

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – HOUSTON

HEBREWS TO REVELATION (05NT522)

Spring 2017

Dr. Ben Dunson

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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Since I will only be in Houston during the limited times our class meets, I am happy to spend time after class on Friday and (if time permits and there is interest) on Saturday morning to discuss the class, ministry, life, etc.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the General Epistles and Revelation that includes the history, setting, theme, purpose, and message of each book.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To explore, and be able to articulate, reading strategies for approaching Hebrews, the General Epistles and the Book of Revelation that are sensitive to the unique genre and content of each letter.
2. To introduce students to central theological themes in these letters.
3. To develop skills in faithful interpretation through in-depth study of selected passages in these letters. We could spend years studying each of these books, so we will have to be selective.
4. To introduce students to the historical and cultural context of these letters.
5. To deepen students' understanding of how these letters contribute to our overall understanding of biblical teaching and how they all must be understood in light of the finished redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. The Bible: Hebrews to Revelation (twice). Any translation is acceptable, as long as it is a translation and not a paraphrase (such as The Message). I use the ESV and will normally read from this version in class.
2. D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, pp. 596-725 (the chapters on Hebrews-Revelation).
3. Geerhardus Vos. *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1956. **NOTE: This is different from what was originally posted on the syllabus. The original book I selected is unfortunately out of print.**
4. Brandon D. Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude*. Phillipsburg: P & R, 2015.
5. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: All readings are to be completed **prior** to the lecture period in which they are listed on the schedule below. This includes the first reading, which is Carson and Moo pp. 596-618 and the entire O'Brien book. Both of these readings should be completed prior to our first class meeting on February 17th.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. **Attendance:** Attendance is expected at every class. Obviously with a condensed class like this missing a single session is more significant than if the class met every week.
2. **Readings:** All assigned readings should be read **before** the class date listed on the schedule below. This means that you will need to do the first set of readings prior to the first day our class meets.
3. Bring a bible to each class.
4. Laptops (and iPads, etc.) are allowed in this course, but please use them only for bible reading and/or note-taking. However, I would strongly recommend that you consider using pen and paper to take your notes and that you put away all computers, phones, etc. Multitasking simply doesn't work (and we all know the temptation to check email, etc.), and taking notes by hand actually requires you to process information in a different (and many would suggest better) way than typing. If you are interested, these articles give you a feel you why I suggest that you consider this:
 - <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>
 - <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/august24/multitask-research-study-082409.html>

If you still want to use a laptop to take notes I would highly recommend that you spend a good amount of time as you study for your exams condensing your notes into a new file that summarizes all of the main points we have discussed in class. This process will help ensure that you have really grappled with the lecture material.

5. Please be respectful of the instructor and your fellow students in the way you use technology.
6. As a courtesy, please do not tweet, or otherwise post, comments made by the professor or other students without asking permission first.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

1. Textbook and biblical readings (10%)
 - a. You will be required to certify on your honor (on your final exam) that you have read all of the assigned reading material (including reading Heb-Rev twice in English translations [unless you want to read it in Greek!]). I will list each reading separately so you can estimate what percentage you completed. Reading means that you make every effort to understand the main points and reasons given for those points. This normally will require you to read and comprehend every paragraph, although not necessarily every word in every sentence. Skimming while seeking to understand the content is acceptable, but simply passing your eyes over words, sentences, paragraphs, pages, etc., is not.
2. Outlines of Biblical Books (10%)
 - a. One outline for each biblical book. These outlines must be 2-3 pages double-spaced for Hebrews and Revelation, and approximately 1 page for the rest of the books. Outlines should begin with Roman numerals (I, II, etc.) and then move to a, b, etc. If you need a third level of indentation use i, ii, etc. Try not to indent excessively. You may not copy or base your outline on any external

source (study Bible notes, commentaries, etc.). This must be based *solely* on your own reading and summarizing of the biblical books.

3. Exegetical Paper (35%)
 - a. 10-15 page exegetical paper. The purpose of this paper is to help you develop your skills in exegeting the biblical text, while also focusing on developing your ability to translate your research into a sermon or talk on the biblical text you choose to write on. Your paper will consist in explanation of the biblical text, the articulation of a central homiletical proposition (main preaching point), and a brief sermon/talk outline.
 - b. I will provide a handout with the requirements for the paper closer to class time. I will also provide (through email or on the first day of class) a brief guide for moving from exegesis to sermon preparation. We will also discuss how to approach this paper in class.
4. Final Exam (45%)
 - a. This exam will consist of several essay questions of varying lengths (answers will range from a single paragraph to 1-2 pages). The first two questions will be about issues of “special introduction” (the material in the Carson/Moo reading). Examples would include questions such as “Discuss the various arguments about the authorship of Hebrews,” or “Discuss the various arguments about when Revelation was written.” We will not discuss special introduction extensively in class, so it is very important that you study the Carson/Moo material carefully. The remaining questions will be on exegetical issues or theological themes, and will be based primarily on the lecture material. Examples would include questions such as “How should we make sense of the warnings found in Hebrews?” or “In 2 Peter, what does it mean that believers are “partakers of the divine nature” (1:4)?”
 - b. You must take the exam in a single 3-hour sitting. The exam will be proctored by Mr. Stahl at the seminary (unless you make an alternative arrangement with me well in advance of the last date by which the exam may be taken [June 2nd, 2016]. Include your name, email address, and your start and completion times on the exam. You may use an English or Greek bible (without any study helps, including concordances, study notes, etc.) during the exam, but no other helps are allowed.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Abbreviations:

C/M = Carson/Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*

Date	Readings (must be read prior to class)
1 st class: Feb 17-18	C/M: pp. 596-618; Vos book (all)
2 nd class: March 17-18	C/M: pp. 619-668; Crowe book (all)
3 rd class: April 14-15	C/M: pp. 669-725; Bauckham book (all)
4 th class: May 5-6	
June 2: Final Exam due (proctored by Mr. Stahl). Will be available around a week after our last class meets, and must be taken by June 2 nd , 2016.	All English (or Greek) Bible reading must be completed by this time