NT 640 Exegesis of First Peter
Aida Besançon Spencer

An exegetical study of the Greek text, with attention to the unique theological themes, structure, and historical context of I Peter, and its application to today.

Even though Christianity is legal in the United States, Christianity is not always understood or appreciated. I Peter addresses a similar situation. How can Christians live in a potentially antagonistic culture? It is a letter that especially deals with suffering, imagery, use of the Old Testament, roles, apologetics, spiritual gifts, and ministry.

This class will review Greek grammar, interpretation methodology, the use of Greco-Roman and Jewish references, and the application of the text to today. We will delve into the theological themes of I Peter by understanding Peter more, the historical context, and the structure and beauty of the letter. NT 502 and Greek I, II are prerequisites.

**General Goals:**
1. (cognitive knowledge) To increase an understanding of the structure and theology of the First Letter of Peter in its historical milieu as basis for application today.

2. (methodological practice) To use grammar, literary style and context, and historical references more to interpret the New Testament.

3. To increase estimation of and facility in Greek.

4. (general skill) To encourage becoming creative, original, careful scholars who employ primary source materials and who allow their conclusions to flow from a careful and accurate reading of the text.

5. (affective goal) To further an enjoyment and awe of God and of the New Testament.

This course addresses the Gordon-Conwell mission statement by:
1. Encouraging students to become more knowledgeable of the structure and theology of 1 Peter in its historical milieu and more competent in using interpretative and application skills learned in NT 502 and Greek 1 and 2 (mission goal 1);
2. Introducing students to the Christian scholarship issues in 1 Peter (goal 2);
3. Helping students mature in their character, outlook, conduct, relationships, and involvement in society by the teacher’s model, class dialogue, mentoring opportunities, and prayer (goal 4);
4. Providing resources and strategies that will lead to effective local and global ministry, missions, evangelism, and discipleship as evident in 1 Peter (goals 3, 5, 6).

**Textbooks:**
Readings will be made in:


Recommended Supplemental Materials
1 or 2 commentaries as reference.
Aida Besancon Spencer. “How to Write a N.T. Exegesis Paper.” binder


Grammatical reference books.

Nestle, Erwin, and others. Novum Testamentum Graece. 27th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche
Course Requirements:
1. Do a 2-5 pp. historical context study of I Peter (10%) due week 2 (Sept. 20, grace Sept. 24, 9 a.m. Professor’s home).
2. Do a "character" study (1 page) and outline (1 page) of I Peter (20%) due week 4 (Oct. 5, grace Oct. 8, 9 a.m. professor’s home). Optional rewritten papers 1 and 2 due Nov. 20 (noon).
3. Complete an 8-13 page exegesis paper (50%) due week 8 (Nov. 1, grace Nov. 5, 9 a.m. professor’s home). Paper must include textual criticism, word, grammar, literary, and background studies, a 1-2 page application, and a bibliography of books used. Rewritten paper due by Dec. 6. Include first draft and original cover sheet. Only papers handed in Nov. 1 are guaranteed the opportunity to redo.
4. a. Read I Peter in Greek, keeping a notebook of vocabulary and grammar not recognized, insights and questions from text (10%). Keep a list of similes and metaphors to describe God and the Christian.
b. Complete two quizzes on Greek (5%). Highest grade will be recorded. If second quiz not taken, 10% penalty. The Biblical Division requires a passing grade for exegesis classes.
5. Complete all reading and class assignments (5%).
6. Th.M. students, to elevate course: in addition, read 2 Peter in Greek and book (at least 200 pp.) from bibliography or other approved reading and hand in 1 page book review by last class day (Dec 6) (grace 12/10 9 a.m. professor’s home).

Extra Credit Assignment (for inbetween grades; required of Th.M. students):

Read 2 Peter (3 chapters) in Greek, using a word list (but NOT a verse by verse analytical lexicon such as Bible Works). Hand in list of Greek words and grammatical forms about which you were unsure - Due by last class (Dec 6).

