

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO at MTSO

2022 Summer Intensive

COS 521—Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

August 8–11 and 15–18, meeting on Zoom 9:00-10:45 AM Eastern each day

Professor: Mark Allan Powell

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Course Description

This course focuses on the content and context of these writings, and the theological emphases of their writers. In addition to Acts and Revelation, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, James, and 1 John will receive special attention.

Goals

Students will be able to

- Distinguish these genres of biblical literature, and understand the major theological themes in these writings.
- Faithfully exegete these forms of biblical literature.
- Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.
- Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

Texts:

- Mark Allan Powell. *Introducing the New Testament*. Second edition. Baker Academic, 2018.
- Jouette Bassler, *Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts* (Westminster John Knox, 2006).

Also recommended by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry:

- Warren Carter and Amy-Jill Levine. *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*. Abingdon, 2013.

Recommended Supplementary Texts:

- An English New Testament. NRSV, NIV, or ESV are recommended translations. Paraphrases (e.g. *The Message*) are not appropriate for academic study.

Requirements

- **Attendance** at all Zoom class sessions is required.
- Students are to do all **required reading** and complete two **take-home/open book exams** based on that material. Note that the reading is to be done *prior to the start of each week's classes* and the exams are also to be submitted electronically prior to those classes.

Note that the answers to all of the questions on these exams may be found in the reading material from Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*. Further, copies of the exams are available at Populi under “Documents” so that you can review the questions and look for the answers before taking each exam electronically. You may also re-take each exam one time—noting what you missed the first time and trying a different response.

Exam due dates:

Exam One – covering Powell 10–14

- Sun Aug 7 – first take submitted by 9:00 PM
- Fri Aug 12 – second take submitted by 9:00 PM

Exam Two – covering Powell 24, 25, 28, and 30

- Sun Aug 14 – first take submitted by 9:00 PM
- Fri Aug 19 – second take submitted by 9:00 PM

- Students are to complete **two major written assignments** of 5–7 pages each (see below). Be certain that you complete these assignments in a manner that complies with the attached statement of the Course of Study School of Ohio regarding “Academic Honor.”
- Students are to **participate in six Populi discussions** (see “Summary of Populi Discussions” below). These involve posting comments appropriate to the discussion prompt and then responding to other people’s postings or replying to their responses. The discussions are set to take place on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoons and evenings (between 11:00 AM and 9:00 PM)..

Evaluation

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Exams 1	10%
Exams 2	10%
Class participation (via Zoom and on Populi)	40%

CLASS SCHEDULE – Week One

Prior to the First Week of Class

- Read Powell chapters 10–14
- Read Bassler
- Complete first take on Exam 1 (may be re-taken once prior to Fri Aug 12 at 9:00 PM)

Monday, August 8 Book of Acts

Reading Material: Powell chapter 10

Today's Populi Discussion:

Discussion of Written Assignment # 1 – option 1 (on the Book of Acts)

Tuesday, August 9 New Testament Epistles & Paul the Letter Writer

Reading Material: Powell chapters 11 and 12
Bassler *Navigating Paul*

Today's Populi Discussion:

Discussion of Written Assignment # 1 – option 2 (on authorship of Pauline letters)

Wednesday, August 10 Romans

Reading Material: Powell chapter 13

Today's Populi Discussion:

Questions Parishioners Might Have Regarding a passage from Romans or 1 Corinthians

Thursday, August 11 1 Corinthians

Reading Material: Powell chapter 14

Written Assignment # 2 is due today by 9:00 PM.

CLASS SCHEDULE – Week Two

Prior to the Second Week of Class

- Read Powell chapters 24, 25, 28, 30
- Complete first take on Exam 2 (may be re-taken once prior to Fri Aug 19)

Monday, August 15 Hebrews

Reading Material: Powell chapters 24

Today's Populi Discussion:

Discussion of Written Assignment # 2 – option 1 (on Hebrews and Jewish relations)

Tuesday, August 16 James

Reading Material: Powell chapters 25

Today's Populi Discussion:

Discussion of Written Assignment # 2 – option 2 (on James and wealth & poverty)

Wednesday, August 17 Johannine Letters

Reading Material: Powell chapter 28

Today's Populi Discussion:

Questions Parishioners Might Have Regarding a passage from the book of Revelation or associated themes (the Second Coming, the Final Judgment, Life after Death, etc.)

Thursday, August 18 Revelation

Reading Material: Powell chapter 30

Written Assignment # 2 is due today by 9:00 PM.

Written Assignment One

This is to be submitted electronically by 9:00 PM on Thursday, August 11.

Length: 5-7 pages, double-spaced (Times New Roman 12-point, one-inch margins)

Address one of the following topics in a way that demonstrates awareness of the reading assignments for this class period *and* pastoral sensitivity to the needs of Christian people in contemporary context.

1. A parishioner says to you: “I have been reading the book of Acts and it seems like everyone was more faithful to God back then and that God used to work miracles for people all the time. Also in 1 Corinthians, everyday Christians spoke in tongues and prophesied and worked miracles. What I want to know is, why isn’t the Methodist church more like that today? Are we missing out?”

