

INDIANA EXTENSION COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL
The United Methodist Church
Meeting at the University of Indianapolis and Online
On Campus Sessions: May 18 and June 29, 2019

COS 521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

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COURSE CONTENT AND GOALS

This course focuses on the content and context of the assigned biblical texts and the theological emphases of their writers. In addition to Acts and Revelation, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, James, and 1 John will receive special attention. Students will articulate a theology of scripture. Students will be able to:

1. Distinguish these genres of biblical literature and understand the major theological themes in these writings.
2. Faithfully exegete these forms of biblical literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and contemporary issues.
4. Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

BOOKS

Required Textbooks (please note that the required Study Bible, Dictionary, and Commentary should be in your library from previous COS classes):

1. Wright, N. T. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*. Fortress Press, 2009.
2. Koester, Craig R. *Revelation and the End of All Things*. Eerdmans, 2001.
3. Long, Thomas G. *Hebrews: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Westminster John Knox, 1997.

from previous COS classes . . .

4. Harrelson, Walter J. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha* [NISB]. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003 ISBN 0-687-27832-5
5. Powell, Mark Allan, ed. *The Harper-Collins Bible Dictionary* [HCBD]. Harper: San Francisco, 2011.

6. Gaventa, Beverly Roberts, and David L. Petersen, eds. *The New Interpreter's Bible One-Volume Commentary*. Abingdon Press, 2010.

Supplemental Textbooks [good to have as a resource, but not required for this course]:

1. Shillington, George V. *An Introduction to the Study of Luke-Acts*. Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2007/2015.
2. Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament*. Baker Academic, 2009.
3. Murphy, Nancey C. *Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion*. Wipf and Stock, 2001.
4. Strunk, William Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Pearson, 1999.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING PAPERS

- 1) For the Reading Questions (see below), read the text assignments, take notes and answer the questions completely in your own words, using complete sentences (unless otherwise noted). Do not quote extensively from the text that you read. Rather, digest the ideas and information and then put them in your own words. *Please study closely and follow the suggestions in "Tips for Becoming a Better Writer" below*. Also, make your paper the approximate length that is given for each item of written work, using one-inch margins.
- 2) Format your written work for 8 ½ x 11 paper, double-spaced. Use 12-point font.
- 3) Citation Rules:
 - a) If you *quote* from a text, you must use *quotation marks* and note the source (including page numbers at the end of each usage). Quotations less than five lines should be enclosed in quotes. Quotations five or more lines should be single spaced and indented 1.5 Inches from the left margin.
 - b) As much as possible, ideas and information should be stated in your own words and sentence structure, not in the words or sentence structure of the authors you have read.
 - c) Whenever you use *information or an idea* from another source, whether that is a direct quotation or a restatement in your own words, *always cite the source*. You may footnote or use the in-text method (Author's last name, Year, page/s), for example: (Powell 2011, 400). If you refer to books or articles that are not listed on the class

reading list, then provide full bibliographic information in a bibliography at the end of the paper (Author, Title, Place of publication: Publisher, Date).

- 4) When you submit the “Reading Questions” include a title page that contains the following information:
 - a) The course number
 - b) Name of the course
 - c) Your name
 - d) Date the paper is due

- 5) When you submit the “Exegesis Paper” place the following information on a cover page:
 - a) The course number
 - b) Name of the course
 - c) Your name
 - d) Paper’s title (if you choose to title it)
 - e) Passage being discussed
 - f) Date the paper is due

- 6) NOTE: Using other people’s language or intellectual property without acknowledgment or documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. Such unacknowledged use of another’s ideas, otherwise known as plagiarism, usually means failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry.

CLASS PREPARATION AND STUDY

Study habits are important. Clergy need to have good study habits. Persons who have college or university experience are expected to have developed good study habits. Persons who have not had such experience should pay special attention to observing them. One rule that students in college learn is the “twofer” one. One should study two hours outside of class for each hour in class. The COS assumes 20 hours of class time and about 20 pages of writing. It frequently helps to read text material twice. The first reading is to see the general ideas and progress of the author’s thinking, the issue that is taken up, the thesis and conclusions and reasons for whatever thesis or conclusion that is claimed. Then ask: Is the thesis justified? Is something important omitted? Is the argument sound and convincing? Are there other solutions to the issue? Are such conclusions better than those of the author? It may be helpful to make notes. For example, outline the text by writing one sentence that summarizes a paragraph or section.

Grading: Letter grades are assigned. The final grade for the course is based upon how well the student fulfills all the requirements of the course. Attendance at both on campus sessions is required. See the “Course Expectations” chart below.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Assignment	% Value
Exegetical Paper (8-10 pages)	30
Reading Questions (2 total, each about 5 pages)	(15 per set X 2) 30
Online Assignments	30
Attendance and Participation in Class Discussion	10
Total	100

COURSE SCHEDULE

Assigned readings for a session shall be completed prior to that session.

