

#217 General Epistles
Western Reformed Seminary
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Fall 2023

COURSE INFORMATION

Course description

Special introduction to the epistles of Peter, James, and Jude, and the Epistle to the Hebrews; outline and general teaching of each book.

Course objectives

In this class you will become familiar with the special introduction of each general epistle, and be able to defend the text's statements regarding introductory matters against intelligent opposition. You will know a general outline of each book, and will have read a commentary and have discussed in class the text of each book. You also will have completed a major assignment involving translation, sermon or lesson preparation, or detailed research in the general epistles.

Course outcomes

By successfully completing this course you should be able to do the following:

- Intelligently discuss the authorship and date of each of the General Epistles, and defend your view against intelligent opposition, especially against liberal criticism.
- Teach or preach through any of these epistles.
- Know and expound the main themes of these books.
- Intelligently describe the various major interpretations of difficult passages in these books.
- Pass questions about these books in a licensure or ordination exam in English Bible.
- Have a strong sense of the spiritual significance of these books.
- Gain spiritual strength and resolve to live by faith in God's promises and to hope in his promises.

Reading assignments

The following books are to be read by the dates indicated on the Course Schedule:

First Reading Assignment

- Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude, in an English translation
- Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, ch. 18-22; OR D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.), ch. 19-22, 24
- Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James (TNTC)*
- Wayne A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter (TNTC)*
- Michael Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude (TNTC)*

Second Reading Assignment

- Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews (TNTC)*

Examinations

There will be two examinations over the printed notes to the course. The questions will be selected from the Study Questions provided. The Midterm Examination will cover the questions on James, Jude, and 1-2 Peter. The Final Examination will cover the questions on the book of Hebrews.

Major assignment

In addition to the required reading, you will select one major assignment. Select from the following four possibilities:

- 1) Translate the following portions from Greek to English, using the format described in class:

James 1:19-27

2:14-26

Jude 5-16

1 Peter 3:17-22

5:1-11

2 Peter 1:16-21

Hebrews 1:1-14

2:14-18

4:14-16

5:7 - 6:8

7:1-10

10:19-31
11:39 - 12:6
13:4-14

- 2) Prepare 8 sermon outlines or Bible lesson outlines from one or more of the general epistles.
- 3) Prepare a research paper of about 3,000 words on an interesting or controversial passage in the general epistles. Use the format specified in *The SBL Handbook of Style*.
- 4) Conduct at least 40 hours of concentrated research on a particular aspect or passage of the general epistles. Document the time spent, and write a brief report explaining the procedures and results of your investigation.

Grading

- Attendance and participation 10%
- Required reading 20%
- Major assignment 20%
- Midterm examination 25%
- Final examination 25%

Course schedule

Assignments are due on the dates indicated.

Sept.	6	Introduction to the course
	13	
	20	(G. W. Presbytery meeting – no class)
	27	
Oct.	4	
	11	
	18	Midterm Examination
	25	First Reading Assignment Due
Nov.	1	

8
15 Major Assignment Due
22
29
Dec. 6 Second Reading Assignment Due
13 Final Examination