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NT 633 EXEGESIS OF COLOSSIANS (AND PHILEMON)

Fall 2004

Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 2:30-5:15

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A. Catalog Description

An exegetical study of the letter to the Colossians which focuses upon the application of basic exegetical principles of the Greek text and understanding the text within the literary, linguistic, historical, and cultural contexts in which it was originally circulated. Prerequisite: NT(IBS)510 or 511; NT520; and NT500 or 501/502 or equivalent. (May be taken by students in M.A. programs not requiring Greek by special arrangement with the professor.)

B. Course Learning Objectives:

Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:

1. Employ a range of exegetical approaches relevant to the interpretation of the New Testament book(s) in question, and to apply those approaches to other New Testament books of similar genre;
2. Situate the New Testament book(s) in question within its socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts;
3. Identify central issues in the critical study of the New Testament book(s) in question;
4. Articulate the importance of one's own presuppositions in the task of interpretation;
5. Articulate the primary theological and ethical concerns of the New Testament book(s) in question;
6. Demonstrate awareness of how the theological and ethical concerns of the New Testament book(s) in question contribute to those of the canon and of constructive theology and ethics;
7. Differentiate between critical and homiletical/devotional commentaries and studies of this and other New Testament books;
8. Evaluate critically the usefulness of secondary literature in the study of New Testament books;
9. Use Greek-based language tools to demonstrate proficiency in lexical semantics;
10. Use Greek-based language tools to identify grammatical constructions (i.e., with regard to sentence structure and use of clauses); and
11. Use Greek-based language tools to engage in syntactical analyses (i.e., with regard to verbal aspect, mood, and voice; use of the dative and genitive cases).

II. COURSE MATERIALS

A. ASSUMED TEXTS

1. Access to two modern translations of the NT, preferably at least one "literal" or formal equivalence (e.g., New American Standard, Revised Standard, English Standard Version, New Revised Standard) and one "dynamic equivalence" translation (e.g., New International). Paraphrases (Living Bible, New Living Translation, The Message) are not suitable for the

purposes of this course.

2. Access to a critical edition of the Greek text: e.g., United Bible Society (3rd or 4th ed.); Nestle-Aland (26th or 27th ed.) or to a Greek-English interlinear based on these Greek texts. Students are expected to bring a copy of the Greek text of Colossians or an interlinear to class meetings.

3. *BibleWorks 5.0* or *6.0* is highly recommended and will by itself more than satisfy 1 and 2. Students will be expected to work with the BibleWorks program for certain exegetical assignments. If you do not own the software, it will be your responsibility to find time in the Library's computer lab to fulfill the assignment.

C. Required Textbooks

Black, David A. *It's Still Greek to Me: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. ISBN: 0-8010-2181-2

Garland, David E. *Colossians and Philemon*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. ISBN: 0310484804

Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001. ISBN: 1-56563-485-3

O'Brien, P. T. *Colossians, Philemon*. WBC. Waco: Word, 1982. ISBN: 0849902436

Students with comprehensive Greek in their academic background or who wish to stretch their Greek skills may substitute or supplement the Black text with Daniel Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) or the heftier unabridged version, *Greek Grammar: Beyond Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

III. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

A. General Exegetical Tools

1. Glossary

Demoss, Matthew S. *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001). A very helpful, inexpensive little guide to the bewildering specialized vocabulary of NT Greek and exegesis.

2. Bibliographical Survey

David R. Bauer, *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003). This is probably the best and most up-to-date bibliographical survey available—and by one of our own! Students acquiring resources for a biblical studies library are strongly encouraged to own this guide.

3. Lexicons

Bauer, Walter and Frederick W. Danker et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Though not cheap, this is a “must own” for serious students of the NT. Note that for a hefty fee (\$125, the same as for the print copy) the complete module of BDAG is available to unlock in Bible Works 5.0 and higher.

4. Exegetical Grammar

Wallace, Daniel. *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. This would be an excellent next step after Black's *Still Greek to Me*—the same kind of book, though less remedial and with much more detail and many more examples. Note also that the unabridged and more detailed version of this reference work, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, is available as a module integrated into BibleWorks.

5. Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia:

a) Basic: Students should own at least one basic one-volume Bible dictionary.

Freedman, David N., ed. *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000.

Wood, D. R. W. et al., eds. *The New Bible Dictionary*. 3d ed. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

b) Advanced:

Evans, Craig A., and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Freedman, David N., ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Martin, Ralph P., Gerald Hawthorne, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993. On the Pauline material in particular.

B. Colossians (and Philemon) Commentaries

The following are recommended and will be on reserve in the Library. It is expected that when researching beyond the course textbooks that students will use *these* commentaries rather than some more available but lower quality alternatives:

Barth, Markus and Helmut Blanke. *The Letter to Philemon*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000.

Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. NICNT, rev. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984.

Dunn, James D. G. *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Letter to Philemon*. AB. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

Harris, Murray J. *Colossians and Philemon*. EGNT. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991.

Lincoln, Andrew T. "The Letter to the Colossians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Nashville: Abingdom, 2000. Vo1. 11:553–669.

Lohse, E. *Colossians and Philemon*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1971.

MacDonald, Margaret Y. *Colossians and Ephesians*. SP 17. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2000.

Moule, C. F. D. *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1957.

Wright, N. T. *Colossians and Philemon*. TNTC, rev.. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986.

IV. COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

A. Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance and participation is a basic expectation. Students are allowed to miss up to a total of two class sessions with no penalty, but there are no "excused absences." Four percentage points (4%) from the total course grade will be subtracted with each additional session missed; two percent (2%) for partial absence (arriving late, leaving early). Note that 4% will usually result in a drop of two grade increments (e.g., A- to B). *Students* are accountable for material missed, class announcements, etc. for the weeks missed. It is the *student's* responsibility to make advance arrangements with fellow students or the professor to access missed material. Students who attend the full duration of every class session will have 2% extra credit added to their total course grade, enough in many cases to bump the grade a partial increment (see grading scale).

B. Late Assignments

Assignments are due during the class meeting of the due date. Late assignments will not be eligible for a grade higher than "F" (i.e., 70/100 pts.) although a lower grade is possible. Furthermore, late assignments will only receive a score; there will be no constructive feedback from the professor. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Students must turn in what they have done by the end of class each day. Missing class to finish assignments is not an alternative (see attendance policy above).

C. Using FirstClass

An icon for the class has been set up for each student in the course (NT633-F1-GA). I will use this as a means of communicating with the class as a whole, and *students are responsible for the material that I post there*. If you do not regularly use FirstClass, I expect that you will do so for the duration of this course. If FirstClass is not set up on your computer, you may use the Information Commons computers on campus, or better, get instructions from IC to download and set up FirstClass on your own computer. (I have done it on several computers and have never had trouble doing so.)

D. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

The ATS standards and policies for academic integrity and plagiarism are given on pages 29-30 of the 2003-04 Student Guidelines (available in FirstClass: Orlando Campus/Student Info/2003-04 Student Guidelines.pdf). Plagiarism is unacceptable both academically and morally, and the following actions, consistent with ATS policy, will be taken when plagiarism is suspected:

1. In the case of plagiarism that is apparently inadvertent (the student is not careful to cite sources), the assignment will be returned to be revised before graded. Students will receive a maximum of 70% for the assignment because it will be late.
2. In flagrant cases (copying directly without attribution from printed or electronic sources), the assignment will be given a 0% grade and the Dean of the School of Theology will be alerted to the situation. Plagiarism can be grounds for dismissal from the seminary.

Every direct quotation and every summary of a unique idea must be properly attributed to its source, printed or electronic. For attribution guidelines, see the PowerPoint file “Some Tips for Academic Writing about Scripture” in the Course Center and the resources listed there. Be aware that much Internet material is *already plagiarized* and the student’s undigested use of such material is doubly egregious.

V. COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. Assignments and Evaluation

1. Reading Reflection (5%). The first assignment will be a two-page, single-spaced reflection on what you learned from Michael Gorman, *Elements*.
2. Greek Review and Exegetical Exercises (35%). Each of the seven assignments is worth 5% of the total course grade.

