Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
NT 626: Exegesis of Galatians

Instructor: Mark A. Jennings
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Office Hours: Wed: 8AM – 10 AM, 1 PM – 3 PM; Fri: 8 AM – 10 AM
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Course Description
This course is an exegetical study of the Greek text of the Epistle to the Galatians with special attention to its overall structure, language, OT background, and theology. A typical session will include lecture, translation, and student-led discussions. Some attention will be given to the letter’s relationship with the other Pauline epistles, but the primary focus of this course will be what the Apostle was inspired to write the churches of the Galatia. Each student will be expected to employ all the exegetical tools at their disposal to better interpret the original intent of the Gospel. Finally, significant portions of each class will be devoted to discussing what our exegesis means for the church, discipleship, obedience of faith, ministering, and so forth. In other words, the exegesis of Galatians (or any Biblical text) is never the end in itself, but is the essential preparatory step necessary for proclaiming the truth revealed in God’s Word. While any study of Galatians will address matters of Pauline interpretation and perspectives (and this course is no different), the driving focus of this course will be how Galatians contributes to the following two questions: “Who is Jesus?” and “Why is this significant?”

Objectives
At the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. Articulate the contemporary issues surrounding the interpretation of Galatians, especially the views of Schreiner, Dunn, Westerholm, and Martyn. (Art 1-2 of GCTS Mission)
2. Understand the Greek of Galatians through a concentrated grammatical study of the entire epistle. (Art 1-2 of GCTS Mission)
3. Translate into accurate and idiomatic English any portion of Galatians. (Art 1-2 of GCTS Mission)
4. Deeply examine and consider a particular passage, utilizing all the appropriate exegetical methods. (Art 1-2 of GCTS Mission)
5. Articulate personal conclusions based on sound exegesis regarding the overarching message and purpose of the Epistle as whole as well as individual sections. (Art 1-3 of GCTS Mission)
6. Consider the importance of this Epistle to one’s faith and understanding of who Christ is. (Art 3-6 of GCTS Mission)
7. Consider how the Epistle to the Galatians informs our understanding of salvation, the church, our ministry, discipleship, etc. (Art 3-6 of GCTS Mission)

**Texts**

**Required:**


**Other Readings as Assigned**

**Recommended**


**Requirements**

1. A **Greek Competency Quiz** is required of every Greek exegesis class. The quiz is prepared by the director of the GCTS Greek language program and may include translation, identification of syntactical functions, and other grammatical matters. This quiz will not count towards your final grade, but **ONLY THOSE WHO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN THE COURSE**. The quiz will be administered on the first day of class. A retake will be allowed, but no other alternatives will be allowed or considered.

2. You will be expected to be prepared each day to translate and discuss the Greek text assigned for that day. You will translate publicly at every class meeting.
3. Attendance at every class is expected. Failure to attend class will impact your class participation grade. (Besides, who wants to miss class? How often will you get a chance to meet weekly with your peers and drink deeply from the Epistle to the Galatians?)

4. You are to read the relevant sections in the required commentaries, as well as any other assigned readings, prior to class.

5. You are to write an Exegesis Paper of 4000–5000 words (strictly enforced) in which you systematically analyze a complete passage of the Greek text from the Epistle to the Galatians. Dr. Ciampa provides some excellent guidance regarding writing sound exegesis papers at http://www.viceregency.com.

   a. This paper should employ all relevant exegetical methods developed in “Interpreting the New Testament” (original text, section boundaries, historical background, literary background, grammar, syntax, semantic/discourse analysis, narrative criticism, etc.). Part of your evaluation not only will be how you employed your method, but which methods you chose to use. Please note – not every method will provide the same level of insight to every passage, and some may be hardly useful to a particular passage.

   i. N.B. Only discuss author, audience, and textual critical matters if they are relevant to your argument (and each of these may be critically important, especially audience and occasion).

   b. This paper should reflect knowledge of the scholarly secondary literature (commentaries, peer-reviewed articles and chapters, etc.), but the weight of your paper should be directed towards your findings and not simply a restatement of the conclusions of others. Be sure to read your sources carefully and cite his/her opinion, not simply an opinion they are discussing. This is especially true for commentaries where multiple opinions are discussed. Try to cite the best representatives of certain arguments. (For example, if Harry, Hermione, and Ron all cite Severus regarding a certain view – then it makes the most sense for you to follow suit and use Severus as the best representative for that point.)

      i. NOTE: DO NOT PLAGARIZE! ALL ACTS OF PLAGARISM WILL BE FULLY PURSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GCTS POLICIES. NO EXCUSES.

      ii. Limit your use of direct quotations. A good rule of thumb regarding quotations – only use them if the author said something much better, and more completely, than anyone else (including yourself).

