I. Course Description

This course is a directed exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews. Emphasis is given to the historical purposes, theological content and practical application of its teachings.

II. Objectives

Consistent with the model of the Book of Hebrews which balances doctrinal teaching by alternating discourse with practical warning passages which conclude with specific exhortations, two main objectives exist in this course. Each primary objective has supporting objectives listed below.

1. To be able to interpret any specific passage of the Book of Hebrews in light of two important contexts---the literary nature of the Bible itself and of its historical/cultural setting.
   a) To understand thoroughly the literary nature of the Book of Hebrews (as an epistolary treatise which resembles a sermon) and its literary structure (natural outline) as a means of discerning how each chapter or sub-section fits the whole argument of the book.
   b) To familiarize oneself with the Old Testament background of Hebrews since the author assumes knowledge of Leviticus and the Levitical offerings and quotes the Old Testament more than any other New Testament writer.
   c) To gain understanding of Roman and Jewish culture of the 1st century in order to discuss issues of date, authorship and destination for the epistle to the Hebrews.

2. To apply the theological doctrines of Hebrews in a valid manner to life situations in the 21st century.
   a) To seek to derive timeless theological principles from the Book of Hebrews which are true to the original context and yet relevant to our modern society.
   b) To appropriate prayerfully the concepts of rest, the strong encouragement of hope and an unconquerable faith in Christ so as to persevere in the Christian life.
   c) To strive to communicate and instill these timeless principles and concepts into the hearts, minds, and lives of others.

III. Requirements

A. Reading and related work


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1 This syllabus [Syllabus date: 7-27-2009] is tentative and may be changed.
2 Contact Information for Dr. Greg W. Parsons: E-mail: gwpbmats@juno.com or gparsons@bmats.edu. Office phone: 903-586-2501, ext. 224.
according to the class schedule below. Both books must be read before the class sessions (~by October 1) and documented/dated on a one or two-page log. Furthermore using the results of these readings, fill in the blanks of the hand-out lectures from Dr. Parsons. A hard copy of these lectures will be made available to students on or before Aug. 31.

3) In addition each student will read materials from Dr. David Allen made available by your instructor (Greg Parsons), possibly by the middle or end of July (in hard copy and/or electronic format). Dr. Allen is working on two books to be published by B&H Publishers. These materials of Dr. Allen as well as his Paschal class Lectures (Oct. 6, 8) must summarized and interacted with.

4) The primary textbook is the N.T. book of Hebrews. Read all 13 chapters of Hebrews (preferably at one sitting or at least chaps. 1-8 at one time and then 9-13) from a modern version such as NIV, NASB, HCSB, or NKJV). This must be done twice in two different versions. All reading must be documented and dated on a one-page log.

B. Term paper and report

Each Master’s student is responsible for a 10-to-15 page (double-spaced) typewritten paper consisting of an exegetical summary of some passage in Hebrews followed by an expository sermon or lesson. Utilizing the two textbooks and at least three other commentaries, the student must summarize the passage and trace the argument (i.e., the flow of thought) in light of the whole Book of Hebrews and its historical/cultural context. This should include an exegetical outline (summarizing in complete sentences the exact thought of the Bible text) with a brief commentary on each verse which expresses your research into the text. Then the sermonic portion of the paper should bring out the biblical teaching and timeless principles which find valid application for today. Be sure to document your research by author's last name and the page number placed within parentheses in the text (or by footnotes if you prefer) with a bibliography at the end. In the last part of the paper be sure to discuss how the doctrine (or theology) of the text impacts our modern society. (a) Don’t forget to follow the suggested guidelines for interpreting New Testament epistles (or other literary forms) (b) Be sure the expository sermon or lesson is built on the text and does not impose something which is not in the text--either explicitly or implicitly.

The term paper will be due on by ~Nov. 20??

Here is the basic process for studying your passage and doing the paper:

I. Study
   A. Read the passage (normally about 10 to 15 verses) carefully, if possible in several different English versions (note esp. the NASB (esp. NASU1995); NIV; and HCSB as well as the TNIV, ESV (or NRSV). Less helpful are the NKJV or KJV.
   B. Look at the context: what is going on before and after the passage?
   C. Look at the structure of the passage to find the development of its argument.

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4 Also see Ross, ibid., especially pp. 46-48 for the concept of an expository outline and timeless principles. Furthermore consult Walter Kaiser’s Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) especially chapter 7 for tips on seeking to glean timeless principles from the text.

D. Look at words and phrases which may be hard to understand.
E. Do the different English translations suggest any places where there might be difficulty about the meaning?
F. Use an English (or Greek) concordance (see bibliography below) to look up any especially interesting or difficult words.

II. Learn from Others
A. Use a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia to look up any especially interesting or difficult concepts.
B. Read at least four commentaries on the passage (see bibliography below) to see what other scholars think about it.

III. Decide
Make up your own mind about what the passage is saying. Seek to combine respect for others who have studied the passage with your own independent judgment.

IV. Write
A. On the basis of the notes you have taken, write an initial draft. Write as well as you can, paying attention to spelling, grammar, and style. Be sure to include reference to any source you have used. You may cite the source in the text simply with a reference to author's last name and page number in parenthesis in the text.
B. Include an introduction of a paragraph or so in which you situate the passage in its context and deal with any necessary preliminary matters.
C. The body of the paper should contain a verse-by-verse explanation of what you think the passage means. Include comments on specific words and phrases; but don't get lost in the “forest” by spending all your time on the “trees”; make sure you help the reader see how the text is moving along, commenting on the transitions between verses and so on. As you comment on the text, be sure to indicate other views of significant points that you have uncovered in your study. Also try to explain why you have chosen the view you have and have rejected other views.
D. Include a conclusion of a page to a page and a half. The conclusion should briefly summarize what you think the key idea of the passage is and spell out its significance for 1) your thinking about the issue or about the faith in general; and 2) what action you may need to take as a result of your study.
E. A bibliography of all the books and articles you consulted should conclude the paper.
F. Rewrite the initial draft to correct errors in grammar or style, improve the flow of the argument, and correct the substance.

