I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to better understand the (often under-appreciated) latter section of the canon. That understanding, however, requires not only growing in *knowledge* but also and even preeminently growing in wisdom, maturity, and love for God. Additionally we want to see how this section of God's word equips us to be better shepherds of those that God has put in our care, better ministers and servants of his Word.

Due to the brevity of our time together we will have to proceed selectively. Rather than working linearly through the entirety of each book we will highlight important themes and passages, attempting to understand those themes in the context of their place in redemptive history. While I hope to focus in some detail on important particulars, the choice of these particulars will be determined by a broader concern: to see how these books augment, magnify, and deepen our understanding of God's plan for redemption, a redemption that is cosmic in scope and yet intimately personal and practical.

In short, this section of our Bible is often mysterious and confusing to us, and this is perhaps because we do not have a big enough Gospel. Thus we are involved in a beautiful spiral: studying the General Epistles and Revelation expands our understanding of the Gospel, and that understanding in turn helps us to better appreciate and appropriate these wonderful and encouraging books. And all this that we might draw nearer to our Great High Priest who reigns even now in heaven!

B. DATES AND TIMES. Class will be held from 9-5 on June 8-10. Your final exam is due June 24. Your term paper is due July 15.

C. INSTRUCTOR

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address: 1833 Hilltop Road, Jenkintown PA 19046
My blog: [http://nerdlets.org](http://nerdlets.org)

D. COURSE WEBSITE

[http://drop.io/rtsepiestlstorevelation](http://drop.io/rtsepiestlstorevelation) (all readings and other materials available here)
password: dc

II. REQUIRED LECTURES

In addition to attending the in-class lectures (June 8-10), in which we will cover Hebrews, James, Jude, 1-2 Peter, and bits of the Johannine material, you will also be required to listen to 12 hours of lecture material outside of class. This material will focus on Revelation and 1-3 John. Treat it as if it were standard lectures, and therefore “fair game” on the final. A list of the required material, and links to all relevant files, will be posted on the course website as soon as they are available.
III. REQUIRED READING

All the following readings except Carson and both Bauckham books are available on the course website (http://drop.io/rtseptistorevelation). I suggest you start with the “special introduction” readings (Jobes on 1 Peter, Lane on Hebrews, Carson on everything else), particularly if you are less familiar with a particular book. The other (more interesting!) readings are designed to draw out specific issues or themes that we will develop in class.

A. BIBLE READING. Read Hebrews through Revelation at least once (in English)

B. SPECIAL INTRODUCTION


C. HEBREWS


D. JAMES


E. 1 PETER, 2 PETER, JUDE


F. REVELATION, JOHANNINE EPISTLES


IV. ASSESSMENT
Your final grade will be determined by three factors: (1) your completion of the required reading, (2) a 10-15 exegetical paper on a text of your choosing, (3) a two-question final exam.

A. READING (20%)
On the day you take the final exam you will also be required to fill out a form stating the percentage of reading that you completed. Each of your required reading assignments will be listed and you will be required to estimate, on your honor, the percentage of each you completed. I consider a book “read” if you have made every effort to understand its main point and the various justifications offered for that point. This usually requires reading and comprehending each paragraph, but not necessarily each word or sentence. In short: skimming is permissible in certain cases, but not skipping.

B. PAPER (40%)
1. OVERVIEW
You are required to write a 10-15 (double-spaced) page exegetical research paper on a text of your choosing. You can choose any text in the General Epistles or Revelation. This paper is due 5 weeks after the last day of class (Wed. July 15) and should be submitted to me by email.

2. TEXT SELECTION
Text selection can make or break an exegetical paper, so choose your text carefully. Your text needs to be short enough that you can do it justice in the space of 10-15 pages, but long enough that it can stand on its own and has its own integrity. Aim for about a paragraph, maybe two if necessary. It is not always easy to determine where your paragraph begins and ends—different English translations and Biblical commentaries divide the text differently (there are no paragraphs in the “original,” at least not as we might consider them), so you will need to do a little research before coming to a final decision. I suggest you pick a section of Scripture (a verse or two) that seems interesting to you, then do a little research on those verses to determine the beginning and ending of the paragraph in which they occur. That final paragraph (or two) should be the center-point of your paper.

