

COS 521 – Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation
Mississippi Course of Study, Oct. 2 through November 20, 2023
Rev. Dawn Douglas Flowers, Instructor

This course focuses on the content and context of these writings, and the theological emphases of their writers. In addition to Acts and Revelation, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, James, and 1 John will receive special attention. Students will articulate a theology of scripture.

Objectives:

1. Distinguish these genres of biblical literature and understand the major theological themes in these writings.
2. Faithfully exegete these forms of biblical literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.
4. Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

Required Text:

Warren Carter/ Amy-Jill Levine, *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*
Jouette Bassler, *Navigating Paul*

Supplementary Text:

Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*
Mark Allen Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*
N. T. Wright, *Revelation*
Victor Paul Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul*
Gordon Fee, *New Testament, Exegesis*

Note: All writing assignments must be typed double space. You will need to use 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman or a similar font. No more than one-inch margins. Cite all sources.

Pre-Class Reading Assignments:

1. Thoroughly read and if you can, re-read Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, James, 1 John, and Revelation. I encourage you to take notes as you read. Keep track of your thoughts, insights, and especially questions. The main point is that you spend adequate time in the Biblical text.
2. In Carter/Levine's book, *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*, read the chapters on Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, Hebrews, James, 1John, and Revelation. Take simple notes regarding your thoughts, insights, and concerns as you read.
3. Read Bassler's book, *Navigating Paul*

Pre-Class Writing Assignments: (All Due by October 2nd) email to almadawn720@gmail.com

1. Write a paper (4-5 pages) on the message of the book of Acts from your reading of the Biblical text. You may discuss ideas from Carter and Levine's book that gave you additional insight into Acts. In the final section of your paper, you may offer any critique of Carter and Levine's or additional insights. Do not use any other outside sources. You may want to deal with one issue, idea, concept, or theme from the biblical text. First, I am interested in your understanding of the Biblical text, don't just give a summary. Second, I am interested in insight from Carter and Levine's book.

2. Choose **one** assignment from the following two options:

- Write a paper (4-5 page) on the message of the book of 1 Corinthians from your reading of the Biblical text. You may discuss ideas from Carter and Levine's book that gave you additional insight into 1 Corinthians. In the final section of your paper you may offer any critique of Carter and Levine or additional insights. Do not use any other outside sources. Again, I am interested in your understanding of the Biblical text. Also, I am interested in insight from Carter and Levine's book.
- Write a paper (4-5 page) on the message of the book of Hebrews from your reading of the Biblical text. You may discuss ideas from Carter and Levine's book that gave you additional insight into Hebrews. In the final section of your paper you may offer any critique of Carter and Levine or additional insights. Do not use any other outside sources. Again, I am interested in your understanding of the Biblical text. Also, I am interested in insight from Carter and Levine's book.

3. Turn in at least 12 to 15 questions or concerns you have from the reading that you would like addressed in class. I would like at least two of the questions or concerns to relate to your reading of Romans. I would like at least two of your questions or concerns to come from your reading of 1 John. And I would like at least two of your questions or concerns to come from your reading of Revelation. The remaining questions can come from any of the Bible readings.

4. Choose a passage for your final paper. Choose any Epistle reading from the Revised Common Lectionary that comes from Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, James, or 1 John. Try to choose a literary unit. Choosing a complete literary unit may mean you will need to extend or shorten the text from what is listed in the Revised Common Lectionary.

Final Writing Assignment: (Due the last day of the class, November 20)

1. Write an exegetical paper on the Epistle passage that you choose (7-8 pages). Utilize the exegetical method you have already learned in Course of Study. Or use the exegetical method from the supplemental book by Gordon Fee's titled *New Testament, Exegesis*. Or, you may use my exegetical guide, "A Guide to Exegesis" that I am included at the end of this Syllabus. Once you have completed your exegetical steps I would like you to write a paper explaining:

- The meaning of your passage after the exegesis is complete

- Literary context or how your passage logically connects to the entire Epistle and especially what comes right before and after, as well as any Old Testament images or ideas included in your passage
- Insight into the writer's argument and literary concerns
- The theological emphasis or main point of the passage and what it tells you about how God relates to humanity
- Application or ways that the passage was relevant to the original hearers as well as the world today.

2. Write a one-page sermon outline of the passage from your exegetical paper. I am interested in how you would speak the truth you discovered to your congregation.

Course Connect: A schedule of topics and additional assignments for each week will be given the first day of class. Once Course Connect is open you may complete any of the assignments early.