   c. You are to follow SBL format. (Format is taken very seriously – attention to form often indicates that the paper was taken seriously. A poorly written and poorly formatted paper will substantively harm a good idea.) Also – since you will give the full bibliographic information the first time you cite a text in the footnotes, you do not need to provide a bibliography/works cited page at the end of your paper.

   d. Your paper should be free of grammatical and syntax errors. Grammar mistakes overly burden the reading of your paper, and substantial mistakes can make the
Any writing submitted for critique and evaluation should not have more than five grammatical mistakes. Part of your evaluation will include your grammar and syntax. Points will be deducted for grammatical mistakes. A paper that is teeming with grammatical errors will be returned and a rewrite will be required. In the event that a rewrite is required, there will be an automatic two-grade penalty. I strongly recommend that you have someone read your work with an eye towards grammar and syntax.

e. The paper is to be double-spaced, 12-pt font, with 1 in. margins.

f. Your paper is to be divided into the following elements:

i. **Translation:** This should be in accurate and idiomatic English. It should be a “functional/dynamic equivalent” translation (in other words, not a paraphrase or something overly formal). Consider it to be a translation that would be useful for teaching and preaching in a church setting with newcomers, new believers, visitors, and old salts of the faith. It should reflect and anticipate the various exegetical decisions you made on your passage. (NOT PART OF WORD COUNT)

   1. It is assumed you are following the preferred text of the UBS4/NA27 unless otherwise indicated. The discussion of significant textual issues should be reserved for footnotes to the text within this section of the paper. Especially important textual issues may merit some additional comment in the commentary section. You only need to discuss textual critical matters when your conclusions differ from the UBS4/NA27.

   2. Any significant textual decisions should be accompanied by the appropriate charts in the appendix.

ii. **Commentary:** This section should include the following:

   1. **Introduction.** No more than one page introducing the passage, the relationship of the passage to the broader context, and the major issues to be discussed.

      a. **Body.** Use a verse-by-verse approach (some flexibility if the versification overly disrupts your argument). Here is where you will exhibit your exegesis, interact with representative secondary sources, etc.

   2. **Summary.** No more than one or two paragraphs summarizing the argument of the passage.

iii. **Theological/Devotional Reflection.** No more than one page identifying the main theological point and the relevance of the passage to the life of the believer and the practice of the church. This is not merely a summary. This section can vary in form and creativity is certainly encouraged.

iv. **Appendix.** Include here any relevant diagrams. These can take different forms (Semantic Structure/Discourse, Sentence Flow, Grammar, Text Critical, etc.,) but they should naturally coincide with the exegetical and translational decisions. (NOT PART OF WORD COUNT)
1. This is not the place to give me an extended discussion on some matter that you wanted to say, but couldn’t make it fit in the commentary.

v. **Word Count:** Please give the word count of the paper (including footnotes). Your word count does **not** include: a) Appendices; b) Translation; c) Bibliographic information; and d) Title and subtitle headings. **NOTE:** I stop reading once the word count is reached and your paper will be evaluated accordingly. For example, if you reach the word count during your commentary section – your evaluation will consider the “Theological/Devotional Reflection” as having been omitted from your paper.

g. **The paper due dates are staggered throughout the term. Please see Course Schedule.** You are to email me two copies of your paper before the start of class on the day the paper is due. One copy is to be a Word (or Pages) document and the other is a .pdf or .jpeg copy.
   
i. Structuring the due dates this way should allow for a rich discussion of the texts in class.

   ii. You are to tell the Instructor the chapter from which you will be exegeting by the third class meeting. Once notified, the student is committed. If a student does not choose a chapter, one will be assigned to him/her.

h. **ALTERNATIVE PAPER:** Any student who has earned an A in two previous NT Exegesis courses and desires to write a different type of exegetical paper (i.e., one that is not “commentary style,” such as a journal article) may do so. The grades will have to be confirmed. Students desiring to do this must meet with the Instructor prior to the third class meeting for more details, including due dates. Once this option is chosen, the student will not have the option of “changing his/her mind.”

i. **LATE PAPERS WILL RECEIVE A TWO-GRADE PENALTY. ANY STUDENT WHO DOES NOT SUBMIT AN EXEGESIS PAPER WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.**

6. You are to complete a *Translation Notebook* on Galatians. The notebook is to take the following format and include the following elements:

   a. Prepare an outline that you feel best represents the organization of Galatians.

   b. Each verse should be its own entry, unless the versification disrupts the natural thought.

   c. Translations: Cut and paste two or three representative translations of verses when there are significant differences in the translations. You are encouraged to use the same translations throughout your notebook. Use from a spectrum of formal and functional/dynamic equivalent. Good options include (but are not limited to) NLT, TNIV, ESV, NRSV, NIV, NRSV. **Note,** you do not need to offer
these English translations for every verse, but only those that reflect significant choices.

d. Provide your own working translation with analysis.

