  - 1. The unique features of Jude
  - 2. The purpose of Jude
  - 3. The themes of Jude
- G. The letters of John
  - 1. The letters of John and the Gospel of John
  - 2. The Johannine community
  - 3. Authorship, date, destination and purposes of the letters of John
  - 4. The Gnostic threat in the early church
  - 5. A summary of the contents of the letters of John
  - 6. The themes of the letters of John

## **IX. The Book of Revelation**

- A. Introduction
- B. Revelation and the apocalyptic movement
- C. The peculiar features of Revelation
- D. Methods of interpreting Revelation
- E. A guide to the symbolism of Revelation
- F. The historical circumstances behind Revelation
- G. The structure of Revelation
  - a. Prologue (1:1-20)

- b. The letters to the seven churches (2:1--3:22)
- c. The central vision of the Revelation (4:1--5:14)
- d. The seven seals (6:1--8:5)
- e. The seven trumpets (8:6--11:19)
- f. Seven important signs (12:1--14:20)
- g. The seven bowls (15:1--16:21)
- h. The triumph of God and His ways (17:1--20:15)
- i. A new heaven and a new earth (21:1--22:5)
- j. Epilogue (22:6-21)
- H. The themes of the book of Revelation

### **X. The New Testament Canon**

- A. Introduction
- B. The probable historical development of the canon of the New Testament
- C. The New Testament Apocrypha

### **ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 4:**

1. Read carefully Hebrews 1-13; James 1-5; 1 Peter 1-5; 2 Peter 1-3; Jude; 1 John 1-5; 2 John; 3 John. As you read, try to determine what the conditions of the church were like when these letters were written.
2. Read carefully Revelation 1-22. Note the various kinds of imagery that is used in the book.
3. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 681-772; 773-813.
4. Read the following article(s) In Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*: "Apocalyptic; Apocalyptic Literature" (pp. 8-10); "Eschatology" (pp. 55-56).
5. The analysis of *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* by Robert Louis Wilken is due in this session.