

Taylor Seminary

NT 546 Hebrews

Winter Semester 2011-2012

Our Mission: To develop Christ-minded leaders who make a difference in the world.

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SCHEDULE: Tuesday, 8:30 am – 12:15 pm

CREDITS: 3

DESCRIPTION: An exposition of the English text of the book of Hebrews in the light of its historical and literary background, with special attention given to the Christology of the book.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the successful completion of this course, the student should have:

1. become familiar with the various views of the historical context in which the book of Hebrews was written
2. gained a thorough understanding of the contents of the book of Hebrews, especially the author's theological concerns
3. become acquainted with the diverse ways interpreters have understood the book of Hebrews and have developed the ability to assess them critically
4. reflected on the implications of the teaching of the book of Hebrews for the Church and society today

TEXTBOOKS:

Peter T. O'Brien. *The Letter to the Hebrews*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

Guide for Research and Writing (SBL style). Available on the Moodle site.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Regular class attendance and participation.

Absences should be the exception. Students are responsible for any and all consequences of missed classes, including any material covered in classes for which they are absent.

2. Careful reading of the book of Hebrews, the textbook, and other assigned readings.
45 hours

3. A major exegetical paper of approximately 3000 words (typed and double-spaced).

The Taylor Seminary *Guide for Research and Writing* gives helpful information regarding how to write an academic research paper and how to format footnotes and bibliography. A copy of this guide is available at the Moodle site. For matters not addressed in the guide, see Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 1999) and the student supplement, which may be found at http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SBLHSrevised2_09.pdf. A copy of the student supplement is available at the Moodle site.

The paper may be based on any pericope in Hebrews 6-13. Normally paragraph divisions are a good guide to what constitutes a “pericope.” The paper should be based on a careful inductive study of the biblical text as well as thorough research. It should explain the meaning of the pericope clearly, giving due attention to both its historical context and its literary context. Where a variety of interpretations exist, the options should be presented fairly and evaluated critically. Attention should also be given to the contemporary relevance of the text. All works consulted that contain material relevant to your topic should be included in the Bibliography.

For help with how to prepare an exegesis paper, see Douglas Stuart, “Exegesis,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 2:682-88. For a more thorough discussion of exegetical methodology and resources, see Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (3rd ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002). Be sure to consult the major commentaries on Hebrews, i.e., the commentaries by H. Attridge, F. F. Bruce, P. Ellingworth, C. R. Koester, W. L. Lane, and B. Witherington, as well as relevant articles in theological periodicals. To locate relevant articles, use the ATLAS Religion Database and ProQuest. The bibliography should list all the works you consulted that contain relevant information.

Please submit the pericope you intend to exegete and a preliminary bibliography in writing by **February 7**. You may submit this by email. The paper will be due at the beginning of class on **April 3**. A hard copy is required. Extensions will be considered only under exceptional circumstances, such as a prolonged illness for which you require treatment by a physician, and must be approved before the due date. No term work can be accepted

after the last day of classes, unless the student has been granted an incomplete by the Academic Committee.

25 hours

4. A critical review of a periodical article from one of the scholarly theological journals.

This article may deal with the pericope you will write your exegesis paper on but may not consist of any of the articles included in the assigned reading. Use the ATLAS database and O'Brien's bibliography on pp. xix-xxxiii to locate an appropriate article. The review should be approximately 600 words in length and must include (1) a summary of the content of the article, including a statement of the author's thesis, and (2) an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the author's case. Only articles from journals in the list of refereed journals found in Taylor's "Guide for Research and Writing" may be reviewed. Due: at the beginning of class on **Feb. 21**.

5 hours

5. Examinations

There will be a midterm examination on **March 7** and a final examination. Both examinations will cover readings and lectures. Please consult the most recent edition of the seminary's Final Examination schedule for the date and time of the final examination. Please note that instructors are not at liberty to reschedule final examinations. Students who propose not to take a final examination at the scheduled time must apply for rescheduling to the Academic Committee.

15 hours

PENALTIES:

Academic honesty and integrity is expected. Plagiarism is considered a serious offence and can have severe consequences. According to the Seminary's *Guide for Research and Writing*, "To plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written something original which in fact you have borrowed from another without acknowledging that other person's work" (*Guide for Research and Writing*, pp. 11-12). If you use another person's words, you must place the material cited in quotation marks and document the source in a footnote. Distinctive ideas and arguments must also be properly acknowledged. Students guilty of plagiarism may receive a grade reduction and be required to rewrite the paper or receive a grade of zero for the assignment. Students are responsible to familiarize themselves with what constitutes plagiarism and to be careful to avoid it.

Late papers will be penalized by a deduction of 5% per week day.

EVALUATION:

1.	Exegetical paper	40%
2.	Article review	10%
3.	Midterm examination	15%
4.	Final examination	35%

COURSE OUTLINE:

Prior to class, read the designated section from Hebrews, the appropriate section of O'Brien's commentary, and the other assigned readings.