In preparation for most class meetings, students will engage in a set of directed preparation activities. These assignments are due on the day the class meets and student will turn in the work they have completed by the end of class. Specific details will be provided for the next assignment each class meeting by means of a handout from the professor. (Because I will be adapting the assignments to the needs of the students, the assignments will not be available in advance of the class meetings.) These assignments will usually include some or all of the following:

- a) reviewing basic Greek grammatical concepts as illustrated in Colossians and Philemon, including reviewing sections from Black, *SGTM* and a close grammatical analysis of a Greek sentence from Colossians or Philemon;
 - b) practicing certain exegetical research tasks (including reviewing sections from Gorman, *Elements*);
 - c) interacting with the interpretations of others (especially Garland and O’Brien).
3. Three Short Exegesis Papers (45%). Students will prepare three, five-page exegetical papers, each related to an assigned segment of the letter. Each is worth 10% of the total course grade.
 - a) For each paper, students will formulate a distinct thesis and in relatively brief compass argue for it. That thesis can have to do with an issue as small as the contextual meaning of a word or as large as an interpretive claim with respect to a larger text segment.
 - b) An acceptable thesis is defined as follows: *a defensible interpretive assertion for which an alternative is conceivable*. Thus the thesis involves a *claim* with regard to the meaning,

translation, or function of a passage. It must be *defensible*; evidence must be available which is appealed to in support of the thesis. And an alternative must be at least possible; in other words, the claim being made is contestable rather than obvious.

c) Kinds of theses might include any of the following or some combination of them:

(1) Textual: an argument for the most probable original reading of the Greek text given the possibility of several alternatives.

(2) Lexical: the contextual meaning of a Greek word and its most suitable translation.

(3) Grammatical/Syntactical: The function of a grammatical feature (the use of a case, an article, a participial expression, a prepositional phrase, a conjunction, verbal tense/aspect, mood, etc.) and the translation that results.

(4) Structural: How is a text segment (a sentence, paragraph or larger section) structured, and what are the implications for interpretation?

(5) Historical or Socio-cultural: what is the socio-historical background to a feature of the text or, alternatively, what is the concrete historical referent in the text? Furthermore, how does this background figure in to the interpretation of the text?

d) We will discuss in class how to come upon such theses. For now, suffice it to say that the primary means are (1) to read the text slowly, repeatedly, critically, and inquisitively (with as much recourse to Greek as one can muster) and (2) to read the secondary literature (in this case especially the assigned commentaries) the same way. In doing so one can choose either to agree with, to dissent from, or to qualify the opinions of the scholars, or even better yet (though more precarious), to chart an original course.

4. Final Essay (15%). Students have two options for the final assignment:

a) A Synthetic Theological Essay: This essay should be 2,500-3,500 words (about 10-12 pages double-spaced). For the expectations and grading standards for this essay see the attached grading rubric. Students may choose from the following topics:

(1) What is the “Christology” of Colossians? Make your argument by specific appeal to the exegesis of key texts.

(2) What is the soteriology (doctrine of salvation) of Colossians? For example, How is salvation “accomplished”? What is the necessary or expected response of the believer? How “secure” is the believer? How does Colossians speak to Christian sanctification? etc.

(3) Is there a “Colossian Heresy”? If so, what can be surmised from the text concerning its constituent elements and how is Paul’s letter a response?

b) Optional Reflection on Exegesis and/or Colossians (automatic 80%). In lieu of the final 10-12 page paper on a theological theme in Colossians, students have the option of a 5-page reflection paper on one or both of the following themes:

(1) A reflection regarding what you are learning about exegesis: how you are growing in skills, where you have yet to grow, questions you have, etc.

(2) Personal reflection on the application of Paul's letter to the Colossians in your life and in the contemporary church.

These papers will not be evaluated and graded per se, but only read and automatically given a score of 80%, assuming they are within the above-stated parameters. Weigh this option in light of your life situation and academic goals. It may be a very wise choice for some and a good learning experience as well.

