



BIGK9404 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 fulfil 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 *Servant Leadership*.

NOBTS has seven basic competencies: 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.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To comprehend 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, theological and textual issues of these Epistles.

- To demonstrate skill in conducting a high level of exegetical research through writing assignments, translating Koine Greek, oral presentations and defence of research and ideas.
- To value the need for the study, interpretation and use of the General Epistles not only in the academic setting, but also in the local church.

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: Greek Text

Select one of the following Greek texts for this course. Ideally, the student should have both in order to interact with the textual variants in the apparatuses. The UBS5 or NA28 are required editions because each is based upon the updated ECM textual work on the General Epistles (see the front matter of each Greek text for the updated summary).

United Bible Society 5th rev. ed. (UBS5) of the *Greek New Testament with Dictionary*.

OR

Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th ed. (NA 28), ed. Barbara and Kurt Aland.

General Works

We will be utilizing the following morphology to analyse Greek verbal forms. Mounce's morphology will also be consulted, but Brooks and Winbery are employed in class for morphological descriptions.

Brooks, James A. and Winbery, Carlton, L. *A Morphology of New Testament Greek: A Review and Reference Grammar*. New York: University Press of America, 1994.

A book review will be conducted this term on Porter's book. This is a practical work designed to assist the student in the process of writing for publication.

Porter, Stanley E. *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010.

Recommended Greek Helps

Baylor University Press has published a very helpful Greek series for your language work. These are recommended.

Adam, A. K. M. *James: A Handbook on the Greek Text*. Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2013.

Culy, Martin M. *I, II, III John: A Handbook on the Greek Text*. Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2004.

Davids, Peter H. *II Peter and Jude: A Handbook on the Greek Text*. Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament. Waco, Texas: Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament. Waco, Texas, 2011.

Dubis, Mark. *I Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*. Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010.

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

The seminar will meet on the dates set in ReDoc course schedule. The first half of the semester will be focused on translation of the Greek text of James, 1-2 Peter, Jude and 1-3 John. Selected morphological analysis will be assigned for verbal forms in the letters. The background for each of the General Epistles will also be covered during the first half of the term. The second half of the term will focus on research papers with formal responses. Each student should begin considering questions from the letters that could become a research topic for a paper.

First Half of the Semester

Session Overview: Each of the first four sessions will cover: book reviews, translation of the Greek text for that session, morphological analysis of selected verbs, and a background paper for the specified letter(s) covered for that week. As you prepare your work for each meeting, consider constructing your materials for use in studying for your oral examination. The background papers will prepare you for a question on our letters, if asked. Hopefully, we will be able to cover all of the verses for translation. The morphology work will deepen your understanding of Greek. Morphological assignments will be sent to you prior to the first day of class. Book reviews and background papers are due to the professor at the beginning of class. We will have one different assignment on Session Three where you will perform a Lexical Word Study using Mitchell's JBL paper as a guide.

Session One: Jan 22 (1:00-5:00 CST)

Book Review (800-1000 words) From class list

Translation of James & morphological analysis of selected verbs (to be assigned)

Background paper on James (1500 words, SBL)

Session Two: Feb 5

Book Review (800-1000 words) From class list

Translation of 1 Peter & morphological analysis of selected verbs (to be assigned)

Background paper on 1 Peter (1500 words, SBL)

Session Three: Feb 19

Lexical Word Study (1000-1500 words) Following Margaret Mitchell's word study as a guide in "Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us": The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10, JBL 117/2 (1998) 299-320. Select a significant word from the General Epistles and conduct a diachronic and synchronic analysis of your word following Mitchell's example.

Translation of 2 Peter and Jude & morphological analysis of selected verbs (to be assigned)

Background paper on 2 Peter and Jude (1500 words, SBL)

Session Four: March 5

Book Review (800-1000 words) *Porter's Inking the Deal*

Translation of 1-3 John & morphological analysis of selected verbs (to be assigned)

Background paper on 1-3 John (1500 words, SBL)

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Book Reviews

Each student will select one of the following books and present a book review to the seminar at the scheduled time. These book reviews are due on the first and second meeting of the seminar. The student may choose which book to submit on those days.

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.

Chilton, Bruce and Evans, Craig, eds. *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity*. Novum Testamentum Supplement 115. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

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.

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

Nienhuis, David R. and Wall, Robert W. *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.

Painter, John. *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition*. Studies on Personalities of the New Testament. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.

Porter, Stanley E. *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.

Varner, William. *The Book of James—A New Perspective*. Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2010.

Wall, R. W. *Community of the Wise: The Letter of James*. New Testament in Context. Valley Forge: Trinity, 1997.

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.

Book Review Guidelines/Rubric

Book reviews will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Grammar and Style:** spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian.
2. **Summary:** State the author's thesis/question and give 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 literature and field today.

Second Half of the Semester

Sessions 5-8:

We will have two papers each session. There will be a respondent for each paper. Everyone will read the papers *prior to coming to class*. Presenters will take 2 minutes to summarize the thesis and results of the research. Respondents will have 5-7 minutes to summarize the critique of the paper and start the discussion by asking a question or two of the presenter. Everyone will have read the paper and the critique, so discussion will be most meaningful and fruitful. Engagement is expected by each seminar participant.

