NT 617: Gospel of John

Syllabus

Dr. Rollin G. Grams (rgrams@gcts.edu)
Fall Semester, 2009
Sept. 11-12; Oct. 9-10; Nov. 6-7
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary--Jacksonville

I. Course Description

This course applies students’ exegetical skills learned in Interpreting the New Testament to a study of the Greek text of John’s Gospel. The content, situation, historicity, literary character, and particularly theological message of John’s Gospel will be examined in relation to a careful exegesis of selected passages from John. The course also (inductively) introduces the student to intermediate Greek as he or she prepares translations of particular passages for each meeting of the class.

II. Course Objectives

*To hone exegetical and Greek linguistic skills, including becoming more acquainted with Greek syntax at the intermediate level.
*To study the message of John’s Gospel, particularly by attending to and interacting with Keener’s Commentary and Bauckham’s work on the Gospel and by writing an exegesis paper on a passage in the Gospel.
*To consider approaches to Johannine theology and the Gospel’s contribution to New Testament theology, particularly through lectures, reading, and class discussion.
*To engage current scholarship on the Gospel, including historical, literary, and reader oriented methods of interpretation of this Gospel.
*To explore living faithfully to the witness of John’s Gospel to Christian life by exploring its contribution to practical theology and ethics, and to address how to preach from and teach John’s Gospel.

III. Relation of Course to Curriculum

This course has prerequisites of Greek I, Greek II and Interpreting the New Testament. It meets the requirement for degrees requiring an exegesis course in the Gospels. Students who have not taken a Greek course in the Spring semester must sit a Greek competency quiz before the Fall semester begins.

IV. Textbooks


In addition to these texts, students should bring their Greek New Testament (UBS or Nestle-Aland) to class. Translation will be done from the Greek text, not from electronic versions of the New Testament such as BibleWorks (which may, otherwise, be used in class) or from their own previously written out translations. A vocabulary list may be used, but students are expected to be able to parse words and translate directly from the
Greek.

V. Course Assignments

All written work should be submitted using proper footnoting style (see the SBL Manual of Style: http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SBLHS_SS92804_Revised_ed.pdf), double spacing, Greek fonts (download BibleWorks fonts if you do not have them: http://www.bibleworks.com/fonts.html), and in hard copy. Work can be turned in at the front desk or to the instructor. Work can be mailed (on the due date) to:

Dr. R. Grams  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
14542 Choate Circle  
Charlotte, NC 28273.

Students may also turn in a self-addressed, stamped envelope to have material returned after marking.

A. For First Class Session: Reading and Quiz on First Day:

Students should prepare for the first weekend of class by the following:

1. Turn in a reading report on the first weekend of class stating that you have read through the Gospel of John and one of the other canonical Gospels.
2. There will be a brief quiz on the content of John’s Gospel the first weekend of class in which students will state in which chapter of John a given story or quotation might be found (5% of final grade). Example: ‘In which chapter do we find Jesus’ conversation with a Samaritan woman?’ The purpose of this is partly to gain familiarity with the text of John’s Gospel at a rudimentary level and partly to have the opportunity to read John more devotionally prior to class.
3. Use the workbook and follow the guidance in the Class Schedule, below. The first workbook assignments are stated in the Class Schedule for September.
4. Students should read the introduction in Volume 1 of Keener’s commentary (note: this is a lengthy introduction).
5. They should also have prepared their Translation Notebooks for the first weekend of class (quite a lot of translation due to the weekend module format).

B. Translation Notebook, Class Discussion, Preparation for Class:

1. The Translation Notebook

Translate the passages noted below into good English. For each passage translated, provide commentary as follows, using the tools noted. The purpose of this is primarily to increase your facility in Greek, including learning more Greek syntax (using Wallace). It is also to provide yourself with notes for future reference in ministry from John’s Gospel. Each passage should have the following components:

For Commentary in the Translation Notebook:
The Translation Notebook is meant to be the student’s preparation for class. Students will be asked to do some additional preparation for class, and this should also be placed in the notebook. In particular, students should include their notes on Bauckham’s book, which will be discussed in class (see Class Outline, below).

