

FALL TERM 2017
COURSE SYLLABUS
Department: Biblical Studies
Course Title: 1 & 2 Thessalonians
Course Number NT639-OL
Credit Hours

Rev. Dr. Cletus Hull
724-351-2679
chull3@yahoo.com

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

1 and 2 Thessalonians are among the earliest writings of the New Testament. As such, these two letters, written by the Apostle Paul shortly after his abrupt departure from the fledgling Thessalonian church, give us unique insight into the life and beliefs of the early church. At the heart of Paul's profoundly pastoral correspondence with the Thessalonian church are the challenges and fears faced by the Thessalonian community—many of which still confront us today—including living out the Christian faith in public, understanding the timing, nature, and hope of the return of Jesus Christ, and the importance of holiness within the Christian community. Through historical and literary study, this course will explore the content and themes of 1 and 2 Thessalonians in order to help us grow in our “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:3).

II. COURSE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES

GOALS: By the end of this course students will:

1. Gain a working knowledge of the historical and cultural context, major themes, and content of the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
2. Recognize the place of the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians in redemptive history in order to interpret and apply the book within salvation history.
3. Recognize the place of the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians in the NT canon.
4. Recognize the relevance of the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians for teaching, preaching, and Christian living.
5. An increased delight in the truth of Scripture and grow in a personal encounter with the Lord.

OBJECTIVES: In order to achieve these goals, students will:

1. Develop a detailed grasp of the content of 1 & 2 Thessalonians

2. Develop an understanding of the themes in 1 & 2 Thessalonians
3. Develop an understanding of 1 & 2 Thessalonians to biblical theology

OUTCOMES: As a result of this class, students will:

1. Be able to identify major themes and content that are important for understanding the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
2. Preach and teach from the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians with biblical-theological, canonical, and eschatological sensitivity and clarity.

The learning outcomes for Trinity School for Ministry are:

The general set of outcomes Trinity desires for each of our graduates includes the following:

1. The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
2. The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology.
3. M.Div.: The student will be able to effectively communicate the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.
M.A.R.: The student will be able to effectively teach the Christian faith.
S.T.M.: The student will demonstrate the ability to carry out research from original sources.
4. M.Div.: The student will be prepared to effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities.
M.A.R.: The student will be equipped to apply scholarship to the life of the church in his or her chosen theological discipline.
S.T.M.: The student will be equipped to successfully pursue further independent research and post-graduate study in his or her chosen theological discipline.

This course furthers all four of these goals, but it will make a contribution in helping students to articulate a biblical theological understanding of the NT (1) and effectively communicate 1 & 2 Thessalonians and eschatology to a diversity of people in diverse ministry settings (3,4).

Along with these objectives related to knowledge and skill that will be assessed through your written work, there are other objectives that are worth mentioning, even though your development in these areas will not be formally assessed. Seminary education is not just a matter of growing in knowledge and skill, but also in one's relationship with God and one's Christian character as a disciple of Jesus

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

1. Quizzes
2. Exegesis Paper

III. TEXTBOOKS

Required:

There are three required texts for this course:

1. Fee, Gordon. *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
2. Witherington, Ben. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Recommended (but not required. All can be found in Trinity's library):

Boring, M. Eugene. *I and II Thessalonians: A Commentary (New Testament Library)* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

Bruce, F.F. *First and Second Thessalonians*. Waco, TX: Word, 1982.

Bruce, F.F. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

Green, Gene. L. *The Letters to the Thessalonians (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC))*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Harrison, Everett F. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

Hoekema, Anthony A. *The Bible and the Future*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Morris, Leon. *New International Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*. Vol. XIII. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.

Shogren, Gary S. *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 & 2 Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

Stott, John. *The Gospel and the End of Time*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991.

Articles

Dennison, James T, Jr. "Eschatology and the Structure of 1 Thessalonians." *Kerux*, 19, no. 3 (December 2004): 31-35.

Giblin, Charles H. "The Heartening Apocalyptic of Second Thessalonians." *The Bible Today*, 26, no. 6 (November 1988): 350-354.

Hull, Cletus. "The Purpose of Suffering and Glory in 2 Thess. 1:5-10," *Conversations with the Biblical World*, 2017. A peer-reviewed SBL publication by the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society.

