

**PHD SEMINAR: BINT9403 Interpreting the General Epistles  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
Biblical Studies Division  
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**NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

**COURSE PURPOSE, CORE VALUE FOCUS, AND CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “academic excellence” especially highlighted in this course. This year, the Seminary core value focus is doctrinal integrity.

NOBTS has seven basic competencies guiding our Masters degree programs: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual & Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. This course addresses the “Biblical Exposition” competency by helping the student learn to interpret the Bible accurately.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This seminar is designed for intensive exegetical work in the General Epistles of the New Testament. Attention is given to introductory and background matters as well as the current scholarly literature on the General Epistles. Special focus is given to exegetical issues in the history of interpretation, genre considerations, theological issues, and historical issues of the Roman Empire that impact the letters. Exegesis and interpretation of the Greek text is made with the help of the best critical literature available.

**OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of this course include the following:

- To nurture understanding of the meaning of the General Epistles in their original context and their application to the current day through the development of critical insight into the background and writings of these Epistles
- Students should enhance the skills used in conducting basic exegetical research
- Students should understand the state of research and historical meaning related to the literature of the General Epistles
- Students should gain an increased appreciation for the relevance of the exegetical study of the General Epistles in the Greek text
- Students should demonstrate the ability to understand the Greek text of the General Epistles and to apply their skills in exegesis for a sound interpretation of the text

**COURSE TEACHING METHODS:**

This course will use a combination of pedagogical methods, including but not limited to the following: lectures, student assignments, small group work, computer resources, textbook reviews, class discussions, and student presentations. Both inductive and deductive approaches to learning will be utilized.

**Required Textbooks:**

Students should obtain and read the following:

**Greek Text**

United Bible Society's 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. of the *Greek New Testament with Dictionary*.  
OR

*Nomum Testamentum Graece*, 28<sup>th</sup> ed. (NA 28), ed. Barbara and Kurt Aland.

**James**

Blomberg, L. Craig and Kamell, Mariam J., *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: James*, Clinton E. Arnold, Gen. ed., Zondervan, 2008.

Dauids, Peter H. *The Epistle of James*, in *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Eerdmans, 1982.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *James*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Martin, Ralph P. *James*, Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word Publishing, 1988.

**1 Peter**

Achtemeier, Paul J. *1 Peter*. Hermeneia: Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.

Dauids, Peter H. *The First Epistle of Peter*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Elliott, John H. *1 Peter*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

Jobes, Karen H. *1 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. 2005.

Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word Publishing Co., 1988.

**2 Peter, Jude**

Bauckham, Richard J., *2 Peter, Jude*. Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 50. Word Books, 1983.

Dauids, Peter H. *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Green, Gene and Robert Yarbrough. *Jude and 2 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

## 1, 2, 3, John

Brown, Raymond E. *The Epistles of John*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982.

Marshall, I. Howard. *The Epistles of John*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.

Smalley, Stephen S. *1, 2, 3, John*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, Texas: Word, 1984.

### SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

**Session One:** Each student will present a book review on the first session. The book choices are given below. Please choose your top choice and also list two or three alternates and email them to the professor. Selection will be based upon a first come, first served basis.

**Sessions Two, Three, and Four:** The following exegetical sessions/meetings will focus on one letter or group of letters each month. October will feature the Johannine letters, November will focus on James, and December will feature the Petrine letters and Jude.

Each of the Oct, Nov, and Dec sessions will be comprised of

- 1) 3 paper presentations on the focus letter(s);
- 2) a responder to each paper
- 3) 3 Journal article reviews on the focus letter(s).

1) We would like for you to choose a focus letter to write your seminar paper. The passage will be open for you to choose, but we will need three papers at each meeting for the schedule to work out. (The first three to choose John will write in the epistles, the first three to choose James, the first three to choose Peter, etc.)

2) Next, select a different focus letter to which you would like to respond. We can negotiate the passages and to whom you will respond at the first seminar meeting.

3) Finally, please choose a journal to review on a completely different focus letter from your response and research paper. The purpose for spreading out the topics is to give you exposure to each of the different letter groups in the General Epistles. This will give you a well-rounded learning experience and also spread out your workload so that your assignments do not come due at the same time. Once we have ironed out the schedule, each of you should be presenting one assignment at each of our meetings. Every effort will be made to give each student his/her first or second choices on assignments.