Class Schedule

Week 1: (Sept. 13)
A. Why is I Peter worth studying?
How to do historical and character studies.

B. Review how to do exegesis paper.

Assignments for next class:
1. Do historical context study of I Peter.
2. Read Mark or John, Acts 1-6:7; 8-13:3; 15; 16:6-8; 21:8-40; Gal. 1-2; I Cor. 1-3, 9, 15. Keep notes on Peter and his spiritual development. Reread 1, 2 Peter at the end.
3. Read Acts of Peter ch. 9 (30-41); Tacitus, Annals 15, 37-47; Eusebius, Church History 2, 25.
Week 2:
(Sept. 20)  
A. Who Wrote I Peter?


Assignments:
1. Read Oppian's Halieutica III; IV. 172-241, 635-45 and skim read James Fowler, Stages of Faith, part IV.

Week 3:
(Sept. 27)
A. How did Peter Spiritually Develop? What was a fisher's life?

B. Class translation of I Peter 1:13-25.

Assignments:
1. Do a character study and outline of I Peter (keep a copy for next week in class).
2. Choose a text for final paper.
3. Choose best text for I Peter 1:22: ek katharas kardias or ek kardias alethines or ek kardias?

Week 4
(Oct. 5)  
A. How to choose the best reading? (review)

B. Class translation of I Peter 2:1-10.
C. What is the main purpose of I Peter (optional - group)

Assignments:
1. Read on temple in Old Testament (I Kings 6-8), in Mishnah Tamid and Middoth, and Josephus War 5, ch. 5. How is Jesus like a stone and Christians like the priesthood?
3. Translate I Peter 2:11-25. Continue to keep a list of similes and metaphors that describe God and Christians.
4. Write exegesis paper
5. Find at least one newspaper article and show how you would use it in an outline of a sermon taken anywhere from I Peter, chs 1-2.

Week 5
(Oct. 8-12)  
Reading Week – No Classes

Week 6
(Oct. 18)  
A. The Temple and a Royal Priesthood.

B. Class translation of I Peter 2:11-25.
Class shares potential illustrations and sermons.

**Assignments:**
1. Read *Joy through the Night*, chs 1, 3, 4,
2. Read Polycarp's martyrdom in Eusebius' *History* 4.15.
4. Read Ps. 34.
5. Read “God the Stranger” ch 4 in *The Global God*

**Week 7**  
*(Oct. 25)*  
A. Importance of Being a Stranger  

B. Class translation of I Peter 3:1-12.  
Review structure of final paper. Open time for questions.

**Assignments:**  
1. Complete writing of final paper.  
2. Read Aristotle, *Politics* 1, 2 on household management  
4. Translate I Peter 3:13-22. *(Review the optative and future participle.)*  

**Week 8**  
*(Nov. 1)*  
A. The Roles of Wives and Husbands in the Context of I Peter.

B. Sentence flow of I Peter 3:14b-15.  

**Assignments:**  

**Week 9**  
*(Nov. 8)*  
A. Apologetics and Noah "He descended into Hell"  
*(class translation of I Peter 3:13-22)*

B. Class translation of I Peter 4:1-19.  

**Assignments:**  
2. Rewritten short papers due next week

**Week 10**  
*(Nov. 12-16)*  
Reading Week - No Classes

**Week 11** *(Nov. 22)*  
No Class - Thanksgiving

**Week 12**  
*(Nov. 29)*  
A. Spiritual Gifts  
B. Quiz. Class translation of I Peter 5. What did you learn from your list of
similes and metaphors to describe God and Christians?

Assignments:
1. Find at least one newspaper article and show how you would use it in an outline of a sermon taken from your final text in 1 Peter. If you have not done so already, be prepared to share one key thought from your final paper.
2. Complete all reading and self-evaluation forms.
3. All rewritten exegesis papers (original and new draft) due by next class.

Week 13
(Dec. 6) A. Elders. The Plural Nature of Ministry.
Class shares potential illustrations and sermons.
B. Summary. Class shares key insights from papers and class. Evaluation.

Week 14 (Dec 13) Review class