IV. COURSE PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SYSTEM

Exegesis Paper: A 15 paper on a passage in the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. If you choose this option, make sure you inform me of the passage by October 18, 2017. Only those who have had (or are currently taking) Greek or Hebrew Exegesis may choose this option. The fifteen-page paper (double-spaced) is the primary assignment for this course. (Students in the S.T.M. program, in lieu of writing the fifteen-page paper, should write a twenty-five-page paper.) This assignment is 10% of your course grade, and it will be submitted in three stages. First, you will submit a discourse analysis of your chosen passage, according to the guidelines I distribute in class. Second, you will submit a thesis and essay outline based on your discourse analysis. Third, you will submit the final version of your paper, having incorporated my feedback on discourse analysis, thesis statement, and outline. This final deadline is fixed, unless you have arranged to take an Incomplete with the Registrar and the Academic Dean (which includes submitting a form and paying a fee). Incompletes are usually granted only for foreseeable, critical reasons, not for time management difficulties.

Be sure to include the following in your paper:

1. Literary context and genre: What is the evidence for considering this passage as a complete unit? Consider the arguments for and against Pauline authorship? What boundary markers are there at the beginning and end of this passage that suggest it is a complete integrated unit? Is this passage part of a larger literary unit that has a discernible beginning and end? How does the passage fit within the books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians as a whole? Determine the evidence for dividing the passage into subunits. What is the genre?

2. Textual problems: Review the external and internal evidence for any variant readings. How do the variant readings affect the interpretation of the passage? Explain what you believe to be the original reading and why.

3. Outline and Discourse Analysis: Construct an outline that represents the major units of information and summarizes the flow of thought. Are there any points of grammar that are significant for understanding the passage? Summarize, in your best judgment, the overall logical structure of the psalm.

4. Synthesis: Identify what you think is the main point of the passage. What is its contribution to the overall message of the book? Discuss, as needed, crucial words for in-depth analysis.

5. Biblical Theology: What is the major theme(s) of the passage and how does it fit into the eschatological theme of salvation history.

6. Applications/Implications: Why should a Christian be interested in learning about this passage? What issues does it raise? What difficulties does it present? Identify a pastoral problem in the passage and demonstrate how Jesus is the solution to the problem, and how a person might handle the identified problem in light of the redemption accomplished by Jesus.

Research expectations for the exegesis paper include: that you have used at least four commentaries in your paper. Demonstrate that you have read journal articles.

Late papers will be assessed a penalty of one full letter grade. [50%]

Assignment Four: Quizzes will be given for each class each Monday: The lowest quiz grade will be dropped before averaging quiz grades. [10%]

NB: Your final grade may be affected by class attendance and participation.

Class grade will be based on:

Class preparedness and participation will be taken into account in my final evaluation.

Three-fold reading of 1 & 2 Thessalonians (10%)

Quizzes. I will drop the lowest grade before tallying your quiz grade (20%)

Exegetical Paper (20%)

Final Exam (50%)

Final exam. This exam, consisting mostly of objective questions, will cover the content of the readings and lectures. More information on how to prepare for this exam will be given in class as the time approaches.

Course Evaluation

Your written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria: clarity and charity of thought and expression, accuracy of information, and breadth and depth of discussion. I will use letter grades or their equivalent to mean the following:

B (80-89): The thought and expression are clear and the information is accurate. The discussion is broad and deep enough to indicate a solid understanding of the issue. By “broad” I mean that sufficient aspects of the topic are covered, and by “depth” I mean that enough supporting and illustrating material is offered to flesh out the basic thought.

C (70-79): The material shows an adequate grasp of the topic, but at points the discussion is unclear, inaccurate, narrow or shallow.

D (60-69): The material shows something close to an adequate grasp of the topic but is notably defective according to one or more of the criteria.

F (below 60): The material does not indicate that the student has an adequate grasp of the topic, or it is severely defective according to the criteria.

A (90-100): The material is exceptional. Usually this means that it is not only clear and accurate but also develops the topic in breadth and depth beyond what is necessary for a good understanding of it. Such material is often, though not always, marked also by creativity, exceptional insight, and/or relatively extensive research.

The school’s grade scale is as follows: A = 100-95; A- = 94-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = below 70; F = below 60.