Jan. 17	Introduction to Hebrews
Jan. 24	Introduction con'd George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews in Its First-Century Contexts: Recent Research," <i>The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research</i> (ed. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 414-43. A photocopy of the relevant pages is in the Reading Room. Read through Hebrews in a single sitting.
Jan. 31	Hebrews 1:1-14 2 Samuel 7:1-17; Psalms 2; 45; 97; 102; 104:1-4; 110. V. Rhee, "Christology and the Concept of Faith in Hebrews 1:1-2:4," <i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i> 157 (April-June 2000): 174-89.
Feb. 7	Hebrews 2:1-18 Psalm 8; 22:1-5, 16-24; Isaiah 8:3-4, 11-18. Pericope selection and preliminary bibliography due.
Feb. 14	Hebrews 3:1-19 Numbers 12:1-8; Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 14; Psalm 95.
Feb. 21	Hebrews 4:1-5:10 Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Joshua 22:1-5; Matthew 12:28; Revelation 14:13; Leviticus 8:1-9:7; Genesis 14; Psalm 110. Article review due.
Feb. 28	Hebrews 5:11-6:20 Genesis 22:1-18 D. Mathewson, "Reading Hebrews 6:4-6 in Light of the Old Testament," <i>Westminster Theological Journal</i> 61 (1999): 209-25.

- March 6 Hebrews 7:1-28
Genesis 14; Psalm 110; 11Q13 [also known as 11QMelch; available in various editions of the Qumran scrolls, e.g., G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London/New York: Penguin, 1997), 500-502].
Midterm Examination
- March 13 Hebrews 8:1-9:10
Jeremiah 31; Exodus 24; Leviticus 16
Entries on “covenant” and “tabernacle” in the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, ed. by L. Ryken, J.C. Wilhoit and T. Longman III (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998), 176-78 and 837-40.
- March 20 Hebrews 9:11-10:18
Leviticus 16; Psalm 40
Mark Strom, *The Symphony of Scripture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 59-68. A photocopy of the relevant pages is in the Reading Room.
- March 27 Reading Week: no classes
- April 3 Hebrews 10:19-11:40
Deuteronomy 31:30; 32:15-19, 35-39; Habakkuk 1:1-2:4; 2 Maccabees 6 & 7 (in the Apocrypha); The Martyrdom (and Ascension) of Isaiah 5 [available in J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983)].
Exegesis paper due.
- April 10 Hebrews 12:1-29
Proverbs 3:1-12; Genesis 25:29-34; Exodus 19-20
- April 17 Hebrews 13:1-25
Deuteronomy 31:1-8; Leviticus 16:23-28
Mikeal Parsons, “Son and High Priest: A Study in the Christology of Hebrews,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (1988): 195-216.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. COMMENTARIES

O’Brien has an annotated bibliography of some the major commentaries on the book of Hebrews on pp. xvii-xix. To his list may be added:

Allen, David. *Hebrews*. New American Commentary. Nashville: B & H, 2010.

Jobes, Karen H. *Letters to the Church: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

Long, D. Stephen. *Hebrews*. Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible. Westminster/John Knox, 2011.

Phillips, Richard D. *Hebrews*. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2006.

Thompson, James W. *Hebrews*. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Witherington, Ben. *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007.

In addition to our textbook, the most important commentaries on Hebrews are:

Attridge, H. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989.

Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Ellingworth, P. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Hughes, P. E. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

Johnson, L. T. *Hebrews*. New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.

Koester, C. R. *Hebrews*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

*Lane, W. L. *Hebrews*. Word Biblical Commentary. 2 vols. Dallas: Word, 1991.

Witherington, Ben. *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007

* The best commentary on Hebrews currently available

B. MONOGRAPHS AND SPECIALIZED STUDIES

O'Brien has a select list of specialized studies related to Hebrews on pp. xix-xxxiii. For more thorough bibliographies, see C. R. Koester, *Hebrews* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 135-68 and Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007), 71-96.

C. RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

For links to reputable web sites related to New Testament, see Mark Goodacre's "New Testament Gateway" at <http://www.ntgateway.com/>

There is a Moodle web site related to this course. The instructor must register you as a student in the course before you can access the site. If you are not already registered as a student at Taylor's Moodle site, please send an email to the instructor requesting that you be registered. Once you are registered in the course, you may go to <http://online.tayloru.ca>. You will see a link in the top right corner that says "log in." Click on this link. Your assigned user name is tsxxxxx (the x's represent your student ID number). Note that ts is in lower case letters. Your password is your surname in lower case letters (in some instances, the first letter is in upper case). Click on Courses, then select Hebrews. The enrolment key is nt546. When you get to the web site for the course, you will see that it is divided into 3 columns. In the center section, you will find links to resources related to this course, including the seminary's "Guide for Research and Writing" and links to a number of web sites relevant to this course.

John Calvin's commentary on Hebrews is available online at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom44.toc.html>. Ray Stedman's commentary in the IVP New Testament Commentary series is available online at <http://www.raystedman.org/hebrews2/>.