

**Course of Study 521**  
**Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation**  
**Wesley Theological Seminary, Upper New York Satellite**  
**October 18-19 and November 15-16, 2019**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Sarah Mount Elewononi**  
**e-mail: [selewononi@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:selewononi@wesleyseminary.edu) and [revdrelewononi@gmail.com](mailto:revdrelewononi@gmail.com)**

**The work is divided into three parts. Question 1 is due on or before October 1, 2019, submitted via Blackboard. Questions (3-6) are due by October 18 via Blackboard and questions (7-10) are due November 15 also submitted via Blackboard.**

Please let Sara Sheppard know if we can help you with this in any way.

This course examines the Work and Word of God as expressed through the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and Revelation. 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:

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.

Textbooks: Please purchase books from Cokesbury, Christian Book Distributor, Amazon or borrow from friends.

**REQUIRED**

- 1) New Revised Standard Version of the Bible  
Please choose a solid study bible such as  
*New Interpreters Study Bible, 2003, Nashville, Abingdon Press*  
or *Harper Collins Study Bible, 2006, HarperOne*

**Read:** *Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2, Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation* including the introductory material for each book and all the notes offered.

- 2) Warren Carter and Amy-Jill Levine *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*  
**Read All**

- 3) Mark Allan Powell *Introducing the New Testament*

**Read** Chapters 9-29 paying special attention to Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, James, 1 John and Revelation.

4) “The Warning against Idolatry: An Intertextual Examination of Septuagintal Warnings in Hebrews” by Jason Whitlark in the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 2012 volume 34 page 382-401. [See Blackboard to download a copy.](#)

Read and use the discussion Board to ask questions and post insights that come up for you.

The course is delivered over two weekends, each with 10 hours of classroom time. All the above assignments are expected to be read before we meet on April 20.

Take notes as you read, especially of anything that you find confusing or don't agree with, and bring them to class.

### Course Outline

#### **October 18-19**

Acts, Paul, Romans, 1 Corinthians

Exegesis clarification

Trivia Game

#### **November 15-16**

Hebrews, James, 1 John and Revelation

#### Due October 1

**1. Why Does this Course Deserve my Time and Attention?** Write me a letter describing how you, your congregation and the community to which you are appointed will benefit when you giving your best time and attention to this course. How familiar are you with these books of the Bible? Which books or passages have been problematic for you or members of your congregation? What questions would you like us to address in class? How will becoming better acquainted with the content and message of Acts, Revelation and the Epistles, the theological perspective of the authors and methods of exegesis help you grow as pastor? (1 page)

#### Due October 18

**2. Become a COS 521 Trivia Champ** Come to class on October 18 ready to play COS 521 trivia against your classmates. This is to encourage you to read all of the scripture between Acts and Revelation and become more aware of cultural references to them. A list of questions will be provided to you in early September so you can practice. There will be two main categories:

- **Music** –recognize the book (chapter and verses if you can) referred to in songs and hymns based on Acts, Revelation and the Epistles.
- **Art** – recognize the book (chapter and verses if you can) of famous paintings and architecture that refer to the scripture we are studying.
- **Map** – identify key New Testament places and geographical features including Jerusalem, Rome, Samaria, Tarsus, Damascus, Antioch (there are two!), Joppa, Tyre, Sidon, Lydia, Macedonia, Galatia, Cyprus, Phoenicia, Syria
- **Extra points** recite the names of the books of Acts-Revelation by memory.



On Friday evening we will team up, fight hard and win fabulous prizes!

**3. Contribute to our Glossary** - as you read the scriptures and text books please e-mail Rev. Dr. Mount Elewononi any terms that are confusing or totally unfamiliar so that together we can build a glossary on Blackboard for everyone’s benefit. Submit at least 4 questions by September 18. (counts as 1 page)

**4. Making All Things New** Write a sermon based on Revelation 21:1-6a to be used at a Watchnight observance on December 31 (or a Sunday morning close to New Year’s Eve. (please bring one paper copy to give to a classmate to analyze - 4 pages)

**5. Remember the Women** The Epistles may all be written by men, but they and Acts name several women. Ten can be found in Romans 16 alone. Pick four female characters found between Acts and Revelation to present to a Sunday school class (of whatever age fits your congregation). Prepare an engaging presentation describing what we know about these women and highlighting how they participate in the work of God. (2 pages)

**6. Apostles, Circuit Riders and You:** The early American Methodist Circuit Riders saw a lot of parallels between the life of the Apostles and their own. Both experienced similar obstacles and met with similar measures of success. Read through the book of Acts paying attention to how they carried out their mission. Write a paper naming the practices the Apostles adopted that furthered their mission, which ones were used by early Methodists and note which of these are used by you, your congregation and your Annual Conference. Are there any practices missing from your contemporary setting that you wish to try out? (3 pages)

Due November 15

**7. Collaborate with your Colleague:** Read your colleague’s sermon on Revelation 21:1-6a. In the first third of your essay affirm what is “right on” about this sermon. Use the rest of the essay using the exegetical tools presented in class in October to suggest how this sermon could be strengthened so that the congregation understands how the text relates to God at work in their own lives. (2 pages)

**8. Abraham’s Heirs** “Do you supposed God is the God of the Jews alone? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?” Romans 3:29-30 Initially arguing that Gentiles could belong to the Covenant

*along with the Jews*, Christians have often opted for an exclusive theology that God has called a new people to *replace* the Jews as Abraham's heirs. This has led to a long, painful history of Christian violence against Jews chronicled in *Abraham's Heirs* by Leonard B. Glick (1999). Use your skills of exegesis to conduct a word study of words such as Greek, Gentile, Jew, Israel, Law, Faith in Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews and Revelation and write a paper describing the relationship of God to Jews and Gentiles in these passages. Are there some passages that assert that Christians replaced the Jews as God's chosen people? Can some or all of the passages be interpreted faithfully in a nonviolent manner? (5 pages)

### **9. Sunday School Drama**

Create a short play about something you find in the Book of James or 1 John for youth or children (or anyone in your congregation who playfully belongs to the kingdom of God) to perform during worship. Use footnotes, or endnotes to show that you have considered and incorporated knowledge you've gleaned from the lectures and readings. Make sure the play is not just "cute" but that it conveys good news about the work of God among the people of God. (2 pages)

### **10. Choose a or b**

#### **a) Sacred Art**

Use google to find paintings or sculptures that are inspired by the NT readings of this course. Pick a passage that has touched you during your reading and create your own original piece of art and bring it to class. Write a reflection paper describing your work. (1 page)

#### **b) Sacred Music**

Pick a text that speaks to you and see what hymns you can find that refer to or quote it. A great on-line tool for this is <https://hymnary.org/> using "advanced search." Carolyn Winfrey Gillette is a contemporary hymn writer who may also inspire you. <https://www.carolynshymns.com/>

Write a fresh hymn based on a passage of the same passage using one of the following tunes: AMAZING GRACE, CWM RHONDDA, KINGSFOLD, BEACH SPRING, or DUBOIS. Use footnotes, or endnotes to show me that you have considered and incorporated knowledge you've gleaned from the readings. Make sure the hymn conveys the text's main message. (1 page)