

# **Wesley Theological Seminary Course of Study School 2018**

Weekend Course of Study School  
January Online and February 23-24, 2018  
Wesley Seminary Campus, Washington DC

CS521 Bible 5: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation  
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## **Course Description**

This course focuses on the content and context of these writings, 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:

## **Course Objectives and Goals**

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 issues of the present day.
4. Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

## **Required Texts**

(these are the only books you are required to purchase)

Carter, Warren and Amy-Jill Levine, *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2013)

Bassler, Jouette M., *Navigating Paul*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007)

Spilsbury, Paul, *The Throne, the Lamb, & the Dragon*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002)

## **Supplemental Texts (not necessary but helpful)**

Bailey, Kenneth E., *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011)

Davies, W. D., *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980)

Dunn, J.D.G., *The Theology of Paul*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)

Johnson, Darrell W., *Discipleship on the Edge*, (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004)

Keck, Leander, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003)

Koester, Craig R., *Revelation and the End of All Things*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001)

Kreider, Alan, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016)

LOGOS Bible Software, online resource for multiple commentaries and resources for scriptural exegesis.

Oden, Thomas C., *Ancient Christian Commentaries*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005)

Peterson, Eugene H., *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John & the Praying Imagination*, (New York: HarperOne, 1988)

Sanders, E.P., *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977)

Sweet, Leonard, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church*, (Colorado Spring: David Cook, 2009)

Wagner, Lori and Leonard Sweet, *The Seraph Seal*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011)

Wright, N.T., *The Climax of the Covenant*, (New York: T & T Clark, 2004)

## **Reading Assignments**

Reading of all required materials should be completed prior to the first day of class.

## **Participation**

Because of the brevity of the course, full participation is necessary in Blackboard for our online portion of the class, as well as our face-to-face meeting time February 23 and 24. All students are expected to participate in all online forums and posts, as well as in face-to-face discussions and group activities.

## Written Assignments

**Pre-Course Assignment** posted to Blackboard is due by Tuesday, January 2nd

### Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Write a brief three-page portrait of Paul's practical and pastoral theology in the genesis of the early church. (Use Paul's letters as well as your readings as a guide to understanding his challenges and ministry.)
2. Write a two-page portrait of your understanding of Saul's/Paul's experience on the Damascus road, how his identity as an apostle for Jesus was formed by that experience, and how it prepared him for his passionate ministry and mission. (Use scripture to support your thoughts.)

### January Online Assignments and Assignment Due Before Face-to-Face Meeting:

Each week of the online portion of the class, you will do one essay or project and participate in one discussion forum on the topic given. Essays or projects are specified and should be posted in the assignment area designated in Blackboard. For the discussion question, use the designated Forum for that week and discuss the topic in depth with your peers bringing the course texts, scripture, your thoughts, and your experiences in ministry into the discussion. This is not a place to post extended essays, but to engage with your peers in meaningful and in-depth discussion of the scriptures and topics.

Written Assignments for **Week One** below are due by Monday January 8<sup>th</sup>. Please post assignments and discussions on Blackboard.

Written Assignments for **Week Two** below are due by Monday January 15<sup>th</sup>. Please post assignments and discussions on Blackboard.

Written Assignments for **Week Three** are due by Monday January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please post assignments and discussions on Blackboard.

Written Assignments for **Week Four** are due by Monday January 29<sup>th</sup>. Please post assignments and discussions on Blackboard.

Written Assignments for **February Face-to-Face** meeting on February 23 and 24 are due by Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>.

***Week One Assignments:***

1. Describe what you know about the Jewishness of Paul. What is Paul's cultural context? How does culture (both Greek and Jewish) play a role in Paul's ministry and mission and in his theology? Point out key Jewish concepts in Paul's theology. (Brief answers)
2. Discussion Forum: Read 2 Corinthians 11. Discuss 1) What do you think Paul looked like physically? Describe his physical appearance given what he's told you he's experienced. 2) Why is he telling the people of the church at Corinth all of this? What are his frustrations in ministry? Why?

***Week Two Assignments:***

1. Choose one of Paul's letters and describe the church he is addressing, its graces and challenges, and the relationship Paul has with these people.
2. Discussion Forum: What drives Paul? Discuss how Paul's theology and his understanding of grace, resurrection, righteousness, and the "new" covenant contributes to his passion for his ministry and mission.

