

THE EPISTLES TO THE EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS—BIBL 5166

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fall Semester 2009—Monday and Wednesday 10:45-12:00

August 24-December 11

Instructor: Klyne Snodgrass

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The analysis of these “sister letters” will deal with their relation, the purpose of both letters, and their teaching about salvation, life in Christ *in this world*, and the description of the church and its ministries. Three hours credit.

OBJECTIVES

1. To become *thoroughly* familiar with the content and the theology of the “sister” letters known as Ephesians and Colossians.
2. To focus attention on the hermeneutical process—specifically, both the method of biblical study and the process of understanding, theologizing, and application.
3. To become familiar with the critical issues and the literature relevant to both letters, especially the so-called Colossian heresy and the question of the destination and authorship of Ephesians.
4. To understand the contribution of both letters to Paul’s theology, especially with regard to Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethics.
5. To gain insight into the significance of these letters for understanding our identity—the identity of Christians in general and of ourselves individually, particularly as it relates to “life in Christ.”
6. To develop procedures whereby the impact of Ephesians—surely one of the most important documents ever written—and Colossians may be communicated to people in our time.

PROCEDURE

Given the variety of backgrounds represented in the class, each person will be expected to work at his or her own level. Class sessions will be dialogical and sometimes will focus on small groups. Students are expected to be prepared for class through readings and work on the study guide. If you have had Greek, you will be expected to use Greek in all assignments and to translate an appropriate amount of each letter. If you have not had Greek, alternative assignments and readings will be substituted. Each person should make every attempt to use inclusive language sensitive to the variety of persons in the class. We will work on introductory issues for both letters, then I will take the primary responsibility of explaining Colossians, and then students will have greater responsibility for explaining Ephesians.

TEXTS

I am not requiring specific texts for this class. The choice of commentaries for each letter for this class depends in part on each student’s ability and experience. You need to select a commentary for each letter for your foundational reading. If you have had Greek and/or previous experience in biblical studies, you are expected to use the more technical commentaries. For papers and specific assignments for class you will be expected to use a variety of commentaries and articles. For the more technical commentaries on Colossians I would list:

Barth, Markus and Blanke, Helmut. *Colossians*. Anchor Bible 34B. Translated by Astrid B. Beck. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

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

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

Lightfoot, Joseph B. *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. London: Macmillan, 1886.

Lohse, Eduard. *Colossians and Philemon*. Hermeneia. Translated by William R. Poehlmann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Moule, C. F. D. *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and the Philemon*. Cambridge: University Press, 1956.

O'Brien, Peter T. *Colossians, Philemon*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word Books, 1982.

Wilson, R.McL. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians (ICC, rev.)*. London: T. & T. Clark, 2005.

For the less technical see:

Garland, David. *Colossians and Philemon*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

Martin, Ralph P. *Colossians and Philemon*. New Century Bible. Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1974.

Thompson, M. M. *Colossians & Philemon (THNTC)*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Wright, N. T. *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Tyndale NT Commentaries. Leicester: InterVarsity, 1986.

For the more technical commentaries on Ephesians I would list:

Barth, Markus. *Ephesians*. Vols. 34 and 34A The Anchor Bible. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1974.

Best, Ernest. *Ephesians*. *The International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997.

Hoehner, Harold. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Vol. 42 of Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word Books, 1990.

Schnackenburg, Rudolf. *Ephesians: A Commentary*. Translated by Helen Heron. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991.

Among those less technical but still substantive I would encourage you to use:

MacDonald, Margaret Y. *Colossians and Ephesians*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2000.

O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999.

Snodgrass, Klyne. *Ephesians*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Stott, John R. W. *God's New Society*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1980. Also published as *The Message of Ephesians*.

As always, read critically!

REQUIREMENTS

On time attendance at all classes is assumed.

