

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce and examine each of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude, although not necessarily in that order. The course will view each letter as reflecting a unique situation and having its own message, and will also view the General Letters as a group that provides a voice to go beside the Pauline letters.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will demonstrate familiarity (i) with the text of the General Letters; (ii) with some views and discussions of contemporary scholarship concerning these writings; (iii) with the theology and message of these letters to their original audiences; and (iv) with the teaching and call of these letters to God's people in our own place and time, including the teacher and students of this class.

COURSE TEXT

This text is available at the Providence Bookstore: 1-204-433-7110 or 1-800-668-7768; email: bookstore@prov.ca.

Martin, Ralph P. and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. InterVarsity, 1977.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments can be submitted either in hard-copy (i.e. paper) or electronically as email attachments. Electronic submissions must be in either MS Word or in RTF format. Electronic submissions should be formatted with all the care of a paper submission. That is, a title page indicating at least the course name and number, the assignment title, and the student's name. Electronic papers should also show proper attention to font size, margins, page numbers, and so on. The seminary's style guide is Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*, 7th edition, 2007. Traditional footnotes are preferred by this teacher.

Class Participation

Students vary a good deal as to how comfortable they are initiating discussion in a class setting. But class time becomes more valuable if students interact with the lectures. Class participation will be made worth some effort. Included in class participation is class attendance. See also the attendance policy in the P.T.S. catalogue. (10%)

General Letters Reading Journal

Students will read from James to Jude through beginning to end eight times, preferably each reading in one sitting. Be patient. Try to read in a relaxed way, make yourself comfortable. Be patient. Read as one getting letters from someone important, whom you do not always understand very well. Unlike McDonalds, the Scriptures offer little to people in a hurry. Don't approach the Scriptures as a shopper, but as a miner mining for gold. It takes some effort and patience.

After each reading, type a half to one page (double spaced) of response to that reading. *Make sure you date it! Do not read it through more than once a week.* The purpose of this reading is reduced if one does all the reading in the first few weeks, and likewise if one does all the reading in the last few weeks. Once a week, please. Date each entry, please. Due once all ten are done (last class). If submitting electronically, submit all ten as a single document file. (20%)

Textbook Readings Journal

Class time will be concerned largely with the content and theology of the General Letters themselves. Awareness of scholarly discussion and debate will occur to some extent in class, but will be supplemented by the textbook readings.

The list below identifies sixteen articles from the course text that the student will read and respond to in a journal. Each entry should have the essay title at the top. The first entry should also have clear bibliographic information concerning the textbook. Entries should primarily summarize the article, but should also respond to the reading. Response should include some comment on the value of the reading, as well as how you experience the reading.

"Diaspora Judaism," "2 Peter," "Christianity and Judaism: Partings of the Ways," "Chronology," "James, Letter of," "John, Letters of," "Jude," "Letter, Letter Form," "Lord's Supper, Love Feast," "Non-Canonical Writings, Citations in the General Epistles," "Old Testament in the General Epistles," "1 Peter," "Pseudepigraphy," "Social Setting of Early non-Pauline Christianity," "Worship and Liturgy," and "Mission, Early non-Pauline."

I expect about one double-spaced page per reading. The first two readings are shorter, and half a page of summary and response will be sufficient. The last essay, "Mission: Early non-Pauline," is longer and should have two full pages of response. The rest should average about one page. The total should be 16-20 pages of text. (20%)

Research Paper.

Select a paragraph or two from any of the General Letters, and write a paper on it, in two parts.

