

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



HOUSTON

Hebrews-Revelation (05NT522/01)

Spring 2019

Feb 1-2

Mar 1-2

Apr 5-6

May 3-4

Friday classes meet from 6:30pm to 9:30pm
Saturday classes meet from 8:00am to 3:00pm.

Dr. Ben C. Dunson

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: bdunson@rts.edu

Phone: 214.295.8599

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the General Epistles and Revelation that includes the history, setting, theme, purpose, and message of each book.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To explore, and be able to articulate, reading strategies for approaching Hebrews, the General Epistles and the Book of Revelation that are sensitive to the unique genre and content of each letter.
2. To introduce students to central theological themes in these letters.
3. To develop skills in faithful interpretation through in-depth study of selected passages in these letters. We could spend years studying each of these books, so we will have to be selective.
4. To introduce students to the historical and cultural context of these letters.
5. To deepen students' understanding of how these letters contribute to our overall understanding of biblical teaching and how they all must be understood in light of the finished redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. The Bible: Hebrews to Revelation (twice). Any translation is acceptable, as long as it is a translation and not a paraphrase (such as The Message). I use the ESV and will normally read from this version in class.
2. Michael Kruger (ed.). *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016 (chs. 19-25, appendix D).
3. Geerhardus Vos. *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1956.
4. Brandon D. Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude*. Phillipsburg: P & R, 2015.
5. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: All readings are to be completed **prior** to the lecture period in which they are listed on the schedule below.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. **Attendance:** Attendance is expected at every class.
2. **Readings:** All assigned readings should be read **before** the class date listed on the schedule handed out at the beginning of the semester.
3. Bring a bible to each class.
4. Laptops (and iPads, iPhones, etc.) are **NOT** allowed in this course. Multitasking simply doesn't work. It prevents you from learning as well as you can.

Banning laptops, however, is not just about you and your learning, but about your neighbor and his or her learning: if we are honest many (most?) of us simply do not have the self-control to sit for 3 hours without checking email, Facebook, texts, etc. One little check won't hurt, right? But then we actually do this more than we realize, and when we are all together in one room doing this it becomes very distracting for your fellow students and for your professor (the same goes for checking iPhones under the table).

One objection to this is that having detailed, easily searchable, notes will be useful for your future ministry. I completely agree. That is why you should do what educational researchers are suggesting more and more (and which I know from personal experience works very well): when you are listening to a lecture write down that which is most important; focus on the main thoughts being conveyed. Do not attempt to transcribe what is said verbatim like a court stenographer. By focusing on the main ideas, main biblical texts, etc., *you are already engaged in the process of learning*, which is not the case when you simply spend all of your energy copying every word down. Then, either throughout the semester, or as you prepare for exams, type your notes on a computer. Then condense them in a separate file for use in studying (and then perhaps consider condensing them again!). Each time you take your notes and rewrite them or condense them you are processing the material in a new way, and *this helps you learn it*. And then you will have searchable notes to refer to in the future as well.

If you are interested, these articles give you more of a feel for why I am doing this:

- <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html?mwrsm=Facebook&referrer=https://t.co/JEkwelyf89?amp=1>
- <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>
- <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/august24/multitask-research-study->

[082409.html](#)

If you are still not convinced, then you can blame Kevin DeYoung:

- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/why-im-not-allowing-laptops-and-tablets-in-my-seminary-class/>
5. As a courtesy, please do not tweet, or otherwise post, comments made by the professor or other students without asking permission first.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

1. Textbook and biblical readings (10%)
 - a. You will be required to certify on your honor (on your final exam) that you have read all of the assigned reading material (including reading Heb-Rev twice in English translations [unless you want to read it in Greek!]). I will list each reading separately so you can estimate what percentage you completed. Reading means that you make every effort to understand the main points and reasons given for those points. This normally will require you to read and comprehend every paragraph, although not necessarily every word in every sentence. Skimming while seeking to understand the content is acceptable, but simply passing your eyes over words, sentences, paragraphs, pages, etc., is not.
 - b. I will hand out a reading schedule on the first day of class (or email it prior to our first class). If you want to get a head start begin reading the Kruger and Vos books.
2. Outlines of Biblical Books (10%)
 - a. One outline for each biblical book. These outlines must be 2-3 pages double-spaced for Hebrews and Revelation, and approximately 1 page for the rest of the books. Outlines should begin with Roman numerals (I, II, etc.) and then move to a, b, etc. If you need a third level of indentation use i, ii, etc. Try not to indent excessively. You may not copy or base your outline on any external source (study Bible notes, commentaries, etc.). This must be based *solely* on your own reading and summarizing of the biblical books.
3. Exegetical Assignment (35%)
 - a. A handout will be provided at the beginning of the semester explaining the details of this assignment. The basic idea is this: you will choose a self-contained passage from Hebrews to Revelation and will provide a series of explanatory observations on the text. The goal of this assignment is to aid you in careful exegetical work in preparation for sermons.
4. Final Exam (45%)
 - a. This exam will consist of several essay questions of varying lengths (answers will range from a single paragraph to 1-2 pages). The first two questions will be about issues discussed in the section “Background Issues” in each chapter of the Kruger volume. Examples would include questions such as “Discuss the various arguments about the authorship of Hebrews,” or “Discuss the various arguments about when Revelation was written.” We will not discuss this “special introduction” material extensively in class, so it is very important that you study the Kruger material carefully. The remaining questions will be on exegetical issues or theological themes, and will be based primarily on the lecture material. Examples would include questions such as “How should we make sense of the warnings found in Hebrews?” or “In 2 Peter, what does it mean that believers are “partakers of the divine nature” (1:4)?”
 - b. You will take the final exam in a single 3-hour sitting at a date to be specified according to your campus. You may use an English or Greek bible (without

any study helps, including concordances, study notes, etc.) during the exam, but no other helps are allowed.