B. Course Schedule

DATE	TOPICS AND TEXTS	ASSIGNMENTS	READING [brackets indicate optional reading; Wallace replaces Black]
Week 1 9/14/04	Overview of Exegesis Intro to Colossians	***	Read Gorman, 1-145, skim the remainder.
Week 2 9/21/04	Intro to Exegesis Cont. Skill: Book Overview	Gorman Reflection Paper	Garland, 17-33 O'Brien, xxv-liv
Week 3 9/28/04	Colossians 1:1-14 Gk Review: Cases, esp. Genitive and Dative	Exegesis Assignment #1	Garland, 39-80 [O'Brien, 18-30] Black, 43-56 [Wallace, 41-80]
Week 4 10/5/04	Colossians 1:15-23 Gk Review: Conjunctions and Prepositions	Exegesis Assignment #2	Garland, 81-115 [O'Brien, 31-72] Black, 82-90; 127-40 [Wallace, 160-73; 293-302]
Week 5 10/12/04	Colossians 1:24-2:5 Skill: Word Study	Short Exegesis Paper #1	Garland, 116-37 O'Brien, 73-100
Week 6 10/19/04	Colossians 2:6-15 Gk Review: Anatomy of the Verb, esp. Verb Tense and Aspect	Exegesis Assignment #3	Garland, 138-71 O'Brien, 101-134 Black, 91-112 [Wallace, 213-53]
Week 7 10/26/04	Colossians 2:16-23 Skill: Socio-Historical Backgrounds	Exegesis Assignment #4	Garland, 172-99 O'Brien, 135-56
Week 8 11/2/04	Colossians 3:1-11 Gk Review: Participles & Infinitive	Short Exegesis Paper #2	[O'Brien, 157-94] Black, 113-26 [Wallace, 254-85]
Week 9 11/9/04	Colossians 3:12-17 Skill: Phrasing	Exegesis Assignment #5	Garland, 200-240 O'Brien, 195-213
Week 10 11/16/04	Colossians 3:18-4:1 Gk Review: The Article	Exegesis Assignment #6	Garland, 241-69 O'Brien, 214-34 Black, 75-81 [Wallace 93-128]
Reading Week 11/22- 26/04			
Week 11 11/30/04	Colossians 4:2-6 Skill: Annotated Paraphrase	Short Exegesis Paper #3	O'Brien, 235-44
Week 12 12/7/04	Colossians 4:7-18	Exegesis Assignment #7	Garland, 270-92 [O'Brien, 245-61]
Week 13 12/14/04	Philemon	Final Exegesis Paper	Garland 293-375 [O'Brien, 265-308]

VI. GRADING SCALE (descriptions from *ATS Catalog*, 28, emphasis added)

95-100	= A “Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives”
92-95	= A-
90-92	= B+
86-90	= B “Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives”
84-86	= B-
82-84	= C+
77-82	= C “Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives”
75-77	= C-
73-75	= D+
70-73	= D “Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives”
<70	= F “Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives”

SHORT EXEGESIS PAPERS GRADING RUBRIC

A. Method and Research

Understanding the fundamental questions/issues and pursuing fruitful lines of investigation	60 points		
Avenues of investigation taken:			
Greek grammar/syntax			
not esp. applicable	could have done more or problematic	adequate	superior
Word analysis			
not esp. applicable	could have done more or problematic	adequate	superior
Literary context			
not esp. applicable	could have done more or problematic	adequate	superior
Historical and social background issues			
not esp. applicable	could have done more	adequate	superior
Interaction with secondary resources (quantity):			
too limited	sufficient	thorough	
Interaction with secondary resources (quality):			
didn't always grasp the data or arguments	adequate grasp of the data and arguments	thoughtful, serious, and critical interaction	