The focus of the first part, 6-8 pages, is to read and observe the paragraph you have chosen for your text. No commentaries, no articles or research of any kind, no study notes; only your own observations on the text, why you began and ended where you did, what is the tone of the passage (Warning? Comforting? Instructing? What kind?), how is it put together, what does it teach, what does it do. Read the Bible. Nothing else. No footnotes in this paper. Do not apply – only observe. Indicate as carefully as possible which words led you to your conclusions. Keep the preachifying (i.e. application) to the last paragraph. (15%)

Second part, also 6-8 pages: read the commentaries, and whatever other research is available to you, and record what complements or corrects what you wrote in the first part. Do not alter the first paper. Limit yourselves, at least for the most part, to commentaries listed at the end of this paper. Try also to find articles in the library (including on-line) on your passage. (15%)

Sermon/Reflection Outlines on James or 1 Peter or 1 John

Write eight one-page outlines from one of the three letters listed above. Make sure you get each outline on one page! Picture yourself either preaching to a church, or sitting in a living room in the evening, leading a group that's hungry to understand

These eight studies / sermons should be spaced more or less evenly through the letter of your choice, and the total of the eight should give your audience a helpful view of the structure and message of the letter as a whole. Your eight texts can simply divide the letter into eight roughly equal parts. Or, your eight texts can be shorter, not covering the entire letter but providing a selection of key sections that will convey the flavour and message of the letter.

Each one-page outline should have the chapter and verse of the passage you have chosen, and a title, at the top. Then it should have 4 paragraphs: (i) a *short* one-sentence paragraph stating the *main idea* of this study/sermon; (ii) a lengthier paragraph *describing* in some detail the passage, not interpreting it too much, just *observing* its tone and how it is written; (iii) a paragraph indicating what the writer was saying to his *original audience*, and how they would have perceived this passage (i.e. *interpretation*); and (iv) your *application*, describing the call you hear for yourself, and your call to the people who listen to you, or at least what you hope they hear.

Work on this throughout the semester. Make notes from classes and from your reading of Hebrews, and other readings, so that these take shape as you go through the semester. (20%)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan 14	Introduction to James; James 1
Jan 21	James 2-4
Jan 28	James 5; Introduction to 1 Peter, 1 Peter 1
Feb 4	<i>Class Cancelled - Missio Dei</i>
Feb 11	1 Peter 2-3; <i>Textbook Reading Journal due</i>
Feb 18	1 Peter 4-5
Feb 25	Introduction to 2 Peter, 2 Peter 1
March 6	<i>Class Cancelled - March Intrasession</i>
March 11	2 Peter 2-3; <i>Research Paper Part 1 due.</i>
March 18	Introduction to Jude; Jude
March 25	Introduction to 1 John; 1 John 1-2; <i>Research Paper Part 2 due</i>
April 1	1 John 3-5
April 8	<i>Class Cancelled - Neufeld at conference</i>
April 15	Introduction to 2 and 3 John, 2 and 3 John; <i>Gen Letters Reading Journal due; Sermon/Reflection Outlines due.</i>

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamson, James. *The Epistle of James*. NICNT. Eerdmans, 1976.
- Bauckham, Richard J. *Jude, 2 Peter*. WBC. Nelson, 1983.
- Beare, F. W. *The First Epistle of Peter*. Basil Blackwell, 1947.
- Bigg, Charles. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*. ICC. T. & T. Clark, 1902.
- Brooke, A. E. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*. ICC. T. & T. Clark, 1912.

- Brown, Raymond E. *The Epistles of John*. AB. Doubleday, 1982.
- Dauids, Peter. H. *The Epistle of James*. NIGTC. Eedmans, 1982.
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- Elliott, John H. *I Peter*, AB. Doubleday, 2000.
- Green, Gene L. *Jude and 2 Peter*. Baker Exegetical CNT. Baker, 2008.
- Goppelt, Leonhard. *A Commentary on I Peter*. 1978; E.T.: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*. BNTC. Black, 1969
- Marshall, I Howard. *The Epistles of John*. NICNT. Eerdmans, 1978.
- Mayor, J. B. *The Epistle of Saint James*. 1892. Reprint: Klock & Klock, 1977.
- _____. *The Epistles of Jude and II Peter*. 1907; Baker, 1979.
- Michaels, J. Ramsay. *I Peter*. WBC. Word, 1988.
- Moo, Douglas. *The Letter of James*. Pillar NTCom. Eerdmans, 2000.
- Ropes, J. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*. ICC. Scribner's, 1916.
- Selwyn, E. G. *The First Epistle of St. Peter*. MacMillan, 1947.
- Westcott, B. F. *The Epistles of St. John*. 1892; Eerdmans, 1966.