Session 5: March 26

Session 6: April 9

Session 7: April 23

Session 8: May 7

Research Paper

For the research paper assignment, the student will write a major research paper on a specific topic in current discussion in the field. The paper is to provide critique of the standard viewpoints and advance the learning on the subject and provide a thorough exegesis of the passage(s) from the General Epistles. The presenter should write in such a manner as intending to publish the paper.

Paper Presenter: Give a clearly stated question or thesis you are seeking to explore. Next, clearly state your methodology you plan to use for carrying out the research. The research papers are to be from 8,000 to 10,000 words (including bibliography, footnotes and title page, etc.).

Papers will be distributed to each member of the seminar *one week prior* to the presentation in class. (By Monday noon, a week prior to class). With the paper, suggested reading will be offered for the class members to encourage class discussion. The presenter will have two minutes to make a few statements.

Paper Responder: Each paper will have a formal respondent. The responder will distribute the response papers to the class *two days prior* (by Saturday noon) to the class presentation. Responses will be 1000 words and the responder will have five to seven minutes to summarize the salient points of the paper. The response paper should outline the strengths, weaknesses, and offer questions for discussion and/or clarification.

Class Response: The seminar members will read the distributed papers. Members should also engage the recommended readings for the most fruitful discussion. When the response is received, the seminar members will read the responses. *For optimal learning, this seminar requires that each person be responsible in meeting the deadlines for all papers and responses.*

Professor: The professor will provide a marked copy of the paper to the presenters at the end of the class period. The presenters will then make corrections based upon the professor's remarks, the responder's remarks, and class discussions. Each paper will then be corrected, improved, and submitted by **May 18**. Include with the finished paper a 300-word proposal suitable for submitting to a professional meeting in the future.

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. State the question/thesis clearly, define the methodology for answering the question/thesis clearly.
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); use of the languages (Greek, Hebrew if applicable, and the LXX)
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.

Classroom Behavior Guidelines and Policies

The following guidelines are presented to encourage all students to participate together in this course, and should be kept in mind at all times.

1. Please do not hesitate to offer constructive criticism of the work of others in the class. Be sure to offer serious arguments and do so in ways that address the issues and do not attack the person.

2. Please do not be offended if criticism of your work is offered in the above spirit. Learning to give and accept criticism is part of scholarly development. Respect the right to disagree.
3. Please respect the opinions of others, even if you do not agree with them. Extend courtesy by not ridiculing others' ideas, but feel free to respond to them logically and critically and in an orderly manner.
4. Students should be on time to class, or be prepared to offer an explanation after class to the professor.
5. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.
6. Students may eat and drink in class so long as they do not distract others or leave the remains of such activities behind for others to clean up.
7. Students are expected not to be doing work on any other subject except that of this course.
8. Students are not to carry on other conversations in class, especially with those seated immediately adjacent to them.

Selected Bibliography¹

James

*Allison, Dale C., Jr. *James: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. International Critical Commentary. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013.

Baker, William R. and Thomas D. Ellsworth. *Preaching James*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2004.

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

*Blomberg, Craig L. and Mariam J. Kamell. *James*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.

Brosend, William F. II. *James and Jude*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Chilton, Bruce and Evans, Craig, eds. *James the Just & Christian Origins*. Novum Testamentum Supplement 98. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

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Davids, Peter H. *The Epistle of James*. New International Greek Text Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

Hartin, Patrick J. *James*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003.

¹ Bibliography with * indicates highly recommended works by Denver Seminary.

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

Jobes, Karen H. and Silva, Moisés. *Invitation to the Septuagint*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015.

Johnson, Luke T. *The Letter of James*. Anchor Bible. Revised. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

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

McCartney, Dan G. *James*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.

*McKnight, Scott. *The Letter of James*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

*Moo, Douglas J. *The Letter of James*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

*Moo, Douglas J. *James*. Tyndale New Testament Commentary. Revised Edition. Downers Grove: IVP, 2015.

Nienhuis, David R. and Wall, Robert W. *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.

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

1 Peter

Achtemeier, Paul J. *1 Peter*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.

- *Davids, 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. Revised Edition. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
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- *Marshall, I. Howard. *1 Peter*. New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove: IVP, 1991.
- McKnight, Scott. *1 Peter*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word, 1988.
- Nienhuis, David R. and Wall, Robert W. *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
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*Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003.

Witherington, Ben, III. *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians, vol. 2: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1-2 Peter*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2007.

2 Peter and Jude

*Bauckham, Richard. *Jude, 2 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word, 1983.

Charles, J. Daryl. "2 Peter," "Jude." Expositor's Bible Commentary. Rev., ed. D. E. Garland and T. Longman III, vol. 13, 357-411, 539-69. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Callan, Terrance D. and Duane F. Watson, *First and Second Peter*. Paideia. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.

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

Donelson, Lewis R. *I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*. New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010.

*Green, Gene L. *Jude & 2 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Green, E. M. B. *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*. Tyndale New Testament Commentary. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

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1, 2, 3 JOHN

*Akin, Daniel L. *1, 2, 3 John*. New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001.

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*Burge, Gary M. *The Letters of John*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

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