#### 1. Book Review Due at Session One

Each student will select one of the following books and present a book review to the seminar at the scheduled time. The student will present his/her first choice and several alternates to the instructor for approval. These are offered on a first come, first served basis. Please choose one and two alternates from different letter groups so that none

are duplicated. Guidelines for the reviews are below. (If you know which letter on which you wish to write your paper, you may pair a book to review that would help you in your research process). For example, you could review Bauckham if you want to write on James, etc.) **Final assignments will be made by the instructor in order to cover all the books under review.**

Bauckham, Richard. *James: The Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*. New Testament Readings Series. New York, Routledge Press, 1999.

Chilton, Bruce and Neusner, Jacob. *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission*. Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press. 2001.

Culpepper, R. Alan. *The Gospel and the Letters of John*. Abingdon Press, 1998.

Elliott, John H. *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.

Jobes, Karen H. *Letters to the Churches: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Langford, Justin. *Defending Hope: Semiotics and Intertextuality in 1 Peter*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013.

Witherington, Ben. *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Social Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James, and Jude*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians, Volume 2: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1-2 Peter*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009

## **2. Research Paper - Choose a letter you wish to research and two alternates**

For the research paper assignment, the student will write a major research paper on a student-selected passage and topic. The paper must include a thorough exegesis of a passage from the letter group detailed above in the General Epistles. The research papers are to be from 25-35 pages in length, thoroughly covering the selected topic. The paper must show evidence that the student used the textbooks for this class in the research of the paper. The paper must be written according to the rubric below and posted in the File Exchange on Blackboard no later than one week before the class session in which it is presented. The responder and class members will then have ample time to prepare for the seminar discussion. Papers will be presented, evaluated, and defended at the class session as indicated on the Seminar Schedule. **Choose one and two alternates. Final assignments will be made by the instructor in order to cover all the focus letters.**

### 3. Paper Response - Choose a letter group to which you would like to respond and two alternates

A response to the paper is to be presented to the writer of the paper in writing prior to the seminar meeting. The responses will be made to the class orally following the presentation of the paper. Like the paper, the response will be defended in class.

**Papers and responses may be chosen by sending in your first choice and two alternates. Final assignments will be made by the instructor in order to cover all the focus letter responses.**

Papers will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Grammar and Style:** Spelling; sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian; use of quotations (use them sparingly to clarify your analysis and interpretation).
2. **Clarity and Coherence:** Organization; logical development; overall sense of the paper.
3. **Research:** Bibliography; type and variety of sources (primary, secondary monographs, journal articles, etc.); [Most bibliographic entries should be accompanied by footnote citations].
4. **Interpretive awareness and insight:** Factual accuracy; awareness of context and connection to other material (i.e., continuity/discontinuity; cause/effect; relationships/comparisons; sensitivity to context; awareness of persons, movements, or forces, historical and otherwise).
5. **Analysis and Evaluation:** Going beyond the mere reporting of facts to include explanation, interpretation, analysis of material; evaluation of the material at hand; demonstration that you have done a thorough critique of the material that you have researched.

Each of the five areas will count as 20% of the grade for the response paper.

### 4. Journal Article Review

The student will select a journal article germane to the study of the subject of the General Epistles and will write a review of the article following the instructions given below. The Journal Article Review will be presented as shown on the Seminar Schedule. **Final assignments will be made by the instructor in order to cover all the focus letters.**

#### **Book and Journal Article Review Guidelines/Rubric**

Book reviews and Journal Articles will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Grammar and Style:** spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian
2. **Summary:** A fair, concise presentation of the book's / journal article's content
3. **Evaluation:** A balanced, critical assessment of the book's / journal article's strengths and weaknesses
4. **Research Insight:** Awareness of the book's / journal article's interpretive significance and place in the Prophetic literature

Each of the four areas will count as 25% of the grade for the book review and journal article review.

### **Translation Skills**

All students should generally be able to handle the translation of the passages in the General Epistles on which the papers are being written. All language helps like computer software and published helps are allowed and encouraged for use in the seminar. Learning to use the available software is an added learning outcome of the seminar. Students are encouraged to share software discoveries and skills with one another.