3. HOW TO WRITE AN EXEGETICAL PAPER
An exegetical paper, unlike a theological or thematic one, is centered upon one particular pericope of Scripture (a paragraph or two). That text is the heart of your paper, and your goal should be to explain what that text means in both its immediate and canonical context.

Once you have picked a text that interests you (see above), begin your research by reading your text (and its surrounding context) over and over again. Go verse by verse and ask yourself tons of questions (and write them all down). No question is too simple (or too complex)! Sometimes the key to a text is found in the questions that seem “too obvious.” Make sure at least one of these questions is “What is the point?” In fact, several of your questions should be variations on that all-important idea. Why does Peter say it that way? Why does John include this in his argument? Why does the author of Hebrews go there? These are all purpose questions, and they are the most important ones to ask.

Now start answering your questions. Don't pick up a book or a commentary quite yet. Answer your questions first by prayerfully and humbly looking at the text itself. You will need to look at the immediate context of your passage. How does it fit into the flow of the book as a whole? How does it further the author's main point? Outline your text, and outline the book in which it occurs. These types of activities help you view the text as a small peace of a larger whole.

Once you starting exploring your text a little more a “main point” should begin to coalesce in your mind. Try to write down that main point in a sentence or so. Then broaden your horizons. What is the main point of this section of the book? What is the main point of the book as a whole?
Only after you have at least preliminary answers to these questions are you ready to crack open a commentary. Start researching your passage in reliable commentaries and articles (the *Word* series of commentaries usually have excellent bibliographies you can consult). In the course of your research you will be able to refine and develop (or reject) the ideas you have already come to on your own.

Now it's time to start writing. Sketch up a preliminary outline. Your organization will of course be dependent on your passage and the main point you want to make, but I suggest you start narrow and work your way out. After a brief introduction, start by explaining the immediate concerns of the text you picked. Are there any translation issues to note? Any strange words? Describe the flow of the argument and tell us the main point being made. Next, describe how your passage fits into the broader context of the book—start with the immediate context and then increasingly “zoom out” until the whole book is in view. As a final concern, show how your passage deepens our understanding of the Bible as a whole, how it fits into the Gospel of our redemption. Along the way, or at the end, you can feel more than free to make some “practical applications.”

4. **Greek Requirement**

If you have taken Greek please use it in your paper. Provide your own translation of the passage that you picked and justify that translation when appropriate. Use Greek when appropriate throughout. You do not need to be detailed here, but if you know Greek use it!

5. **Format**

Your paper should be double spaced with 1-inch margins. Use Times New Roman or equivalent font, 12pt. Cite all your sources following the guidelines laid out in the *SBL Handbook*, or the *Chicago Manual of Style* (I'm fine with either the “standard” method or the newer author-date format) You might want to considering using bibliography software, such as the free Zotero plugin for Firefox ([http://nerdlets.org/2008/11/20/setting-up-zotero-link-by-link/](http://nerdlets.org/2008/11/20/setting-up-zotero-link-by-link/)) to make this process easier. Include a bibliography with all the works you cited in your paper as described in the aforementioned guides.

C. **Final**

The final exam will be posted online on the last day of class. It will consist of two essay questions. The first question will be a “special introduction” question over one of the books we have covered. Some examples include “Discuss the authorship of 2 Peter” or “How would you describe the genre and main point of the Epistle to the Hebrews.” The second question will be more general, allowing you to “show off” by integrating your readings with the material we have covered in class in a more open-ended kind of way. Examples here include questions like “How does this section of the canon address Christian suffering?” or “How might you use what you have learned in class to counsel someone who constantly doubts their salvation?:

The exam will be due 2 weeks after the last day of class (Wed. June 24). You may download the exam at any time but please do not look at it until you are ready to complete the exam in one 2-hour sitting. Include your name, email address, and your start and completion times on the exam.

You may use an English or Greek bible during the exam, but no other helps are permitted.

D. **Grading Scale**

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Etc.

V. **Outline**

An outline of lecture material will be provided on the first day of class to assist you in studying. I will also provide slides of my lecture material as we proceed in class. An extended bibliography will also be provided.