Saturday, May 18, 8:00am - 4:00pm

Topics

- The General Letters
- Christian Life and Mission in Conditions of Suffering and Persecution
- Exegetical papers to be explained and possible topics discussed
- The Lukan Narrative(s)
- The Beginnings of the Worldwide Christian Movement and the Nature of Christian Witness
- How to write academic papers

Readings

- Hebrews
- James
- Thomas G. Long. *Hebrews: Interpretation* [RT]
- Acts (and review Luke's Gospel as well)
- "Acts," Chapter 9 in Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament* [ST]

Assignment Due

- Reading Questions for May (see below) – due Saturday, May 18

Saturday, June 29, 8:00am - 4:00pm

Topics

- Paul's Letters, Theology, and Mission
- Pastoral Theology and Community Formation

- The Johannine Writings
- Apocalyptic, Endurance, and Hope
- Victorious and Enduring Faith and the Triumph of God's Kingdom

Readings

- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- N.T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* [RT]
- 1 John
- Revelation
- Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things* [RT]

Assignment Due

- Reading Questions for June (see below) – due Saturday, June 29
- Exegesis Paper – due June 29

Reading Questions for May

Instructions

The sources for this assignment should be primarily from the assigned readings. Citations can use the abbreviations used in the course syllabus followed by a comma and page number, such as: (HCBD, 415) or (NISB, 7). Please bring your completed work to the May session.

Questions on the so-called general letters in the NT: (about one page, double spaced total):

- Which NT letters fall into the category of “general letters,” and what are some of the implications of referring to these letters by that designation?
- Describe briefly how interpreting NT letters is different from interpreting the Gospels.
- Put in your own words what you consider to be the main message of Hebrews and the central message of James.

Questions on Luke’s Gospel: (about two pages double spaced total):

- What seems to be Luke’s reason for writing his narrative of Jesus’ ministry?
- What role does Luke portray Jesus fulfilling in Israel, and how does Jesus do so?
- How does Luke’s Gospel utilize the Old Testament, and for what reasons might the Old Testament story be echoed in this Gospel so “loudly”?

Questions on Acts: (about two pages double spaced total):

- Luke refers to the disciples of Jesus in Acts as “witnesses.” Why do you suppose Luke underscores that role in his narrative, and how does that role play itself out in the story of the early church’s mission in the world?
- Students of Luke and Acts have long puzzled over the Isaiah quote in the final scene of Acts (Acts 28:25-28), as well as earlier such texts that mention the gospel and its messengers going away from the Jews and to the Gentiles (e.g. Acts 18:6). Considering the final Isaiah quotation in Acts, what do you imagine Luke is wanting his readers to think about God’s relationship to both Jews and Gentiles?

Reading Questions for June

Instructions

The sources for this assignment should be primarily from the assigned readings. Citations can use the abbreviations used in the course syllabus followed by a comma and page number, such as: (HCBD, 415) or (NISB, 7). Please bring your completed work to the June session.

Questions on the apostle Paul: (about one page, double spaced total):

- What does Paul mean by calling himself an “apostle”?
- If Paul were to write his own brief job description, what do you think it would say?
- How would you say Paul’s mission related to the rest of the early church’s sense of its own identity and purpose?

Questions on Romans: (about one page, double spaced total):

- Romans 1:16-17 is often thought of as the thematic statement for the letter to the church in Rome. How does that statement describe Paul’s gospel?
- Historically, NT scholars have typically viewed Romans 9-11 as somewhat separate from the rest of Romans. Do you see it as somewhat distinct from the rest of the letter, or more integrally connected to it? Why?
- A key question in the interpretation of Romans has been why Paul wrote this letter. What do you think were his reasons, based on the contents of the letter itself?
- As with Luke and Acts, Paul too roots his thinking and writing in the Old Testament. How does Paul seem to use the Old Testament in Romans and for what reasons? Or to ask that question another way, what would be lost from Paul’s “argument” in the letter if he were to leave out all references and allusions to the Old Testament?

Questions on 1 Corinthians: (about one page, double spaced total):

- What would you say are the top two or three problems Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians, and why does he consider them problematic?
- What solution does Paul propose for all the various specific problems he addresses in this letter? In other words, how, in terms of principles or strategies, does Paul want the Corinthians to think and/or behave differently?

Questions on the nature of apocalyptic: (about half a page, double spaced total):

- Where does the word “apocalyptic” originate and what does the term signify in when used of certain Jewish and/or Christian writings?
- What assumptions might we bring to our study of Revelation just based on the idea that Revelation can fit into a genre we could call “apocalyptic”?

Questions on 1 John: (about half a page, double spaced total):

- What does the author say is his reason for writing this little letter, and how might that reason help you interpret the letter’s message?
- The word “love” plays an important role in 1 John. Briefly describe that role.

- Discuss two or three concerns you believe John had for the early church, based on 1 John.

Questions on Revelation: (about one page, double spaced total):

- What kind of writing is Revelation, and how might its literary genre inform your interpretation of it?
- Many people have an impression of what Revelation is about, though they have not necessarily ever read it. Based on your study of Revelation for this class, how would you describe its main message and the relevance of that message for people today?