***Week Three Assignments:***

1. Reading the story of the Eunuch in Acts 8. Exegete the story (show your sources and the process you chose). Write a brief exegesis of the story. Then offer three possible themes/sermon topics to address the scripture story.
2. Discussion Forum: Each of you, choose a character from the New Testament (not Paul) and discuss his or her identity as a Christian disciple or apostle in the genesis of the early church. What role does this person play? How does this person interact with others? What stands out about this person's theology? How do you see that person's Christian identity developing out of his or her former Jewish identity? How and why?

***Week Four Assignments:***

1. List at least ten metaphors used in Revelation. Where else do you see these metaphors in scripture (both in the Hebrew and Christian testaments)? Exegete the metaphors. What multi-faceted messages do these metaphors bring to the meaning of this letter for early Christians and Christians today?

2. Discussion Forum: Discuss the metaphor of the “body” in the Christian Testament scriptures. Where do you find references to “body” in these scriptures and how is body/embodiment understood? Discuss the various meanings, contexts, and metaphorical uses of the word and how these contribute to early (and present) Christian theology.

***Written Assignments in Preparation for Face-to-Face Meeting:***

1. Choose your favorite scripture story from the New Testament (excluding the gospels). How does it speak to your life? How can it speak to the life of your congregation? Name at least five sources you will use to exegete this scripture story and why you choose them. (2 pgs)
2. Describe what it means to be a Christian. A follower of Jesus. How do you form “identity” within your congregation? Your family? Your community? What does it mean to “incarnate” Jesus in every culture? What does it mean to say, “Christ lives in me”? How can these ideas in the scriptures (using them in Bible study, preaching, and counseling or using the lessons/themes they have taught you) help you as a pastor to build a stronger Jesus identity within your congregation? How can teaching a theology of grace, forgiveness, and love change the way your congregation sees themselves and others? (3 pgs – brief answers)

**Writing Guidelines**

Please type all papers using a 12-point font, double spacing, and one-inch margins. Please show evidence in your work that you have read the course material and are applying what you have learned to your ministry context.

**Face to Face Course Schedule**

Friday, February 23

1:00 PM	Worship
1:30 PM– 3:15 PM	Session I: Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church Mapping the Course
3:15-3:30 PM	BREAK
3:30-5:00 PM	Session II: Exegetical Practicum
5:00-7:00 PM	DINNER BREAK

7:00-9:00 PM

Session III: Bible Study

Saturday, February 24

9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Session IV: Scriptures for  
Preaching, Teaching, Liturgy, and Prayer  
Ecclesiology: Developing a Theology of the  
Church  
Christology: Developing a Theology of Jesus  
The MRI Church

Understanding the Scriptures for a 21<sup>st</sup>  
Century Church: Applications for Ministry  
and Mission

Bible Study

Evaluations

**Grading:**

Pre-Course Questions: 10 pts

Four Weekly Project Essays: 40 pts

Four Weekly Discussion Forums: 40 pts

Face-to-Face Preparation Questions: 10

The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a “B” grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

A “B” means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.

A “B+” means the assignment is also well crafted.

An “A-” means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.

An “A” means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student’s prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and

meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student's imagination at work; it has a creative edge.

A "C+" means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer's opinions than the results of the writer's analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.

A "C" means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.

A "C-" means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

An "F" means the individual needs to see me immediately.

Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for assignments handed in after the start of class, and a full letter grade for any assignments 24 hours past due. Assignments over 48 hours past due will be lowered two letter grades. We need to talk if an assignment is over 72 hours past due. Please note only two unexcused absences are allowed before grade is lowered one step.

Final course grades are mailed to the student, GBHEM in Nashville and the student's conference representative one month after the end of the course. Grades are not posted online.

### **Citations & Bibliography**

Proper citation is critical. Ideas, concepts, or information derived from other sources or persons other than your own thinking must be acknowledged through footnotes. Any quotation of three words in length or greater must be footnoted.

Use any academically acceptable "notes-bibliography" style for footnotes and citations. A helpful style is "Turabian."

[http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)

Each paper must have a bibliography, citing all the resources you used in preparing the paper – even if you use only one and it is the assigned reading!

Failure to meet these formatting requirements will adversely affect a grade. Plagiarism is theft, and may result in a failing grade.

### **Inclusive Language**

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

Academic Policies

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty member have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of

grade or loss of credit for the course.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:

- Copying from another student's paper
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
- Using unauthorized material during an examination
- Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.