NT 639: Exegesis of James Syllabus, Spring 2012
Lecturer: Sean McDonough Email: smcdonough@gordonconwell.edu

MEETING TIME
Monday 9:15 am- 12:15 pm

TEXT BOOKS
Luke Timothy Johnson, James, Anchor Bible, □James
Peter Davids, James, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Eerdmans)
Richard Bauckham, James, New Testament Readings (Routledge)

ASSESSMENT
Greek Competency Quiz 0%
Greek Memory Quiz James 1, Greek text 10%
Exegesis Paper (due May 7) 65%
Final Exam 25%

WEEK 1 – Background, Chapter 1
WEEK 2 : Chapter 1, cntd.
Readings: Bauckham, James, in its entirety; introductions in Johnson and Davids; article: Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church", in Bauckham, ed., The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting.

WEEK 3: Discussion sections led by Goran Kojcev
READING WEEK: Continue reading in the commentaries
WEEK 4 – : Partiality and the law of love (2:1-13)□; Faith and Works (2:14-26);
WEEK 5 – : Faith and Works, Cntd. memorization quiz in class
WEEK 6 –: The tongue (3:1-12)
WEEK 7 – : True and false wisdom (3:13-18); A call to the double- minded to repent (4:1-10); Against judging one another (4:11-12)
READING WEEK – Continue reading in the commentaries

WEEK 8 –: Denunciation of merchants (4:13-17); Denunciation of landowners (5:1-6); Quiz

WEEK 9 –10: Holding out till the parousia (5:7-11); Speaking the whole truth (5:12); Prayer (5:13-18); Reclaiming those who err (5:19-20)

Readings: appropriate sections in the commentaries of Johnson and Davids; readings needed for your exegesis paper

WEEK 10 – Summary and review of the book of James

WEEK 11 – Final Exam

ABOUT THE COURSE

Martin Luther, it appears, had some trouble with having the book of James in his Bible, and many people before and since have felt the same way. For Luther, the problem was James’ insistence on works, which seemed to conflict with Luther’s emphasis on “faith alone”. For others, James’ strict moral teaching on poverty, speech, and the pursuit of holiness may seem out of keeping with current approaches to life.

But when you open your Bible, James is still there, and his message must be heard. Our goal in this course is to listen to his message and to understand how it should affect our lives, and the lives of our communities. Listening to James will involve careful attention to the language of the letter, to its literary style, and to all the other historical and theological questions that meet us when we read something from the ancient world. Who wrote James? How does his teaching relate to the teaching of Jesus? to the Judaism of his day? to the Greco-Roman world? to the rest of the bible? Answering these questions will require hard work and deep thought.

But listening is only half the job. As James himself says, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves...” In light of this we will spend a considerable amount of time reflecting on how the message of James needs to shape the life of the church today.

ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENTS

On the Exams

The Greek Competency Quiz is required of every Greek exegesis class. You must pass this quiz to remain in the class. The memorization quiz will improve your Greek by encouraging you to memorize a portion of James chapter 1 in Greek and share some of those verses on paper with the instructor. The final is designed to ensure an active engagement with the Greek text, readings, and lectures. This exam will contain a translation sections with related short-answer questions, and short-answer questions pertaining to reading and lecture material.
On the Exegesis Paper

Each student is required to produce an exegesis paper of 12-15 pages (1.5 spacing, 12 point type; appendix accepted for charts, diagrams, illustrations, etc.) based on a portion of the Greek text of James. You may choose a passage from anywhere in the book. Generally the passage should range from 6-12 verses, but there may be exceptions. This is meant to be an intensive exploration of the Greek text, and as such it should display the full range of exegetical skills developed in Interpreting the New Testament. The format should be a brief introduction followed by a verse-by-verse discussion in the style of the Harper’s New Testament Commentary series. Your interaction with the Greek text, however, should often be more detailed than in the Harper’s commentary.

NOTE: If you wish to receive papers or quizzes back, you must include your box number on them. Material without box numbers will be retained in my office.

NOTE 2: If you plagiarize, you will fail the paper and the class.