e. Your analysis should include:
   i. Parsing of difficult words – including all participles and infinitives
   ii. Explain forms that seem unusual or warrant explanation
   iii. Identify and Evaluate the following: relationships that offer differing meanings (types of dative, genitive, etc.); participial and infinitive functions (See Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*); transitional markers (conjunctions, etc.), types of conditional statements, and other relevant grammatical/syntactical observations

f. Comment on substantial lexical data: Certain terms may require brief comment regarding meaning.
   i. Offer your conclusions regarding the best sense of the term and the most likely sources for understanding of the term.
   ii. (N.B. You do not need to do an exhaustive study, rather identify a few passages or places that you feel best explain the author’s use of the term.)

g. **The Translation Notebook is due by NOON on the last day to submit written work. Note this date is earlier for those graduating at the end of term. Like the Exegesis Paper – you are to email me two copies of the notebook.**

   i. Late Notebooks will not be accepted. Any student who does not submit a Notebook will fail the course.

7. **You are to write a Devotional Study of the Epistle to the Galatians.**
   a. Identify the individual sections/passages of the epistle.
   b. Create brief devotional entries (no more than one page per entry) for each section. Some sections will naturally require more discussion.
   c. These sections should include a brief discussion on the main idea of the passage, an illustration of the idea, and an exhortation/application built upon the main idea.
   d. Do not consult any resources (especially other devotionals on Galatians). This is to be entirely based on your exegesis and your prayerful consideration of the epistle.
   e. Additional information will be forthcoming on this assignment.
   f. **This assignment is due by NOON on the last day of class. Like the Exegesis Paper – you are to email me two copies.**

   i. A late “Devotional Study” will result in a two-grade penalty. Any student who does not submit a “Devotional Study” will fail the course.

8. NOTE: It is advised (and expected) that you are working on all the assignments throughout the course.
**Grade Components**

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<tr>
<td>Greek Competency Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exegesis Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exegetical Notebook</td>
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<td>Devotional Study</td>
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**Note on Class Participation:** Participation is expected and assumed. Participating does not mean “talking all the time.” Rather it means coming to class prepared to offer useful questions and considerations. Failure to adequately participate may result in a 5-10% reduction in your final course grade.

**Final semester letter grades will be assigned as follows:**

- **A** 93% and up
- **A-** 90%
- **B+** 86.6%
- **B** 83.3%
- **B-** 80%
- **C+** 76.6%
- **C** 73.3%
- **C-** 70%
- **D+** 66.6%
- **D** 63.3%
- **D-** 60%
- **F** below 60

**A Brief Word Regarding Translations for Class**

The purpose of this course is not simply to teach Greek grammar but to interpret the New Testament from the Greek text. It is assumed that each student prior to class session will have translated the assigned text. Students will be called upon each class to translate and field questions regarding the assigned text. When we are discussing translations in class – it is to be done with a “hard copy” of the Greek New Testament – not an electronic copy. No exceptions. Failure to translate the assigned text (or at least to make a serious attempt) before class renders you ill prepared to sufficiently contribute. On those occasions where “life happens” and you must choose between doing the assigned reading or doing your translation work, the latter should always take precedence (with the assumption you will “catch up” on your reading at the first possibility).

In the event that you are unable to translate all of the assigned text for the day, you are to notify the instructor before class of how much you did translate. If you fail to show up for class, it will be assumed that you did zero translation for that day. (If you did do some translation in preparation but were unable to make the class – please email me how much of the text you did translate). Naturally a failure to translate will impact your participation evaluation.

The reward of continually translating occurs in the effort. Therefore do not feel the necessity for a perfectly dynamic translation. This is part of what the class discussion is to accomplish. Also resist the temptation to do your translating work with contemporary Bible or computer software on hand. What good does it do to show that you can “copy well” or move your computer mouse? I encourage you use a lexicon and grammar and find your own translating mind.
A Brief Note on Intellectual Property Rights

No audio or video recordings are allowed. Furthermore no publication (audio, video, written) or live transmission of classroom proceedings will be permitted. Any requests for such privileges must be made in writing and must receive written approval from the instructor.

A Brief Note Regarding Internet Usage

Please do not access the internet (email, apps, websites, etc.) during class. This can be extremely distracting to all parties – and quite frankly it is unbecoming to do. Exceptions may be made on occasion, but only at the instructor’s discretion.

A Final Note

It is my prayer that through this study of Galatians the Holy Spirit will guide your mind and illumine your heart, that your love will abound more and more in knowledge and deep insight, so that you may be able discern the more excellent matter and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (Phil 1:9-11). Let us come together in full humility, full of joy, crying out in prayer that our Sovereign Almighty might be pleased to reveal Himself to us in the study of His Holy Word.

Course Schedule (subject to instructor’s revision at any time)
* Course Schedule will be made available one-week before class begins