### **Recommended Computer Software**

The student is strongly encouraged to purchase Bible software for his/her use in biblical exegesis. At this level of Greek study a program capable of producing the text, performing sophisticated morphological searches, with available lexicons, commentaries, and other helpful supplemental works is an absolute necessity. The software packages listed below are capable of intense, complex searches required for biblical studies research purposes and/or sermon preparation. The purchase of this kind of software is indispensable at this level of language study.

#### PC Users:

BibleWorks ([bibleworks.com](http://bibleworks.com)) provides discounts for our students when purchased in bulk orders (see your professor for more information). BibleWorks costs about \$350 for their basic software program which includes many supplemental works. Ordered in bundles of 10 or more, the price is reduced to \$250 for NOBTS seminary students. Bulk orders are placed through the local NOBTS LifeWay Store. Call their customer service for questions.

#### Mac Users:

If you are using a Macintosh computer, Accordance Bible Software ([accordancebible.com](http://accordancebible.com)) is the standard in the field. The basic Scholar's Core is around \$250 with many other add-on texts available and they offer student discounts. Accordance has a PC emulator as well. Responses have been varied on this emulator. Call their customer service for questions.

#### Mac or PC Users:

Logos 5.0 is now available for either Mac or PC platforms ([logos.com](http://logos.com)). Logos 5.0 is offered at varied package prices, but we recommend that you consider a minimum of the Bronze Level package that has the Greek and Hebrew texts for NOBTS language courses. NOBTS offers a training course called PREA6230/6330 Technological Applications for Bible Study and Preaching. Students who take this course may purchase the software at a 50% discount. Students who purchase the software directly from Logos receive a 30% discount. Call their customer service for questions.

**SEMINAR SCHEDULE**  
**BINT9403 Interpreting the New Testament General Epistles**

Please take special note of the due dates for papers, responses, and journal articles.

**Meeting 1**

**September 12**

8:00-11:00 Introduction, Paper/Response Assignments & Book Reviews  
 1:00-6:00 Continue: Book Reviews

**Book Reviews - All**

Each presenter will have 30-45 minutes to present the book review for the class. Please upload a digital copy of your book review into our course Blackboard shell **a week prior** to our first meeting. Each of the seminar participants will download the reviews, read them prior to our class meeting, and be able to follow your presentation. We will discuss the content of the book following each review.

Name	Title (See Syllabus Biblio)	Date - 9-12
Zach Richards	Langford - Semiotics	
Andrea Robinson	Witherington - #1 Socio-Rhetor Heb, James, Jude	
Wade Stevens	Witherington - #2 Socio-Rhetor 1-2 Peter	
Chris McElmurray	Witherington - #3 NT Rhetoric	
Courtney Veasey	Elliot - Home for Homeless	
Scott Talley	Jobes - Letters to the Churches	
Ju Heun Park	Culpepper - John	
Rosanne Osborne	Chilton - James	
Brian Richards	Bauckham - James	

**Meeting 2: John's Letters**

**October 10**

Please upload your papers to our Blackboard shell **one-week prior** to our class meeting. Each responder and class member will then have one week to read the papers in preparation for our class meeting.

Each responder will then upload a copy of his/her response **two days prior** to our class meeting. The class will then be able to read the responses ahead of time as well.

8:00-11:00 John: Paper Presentations & Responses (3 papers)  
 1:00-6:00 Continue Papers & Journal Article Reports on John's Letters

### Research Papers: Book/Letter to Study

Name: Presenter	Letter to Exegete: Date	Responder
	Letters of John - October	
Scott Talley		Ju Heun Park
Rosanne Osborne		Wade Stevens
Chris McElmurray		Brian Richards

### Journal Articles

Please upload your journal article reviews **one week prior** to our meeting for the class to read ahead of time.

Name	Journal Review	Date
	John's Epistles	October
Zach Richards		
Andrea Robinson		
Courtney Veasey		

### Meeting 3: James

November 7

Please upload your papers to our Blackboard shell **one-week prior** to our class meeting. Each responder and class member will then have one week to read the papers in preparation for our class meeting.

Each responder will then upload a copy of his/her response **two days prior** to our class meeting. The class will then be able to read the responses ahead of time as well.