Zoom: All Classes will be on zoom. See schedule below.

Class Schedule

Monday, October 2: 6:30-8:30

Monday, October 9: 6:30-8:30

Monday, October 16: 6:30-8:30

Monday, October 23: 6:30-8:30

*Week of October 29 TBD

Tuesday, November 7: 6:30-8:30

Tuesday, November 14: 6:30-8:30

Monday, November 20: 6:30-8:30

Grading

Pre assignments 25%

Course Connect Assignments 25%

Zoom Participation 25%

Final Paper 25%

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A Guide to Exegesis written by Rev. Dr. Chuck Meador

1. **Establish the text!** When exegeting a narrative ask, "Is this a single *episode*?" If it is an epistle or some other instructive passage ask, "Is this a *paragraph*?" Every literary unit

has one main idea (though it may be expressed in more than one way). So first make sure this is a literary unit!

2. **Determine the context!** Consider the *literary context*—what precedes and follows it in the chapter or book? Reading understanding the entire book of the Bible your passage comes from is important. Then determine the *historical context*—when and where did this occur in the life of Israel or Jesus or the Church? Involve yourself in the *game of asking* “who, what, when where, why, and how?” Remember not understanding the context can lead to our biggest mistakes.
3. **Clarify Translation!** Compare with several translation. Examine any differences among the translations. Use Greek study tools to discover meaning or ideas. But the context is most important.
4. **Sermon Use List!** Throughout the process record observations from your exegetical work that you might want to mention in your sermon. This will continually be revised and reworked. Some information may work in a sermon at a later date.
5. **Trace the argument!**
 - ✓ Determine the development of the Biblical writers thought. Is it:
(1) problem/solution (2) past/present/future (3) cause/effect (4) compare/contrast (5) dominant image
 - ✓ Determine the subject (which can always be put into an interrogative question—who, what, when, where, why or how) and the complement (which completes the idea). Combining the subject and the complement will reveal the main idea.
6. **Note any special literary concerns.** Pay attention to the following:
(1) Imagery (2) Phraseology (3) Parallelism (4) Mood of passage: hope, fear, anger, affection etc.
7. **Do a word study**—look for repeated or strategic words; first within the book of the Bible you are studying, then broaden as needed. Remember etymology merely gives the history of the word; context determines its meaning! (*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, *Strong's*, or other good lexical aids; Remember Old Testament in Hebrew, New Testament in Greek)
8. **Cross references** (quotes, images, and ideas, from other scriptural references. Always start by looking for other references within the book that your passage comes from. If the passage is from the Old Testament then look at other Old Testament passages. If the passage is from the new testament then look at the Old Testament before you look at another new testament writing by a different author.)
9. **Think!** Learn at least one new insight from this passage. Let it teach you. Formulate your ideas.
10. **Commentaries**—Now you may consult at least two good Commentaries: (from modern scholarship) Consult commentaries only after you have completed your exegetical work and discovered
11. **Think! Pray!** Learn at least one new insight from this passage. Let it teach you.

Honor Code

All MSCOS students are required to abide by the MSCOS Honor Code, and to seek to uphold the highest standards of academic and pastoral integrity. The Honor Code of MSCOS requires that all material that a student submits must be that student's own work. Violations include: cheating, turning in work completed by someone else, copying work from the Internet or a book without citation, and plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as knowingly claiming the published work of another person as one's own (including the lack of proper citation in a paper or other assignment). Any student not in compliance with the Honor Code faces one or more of the following actions: receiving a warning, failing the assignment, removal from the course, failing the course, being placed on probation, and expulsion from MSCOS. The MSCOS reports all Honor Code violations to the student's district superintendent and local pastor registrar.

Academic Expectations

The MSCOS includes pre-work, class time with the instructor, coursework to be completed outside of the classroom, and on-line work through Course Connect, our Learning Management System. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of deadlines set by the instructor and to complete all assignments on time. MSCOS faculty reserve the right to mark down or refuse to accept late assignments. All completed written assignments must include a cover sheet, signed by the student's mentor. The cover sheet is available for download on the Center for Ministry website. For electronic submissions, students are to scan the cover sheet and include it as an attachment. The MSCOS will use letter grades A, B, C, D, or F. Students must repeat classes graded D or F. The MSCOS sends grade reports to the Division of Ordained Ministry, the annual conference, and the Regional COS Director. In exceptional circumstances, students may request an incomplete for a course by submitting a written request to the instructor and the MSCOS director. Incomplete grades not resolved within 60 days will be recorded as an F.