B. COMMUNICATION

Communicating the results of exegesis in a clear and persuasive manner	40 points		
Thesis:			
there is none or it is unclear	adequate, clear	especially well articulated	
Integration of exegetical data into a persuasive argument:			
scattered observations	somewhat integrated but "bumpy"	synthetic, data integrated into argument, cumulatively persuasive	
General clarity of writing and argument:			
characteristically unclear	unclear at points	generally clear	exceedingly clear
1. Grammar and style:			
numerous problems	some problems	solid	impeccable
2. Documentation:			
review documentation style	some problems	solid	impeccable

A Grading Rubric for NT632 Final Essay*

Score	Deficient (<19 pts)	Acceptable (19-21 pts)	Good (22-23 pts)	Superior (24-25 pts)
25% Research and use of Resources	Not even class texts are given much use; essay rests upon student's opinion or the use of inferior resources (e.g., public domain or unscholarly internet sites).	Research includes thoughtful interaction with class texts. Reference to other resources is minimal or superficial.	Research includes thoughtful interaction with class texts but also includes recommended reserve commentaries, and possibly even other exegetical research tools (lexicons, grammars, reference tools). A good essay might access and interact meaningfully with 6 or more resources.	Research includes thoughtful interaction with class texts as well as recommended reserve commentaries, exegetical research tools (lexicons, grammars, reference tools) and perhaps even periodical resources (journal articles). A superior essay might access and interact meaningfully with 10 or more resources.
25% Comprehensiveness and Synthesis	Important passages ignored and irrelevant passages dwelt upon. Essay generalizes beyond Colossians to answer questions.	Many or most of the relevant passages are noted and engaged with, though perhaps superficially in some cases. Some effort is expended in synthesizing and appropriating the various data.	All or most of the relevant passages are dealt with, for the most part at a satisfactory in-depth level. Effort is expended in synthesizing the various pertinent data, and, where the question allows or requires it, to appropriate the material with respect to contemporary concerns.	All of the relevant passages are noted and engaged with at a sufficiently in-depth level. Significant effort is expended and skill demonstrated in synthesizing the various pertinent data, and, where the question allows or requires it, to appropriate the material with respect to contemporary concerns. Essay is characterized by <u>keen insight</u> and <u>thoughtful reflection</u> .
25% Exegesis	One or two English translations are used and taken at face value, unaware of ambiguities or interpretive difficulties in the original language.	Several English translations are used and compared to each other where different. Student demonstrates some awareness of ambiguities or interpretive difficulties in the original language and interacts at least with commentaries regarding those issues.	Essay shows an awareness of some of the disputed issues or ambiguities. Underlying issues pertaining to the Greek text are noted, and, where possible, decisions are made and supported. Appeals are made to both historical and especially literary contexts.	Student shows an awareness of the important disputed issues or ambiguities and addresses them in the course of the essay. Underlying issues pertaining to the Greek text are attended to by means of reference to critical commentaries, grammatical resources, and the standard lexicons. Options are noted, and decisions are made and well supported. Judicious appeals are made to both historical and especially literary contexts. Essay is characterized by <u>thoroughness</u> .
25% Writing and Style	Writing is unclear, significant problems with spelling, usage, grammar, organization, or coherence—or essay is unacceptably brief (less than 75% of the minimal standard). Note well: any evidence of plagiarism will result in a “0” for this category.	Generally clear but with some occasional ambiguities or coherence problems. More than occasional grammar, spelling and typographical errors. Greek or Hebrew is routinely problematic. Citation method is sloppy or inconsistent; no evidence of a standard method being employed.	Writing is sufficiently clear; essay is organized and coherent. Only a handful of minor problems with grammar, spelling, and typographical errors. Greek or Hebrew is recognizable. Citation method is acceptable but not impeccable; an accepted standard used but not consistently adhered to.	Writing is very clear; arguments are logical, free of grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors (or nearly so). Well organized and coherent. Format is as requested. Greek or Hebrew words are spelled (or transliterated) correctly and with proper diacritics, including accents. Citation method conforms to an accepted standard (e.g., Turabian, <i>SBL Handbook</i> , APA) and is consistent. Essay is characterized by <u>clarity</u> and <u>grace</u> .

* Points are based on a total of 100%. See Grading Scale in Syllabus for corresponding grade value.