Summary and review of Allen’s materials (a summary and interaction/critique of all material by Dr. David L. Allen). This material includes at least 1) his article “The Authorship of Hebrews: The Case for Luke.” Faith and Mission 18.2 (Spring 2001):27-40. [The student should also read this whole #2 issue: pp. 3-69 on “Authorship of Hebrews” which gives views by other authors.] 2) Introduction to Hebrews (pre-publication excerpt from New American Commentary—pre-publication copyrighted by B&H Publishing) which will be made available by an electronic pdf file (not to be reproduced) online: see www.bmats.edu/syllabi/PARSONS/AllenHebNACintro.pdf. 3) ?Perhaps other portions of NAC commentary as a pdf file through your professor. At least Allen’s article in the above mentioned journal issue (pp. 27-40) and the Introd. to Hebrews from NAC must be read before class (a signed statement is needed).

The completed review is due ~Oct. 30 and should consist of about 6 to 10 single-spaced pages (see 2 aspects or parts mentioned below on syllabus—p.4).
C. Exam
Only one exam will be given at the end of the semester as recorded on the class schedule below. ~Dec. 7 to 10. The nature of this test will be explained later. This exam will probably be either a take-home exam or through a proctor.

E. Approximate grading guidelines (for Master’s students)
Final Exam—25%; Term paper—25%; Summary & review of Allen—25%; Reading of 2 textbooks and of Hebrews [twice](documented on a summary log--dated) & filling in hand-outs from Parsons--20%; and class attendance (including possible participation)--5%.

IV. Class Schedule (2009) [Master’s]
Oct. 5: Mon. Due date for reading log of two textbooks plus fill-in blank assignments (GWP structure, etc)

Oct. 13: Tues. 9:30a.m. Paschal Lecture #1: Dr. David Allen
10:45 to 11:45 a.m. Orientation to course. Preliminary introduction to Hebrews? Assignment: Need to have signed statement of having read:
(1) all 13 chapters of Hebrews (preferably at one sitting or at least chaps. 1-8 at one time and then 9-13) from a modern version such as NIV, NASB, HCSB, or NKJV;
(3) “Introduction to Hebrews” from New American Commentary (pdf file found under BMATS website syllabus subset):1-114.
3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Paschal Lecture #2 Dr. David Allen
4:15 to 5:15 p.m. Brief introduction to Book of Hebrews (structure, purpose, authorship, date and geographical provenance). Possibly brief guidelines for interpreting the genre of the epistle??

Oct. 14 Wed. ~8:15 to 12 noon. Overview of Hebrews part I: ~1-7 (by Dr. Greg W. Parsons)
~12:45 to 6pm. Overview of Hebrews part II: ~8-13 (G.W. Parsons)

Oct. 15 Thurs. 9:30a.m. Paschal Lecture #3: Dr. David Allen
3:00 p.m. Possible Lecture #4??
~4:15 to 5:15: ??Possible “Debriefing” and transitional orientation to rest of course. Guidelines for final exam.

~Oct. 30: *Due date for Summary/review of Dr. Allen’s materials (including whole issue of Faith and Mission as a context for his view on Lukan authorship)—2 parts
*1) Summary of data on authorship of Hebrews with critical interaction esp. on Paul and Luke as possible authors. Be sure to give your view and why.
*2) Summary of other data by Allen on Introduction to Hebrews (with interaction, possibly from Guthrie and Hughes via Parsons’ notes)

*Nov. 20? Term paper due (be sure to follow instructions above)

Dec. 6-8. FINAL EXAM (To be “take home” exam or through a proctor)
V. Selected Bibliography

Concordances and Word-study tools
The library reference section will have a selection of English-based concordances. The best to use are those that are keyed to Greek words, such as Strong's numbers (helpful mainly for KJV, etc.):


*Keyed to Strong's concordance.*


Also see below for online resources of this type.

(*Or even better Goodrich-Kohlenberger numbers often related to NIV such as


Verbrugge, Verlyn D. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004);

Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias
These are particularly useful for looking up concepts, such as Sacrifice, Day of Atonement, Covenant, etc. Most useful for this class is *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: IVP, 1997).

Also very helpful, since Hebrews depends so much on OT and Jewish ideas, is *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000)

For issues in Biblical theology (including an article on Hebrews), see *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and B. Rosner (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000) and


Academic Commentaries (providing a wealth of information with comments on the Greek)


Lane, William L. *Hebrews 1-8 and Hebrews 9-13*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word, 1991. One of the most comprehensive modern commentaries on Hebrews. Though technical, also has some material understandable to average Bible student.


*Expositional Commentaries*


*Special studies*


*Online Resources*

http://www.textweek.com/epistlesrevelation/hebrews.htm

http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/hebrews.php  excellent list of journal resources and basic books

http://www.studylight.org/lex/  Heb and Greek lexicons keyed to Strong’s # and other sources

http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk  Greek lexicon using an English word, Greek word or Strong’s Number

http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/view.cgi?number=3309  Interlinear study bible; example of  Strong# for *merinao* (verb)