1. a. Read all ten chapters of Ephesians and Colossians the first week and begin the study guide. Read Acts 18:18–20:38 and the articles on Colossae and Ephesus in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, I, 1089 and II, 542–549 respectively. Due Aug. 31.
b. Read the introduction to Colossians in Barth and Blanke, pp. 7-134 or O'Brien, pp. xxvi-liv. Due Aug. 31.
2. During the next four weeks (Aug 31-Sept 3-28) read Colossians once each week changing the perspective each week so that you read as:
 - a. a lay person seeking an active faith
 - b. an academic especially concerned for knowledge
 - c. a person with an inferiority complex
 - d. a theologian trying to understand salvation
3. Read the introduction to Ephesians in **Lincoln**, pp. xxxv–xcvii or **Hoehner**, pp. 1–61 or preferably 1–114. Due Sept. 28.
4. During the next six weeks of the term (Sept 28-Nov. 16) read Ephesians once each week changing the perspective each week so that you read as:
 - a. a lay person seeking an active faith
 - b. a minority person victimized by racial oppression (If you are a minority person, select a different ethnic minority from your own.)
 - c. a person fighting depression
 - d. a person preparing for ministry
 - e. a person seeking to understand the church
 - f. a wife victimized by abuse
3. Throughout the term answer the questions on the study guide. After the first week, the study guide sections and translations must be done **prior** to class sessions on the relevant sections of Colossians and Ephesians and **prior** to any relevant reading. In this class more focus will be placed on your own working with the Greek text of both letters (or if you have not had Greek, on working with a translation) and less on reading secondary sources.
4. Read at least 350 pages exclusive of any research for your paper. Include the specific items required (such as the articles on Ephesus and Colossae and the articles listed in the proposed schedule below) and a balance of readings from the commentary selected on Colossians and the one selected on Ephesians. Keep good records, for a reading report will be required at the end of the term to indicate what was read. For Greek translation work do not write out your translations. Turn in only your worksheets on which you have identified words and parsed (completely) verb forms not immediately recognized. I hope your Greek is sufficient to translate both letters; if not, think first of the following: Col. 1:9-23, 24-29; 2:6-15; 2:20-3:4; Eph. 1:3–14; 2:1–10 or 2:11–22; 4:1–16; 4:17–5:2; and 5:15-33. (Your work sheets should be turned in with your reading report forms at the end of the term.)
5. Memorize either Col 1:9-20 or Eph 1:3–14 from the translation of your choice. (Due Oct. 5)
6. Select one of the following subjects for Ephesians and be ready to initiate discussion of that topic on the specified date. You will need to have read at least three commentaries, one Pauline theology (such as Dunn's), and one periodical article.
 - a. Election, especially in Eph 1:1-14 (Sept 28)
 - b. Salvation in 2:1-22 (Oct 7)
 - b. Ministry in 3:1-19 and 4:7-16 (Oct 26)

- c. Ethics in 4:25-5:14 (Nov 9)
- d. Submission of women and male headship in 5:18-33 (Nov 18)
- e. Spiritual Warfare in 6:10-20 (Dec 2)

For these assignments the instructor is glad to suggest readings.

7. Write a three page paper on the significance of Ephesians for you own spiritual development. I do not want devotional musings on your experience; I want to know what contribution Ephesians offers for your own spiritual growth. Due Nov. 11.
8. Select a section of either Colossians or Ephesians (six to ten verses) or a theme from either or both and do an investigative paper dealing with the issues and theology of the subject. Present your paper with technical accuracy according to Turabian. Minimum length is 15 double-spaced pages with no less than **ten** good sources used. (Bibles, lexica, and concordances do not count.) Use appropriate footnote or endnote form. Be sure to include a bibliography. If you have had Greek, you will be expected to use it. Your first task should be the translation of your text. Do **not** use quotations **at all** in the body of your paper! Due Dec. 2 with grace until Dec. 7.

GRADING

Reading and class involvement including discussion, memorization, and three page paper (A Reading Report Form will be provided)	20%
Study Guide	30%
Paper	30%
Final Exam	20%

PROPOSED SCHEDULE—

August 24—Introduction, Ephesus and the Lycus Valley, “critical” issues for Colossians, authorship and purpose

August 26—Overview of Colossians; 1:1–2 and 3-8

August 31—Col 1:9-23. Read pp. 79-95 of *Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire* by Brian Walsh and Sylvia Keesmaat

September 2—Col 1:24-2:5

7—Labor Day: No class

9—Col 2:6-19 with focus on salvation and baptism

14—Col 2:20-3:4

16—Col 3:5-17. Read C. F. D. Moule, “The New Life in Colossians 3:1-17,” *RevEx* 70 (1973): 481-493.

21—Col 3:18-4:18

23—Introduction to Ephesians, authorship, destination, and 1:1-2

28—1:3-14, structure, privilege, election, salvation, and gift. Read Solomon, “The New Testament Doctrine of Election,” *SJT* 11 (1958): 406–422. **Students responsible for the discussion of election.**

30—1:3-14 continued

October 5—1:15–23: the structure of the prayer; Christology; ecclesiology; and 1:23.

7—2:1-10: the plight and the solution. Read Lincoln, “Ephesians 2:8–10: A Summary of Paul’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 617–630. **Students responsible for the discussion of salvation.**

12-16—Fall Break: No class sessions

19—2:11–22: the church, its salvation, and the rejection of racism. Read Markus Barth's commentary I, 282–291.

21—2:11–22 continued

26—3:1–13: Ministry. **Students responsible for the discussion.**

28—3:14–21 and 4:1–6

November 2—4:7–16 The church and its task. Read John Calvin's commentary on 4:11–16.

4—4:17–24 A Christian view of the mind and of conversion and 4:25–5:2: an ethical primer for Christians.

9—4:25–5:2 Ethics. **Students responsible for the discussion.**

11—5:3–14 Light vs. darkness and the issue of separation

16—5:15–21 The life of the Spirit

18—5:22–33: Husbands, wives, submission, head, and all that. **Students responsible for the discussion.**

23—**Instructor at SBL; No class**

25—Continuation of 5:22–33: Husbands, wives, submission, head, and all that.

30— 6:1–9: families and slaves—is there theology here?

December 2—6:10–24: The battle against evil and the letter closing. Read Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers*, pp. 82–96. **Students responsible for the discussion.**

7—Living, Teaching, and Preaching the Theology of these two letters

11—TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM

Students with a disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the dean of students. Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. If needed, appointments can be relocated. For further information please review the following website:
<http://www.northpark.edu/ada>