8:00-11:00 James: Paper Presentation & Responses (3 papers)  
 1:00-6:00 Continue Papers & Journal Article Reports on James' Letters

### Research Papers: Book/Letter to Study

Name: Presenter	Letter to Exegete: Date	Responder
	James- November	
Brian Richards		Rosanne Osborne
Andrea Robinson		Scott Talley
Courtney Veasey		Zach Richards

## Journal Articles

Please upload your journal article reviews **one week prior** to our meeting for the class to read ahead of time.

Name	Journal Review	Date
	James' Epistle	November
Ju Heun Park		
Chris McElmurray		
Wade Stevens		

### Meeting 4: 1-2 Peter & Jude

December 5

Please upload your papers to our Blackboard shell **one-week prior** to our class meeting. Each responder and class member will then have one week to read the papers in preparation for our class meeting.

Each responder will then upload a copy of his/her response **two days prior** to our class meeting. The class will then be able to read the responses ahead of time as well.

8:00-11:00 Peter: Paper Presentations and Responses (3 papers)  
 1:00-6:00 Continue Papers & Journal Article Reports on Petrine Letters/Jude

### Research Papers: Book/Letter to Study

Name	Letter to Exegete: Date	Responder
	Petrine Letters/Jude - December	
Zach Richards		Andrea Robinson
Ju Heun Park		Chris McElmurray
Wade Stevens		Courtney Veasey

## Journal Articles

Please upload your journal article reviews **one week prior** to our meeting for the class to read ahead of time.

Name	Journal Review	Date
	Peter's Epistles/Jude	December
Scott Talley		
Rosanne Osborne		
Brian Richards		

## Further Recommended Texts:

### Lexical

Danker, Frederick William. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000.

This lexicon is the current standard for Greek studies. It is thorough and extremely helpful for the student. Most Greek software packages offer it as an add-on resource. It is very helpful and should be in every serious Greek student's library.

### Text Critical

Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: American Bible Society, 1994.

This little commentary is expensive, but details Metzger's decisions for selecting many of the variant readings found in the Greek text. This book will assist you in answering many of the questions in the class workbook.

### Greek Grammars

Mounce, W. D. *Basics of Biblical Greek*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.

A standard among Greek grammars. Now in its third edition, this work is used for most college and seminary introductory Greek courses. This work is a great edition for every serious Greek student's library. The book is inductive in approach to learning Greek.

Stevens, Gerald L. *New Testament Greek Primer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2007.

This Greek grammar is published by NOBTS Greek guru, Dr. Jerry Stevens. The grammar is deductive in approach and is loaded with detailed information for using the Greek language. The exercises are systematically keyed for programmed learning of the language. It is a very helpful resource for serious Greek students.

\_\_\_\_\_. *New Testament Greek Intermediate*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.

This intermediate grammar extends the process of the Primer above. This is also very helpful for Greek studies and should be in your library.

Wallace, Daniel B. *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

Wallace's grammar is now a standard in the field. Although it does not replace Robertson's grammar, it is a working grammar that you will use regularly in advanced Greek studies. This is a must have for every serious Greek student's library.

## Selected Bibliography

### 1 Peter

Arichea, D. C. and Nida, E. *A Translator's Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*. New York, London, Stuttgart: UBS, 1980.

Barbieri, L. A. *First and Second Peter*. 2d ed. Chicago, 1978.

Bauer, J. B. *Der erste Petrusbrief*. Die Welt der Bibel 14. Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1971.

- Beare, F. W. *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*. 3d ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1970.
- Best, E. *1 Peter*. NCB. London: Oliphants, 1971.
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- Brox, N. *Der erste Petrusbrief*. 2d ed. EKK. Zurich: Benziger, 1986.
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- Felten, J. *Die zwei Briefe des hl. Petrus und der Judasbrief*. Regensburg, 1929.
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- Gunkel, H. *Der erste Brief des Petrus*. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1906.
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- Holtzmann, O. *Die Petrusbriefe. Das Neue Testament*. Giessen, 1926.
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- Margot, J. C. *Les Epitres de Pierre*. Commentaire. Geneva: Editions Labor et Fides, 1960.
- Michl, J. *Die katholischen Briefe*. 2d ed. Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1953.
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