Students will be called on to translate verses in class and to discuss aspects of the commentary reading. Students will not be permitted to read a prepared translation in class or to use a computer program when translating in class. Class participation is largely a matter of translating, parsing, and commenting on the Greek passage, but it is also a matter of being involved in the class, such as in class discussions.

2. Other Class Preparation

Students are also expected to be prepared for class discussion on topics listed in the Class Outline, below. For this discussion, students should read relevant sections in the Workbook (posted on CAMS), read from the textbooks and any other relevant literature, and have some insights to share in class.

This requirement—the translation notebook, class discussion, and preparation for class--will count for 35% of the final grade.

Note: “Competence in Greek is required in all aspects of an exegesis course for a passing grade” (Catalog, page 77; see http://www.gordonconwell.edu/sites/default/files/CHA%20charlottescatalog.pdf.)

B. Exegetical Essay

The exegesis paper is to be 2,500 words (plus or minus 10%) and will be worth 60% of the final grade. Attach the provided marking sheet for exegesis to the front of the paper. The paper should be a thorough piece of research demonstrating an understanding of Johannine Studies as well as an ability to exegete a passage in John’s Gospel. For this, the student needs to demonstrate strength in reading and research, as well as in exegetical method.

For this assignment, students should refer to my Research and Writing in New Testament Studies, available on CAMS.

C. Attendance

We will meet together for class on three weekends: 11-12 September, 9-10 October, and 6-7 November. Class on
Friday nights begins sharply at 6:30 and runs to 9:30. On Saturday, class runs from 8:30 – 4:30. Class breaks are as follows: Friday nights, 15 minute break around 8:00; Saturdays, 15 minutes around 10:00 am, lunch break from 12:00 – 1:15, and two 10 minute breaks in the afternoon around 2:15 and 3:15.

Students are expected to attend class. Three hours may be missed for a legitimate reason. (If class is missed without a legitimate reason, the final grade will be dropped by 1/3 of a grade. Legitimate reasons include illness, bereavement, or circumstances beyond the student’s control.)

If class is missed for a legitimate reason, students will be asked to do additional work that reflects what the class did in the classroom. This may involve additional reading around lecture topics, but it will always involve writing up observations on the discussion topic/s that are missed.

If a student finds that he or she needs to miss more than three class periods (nine hours of the course) for any reason or reasons whatsoever, he or she should drop the course.

VI. Course Logistics

A. Communication With the Class and Professor

Communication with others in the class and about the class will take place on CAMS. Individual communication can take place by e-mail (see above for mine), which is far better than trying to reach me by telephone. Students may set up individual appointments with me, and I will usually be available for drop in visits the afternoon prior to our evening class.

B. Due Dates:

1. Class Preparation: due by class time each week.
2. Exegetical Essay: 7 December (date of mailing)

C. Marking

Marking criteria are listed in my Research and Writing for New Testament Studies. Plagiarism is also discussed in the Handbook and will result in an automatic ‘F’ for the course (and be referred to the seminary’s judicial committee as per the Student Handbook).

VII. Course Outline and Format

The course will work through John’s Gospel with attention to particular passages. Students are to prepare translations in bold as noted above. Classes will include lectures and discussions. Discussion will be based on reading the textbooks and the workbook—be sure to read and be prepared to discuss in class. Class preparation also includes weekly translation work and exegesis (including reading the commentary) of particular passages. Students should keep up with the dates and the work noted in this outline as it involves preparation for classes. Some changes may be made to this outline as the course progresses, and any such changes will be noted clearly in class beforehand.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates and Topics (Lectures and Discussions)</th>
<th>Translation Passages and Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September: Introduction; Sources and the Johannine Community</td>
<td>Jn. 1.1-18 (Prepare for first class meeting)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read Keener’s Introduction (for first class meeting)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Structure of John’s Gospel; Miracles in the Gospels</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Historical and Literary Features in John’s Gospel; Jesus’ Discourse with Nicodemus</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Christology in John’s Gospel</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>John and the Synoptics; Questions of Divine Predestination in John’s Gospel</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of Bauckham</strong></td>
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<td>The Passion of Jesus</td>
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<td>7 December</td>
<td><strong>Exegesis Paper Due</strong> (date of mailing)</td>
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**VIII. Bibliography:**

The commentary for this course covers up to date and significant bibliographical material for the course. Key resources in Johannine studies will be identified in class during lectures.