Explain how you might respond to this concern, taking into account what Powell and Bassler say about the book of Acts and about 1 Corinthians 12—14. Draw upon your theological training to discuss the place of charismatic and/or supernatural manifestations of the Spirit in Christian communities. You may feel free to draw upon your own experiences and to consider the role of “experience” ascribed to divine revelation in the Wesleyan quadrilateral (i.e., as one mode of revelation along with scripture, tradition, and reason). Why *isn’t* the Methodist church today more like the church in the book of Acts (or in Corinth)—and should it be?

2. A parishioner says to you: “I was preparing a Bible study on the book of Ephesians and I used one of the commentaries in the church library. The Bible clearly says that Ephesians is a letter written by Paul, but the commentary published by our church publishing house says that Paul did not write this letter. It bothers me that these scholars don’t believe what the Bible says and that our church publishes books by them all the same.”

Explain how you might respond to such a concern, taking into account what Powell and Bassler say about “pseudepigraphy” and the question of authorship of NT letters (not just Ephesians). Why do some scholars question the traditional ascriptions of authorship, even when they are offered in the biblical books themselves? How do they justify questioning what the biblical text says about authorship with regard for scripture as divinely inspired writings? And what is really at stake in these discussions?

Written Assignment Two

This is to be submitted electronically by 9:00 PM on Thursday, August 18.

Length: 5-7 pages, double-spaced (Times New Roman 12-point, one-inch margins)

Address one of the following topics in a way that demonstrates awareness of the reading assignments for this class period *and* pastoral sensitivity to the needs of Christian people in contemporary context.

1. A central concern of the Letter to the Hebrews is to establish Christianity as *a better religion* than Judaism. But we now live in a world that encourages us to respect the religious beliefs of other people—not to disparage them. Religious co-operation is usually preferred to religious competition.

So . . . is the message of Hebrews still relevant? If not, how do you suggest we deal with such passages in the Bible? Or, if yes, how do you suggest we communicate such a message in a meaningful and appropriate manner?

Be sure to interact with the text of the Bible and with the readings for this class? You might consider such questions as these: a) is the faith of Christians more pleasing to God than the faith of Jews? b) is Judaism a “false religion”? c) have Christians replaced Jews as the “chosen people of God”? d) should we actively try to convert Jews to make them Christians?

2. The letter of James not only expresses concern for the poor but also conveys harsh condemnations of the wealthy. But we now live in a nation that is one of the wealthiest countries in the world—even poor people in America today have greater access to life’s necessities than was common in the world of the New Testament. Even poor people have access to comforts and pleasures that the wealthiest people in the New Testament world would have regarded as luxurious.

So . . . how might you teach or preach the message of James in a middle-class American congregation today? or how might you teach or preach that message in a lower-class setting? Would you teach and preach the message differently in one setting than in another—why or why not?

Be sure to interact with the text of the Bible and with the readings for this class? You might consider such questions as these: a) is it sinful to be rich? b) do poor people tend to have greater faith than the wealthy? c) do riches inevitably involve a “friendship with the world” that distracts people from the way of God; d) how do we know “how much is enough” and how much is *too much*?

Summary of Populi Discussions

Week One

MON AUG 8: Question addressed in Written Assignment #1—Option 1

AFTER OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON AUG 8 – students who have chosen to address Option 1 for Written Assignment # 1 (dealing with miracles and supernatural manifestations of the spirit) should post a brief comment addressing that theme (brief = less than 300 words).

All students: check in at various points during the day . . . before 9:00 PM you should respond to at least 3 of the posts that were made by other students. Original posters should reply to all of the responses made to their comment—and others should also reply as appropriate to responses made to what they have posted.. You are expected to spend about one hour total participating on-line in this activity.

TUE AUG 9: Question addressed in Written Assignment #1—Option 2

AFTER OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON AUG 9 – students who have chosen to address Option 2 for Written Assignment # 1 (dealing with authorship of Pauline letters) should post a brief comment addressing that theme (brief = less than 300 words).

All students: check in at various points during the day . . . before 9:00 PM you should respond to at least 3 of the posts that were made by other students. Original posters should reply to all of the responses made to their comment—and others should also reply as appropriate to responses made to what they have posted.. You are expected to spend about one hour total participating on-line in this activity.

WED AUG 10: Questions from Parishioners on Romans or 1 Corinthians

AFTER OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON AUG 10 -- each student is to post one question that they think a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the letter or Romans or from the letter of 1 Corinthians.

Check back in at various points during the day . . . before 9:00 PM you should respond to at least 3 different questions posted by other students, indicating how you would answer the question or address the concern—also, read responses that other students have given to the question you posted and reply as seems appropriate. You are expected to spend about one hour total participating on-line in this activity.

Summary of Populi Discussions

Week Two

MON AUG 15: Question addressed in Written Assignment #2—Option 1

AFTER OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON AUG 15 – students who have chosen to address Option 1 for Written Assignment # 2 (dealing with the letter of Hebrews and the issue of Christian evaluation of Judaism) should post a brief comment addressing that theme (brief = less than 300 words).

All students: check in at various points during the day . . . before 9:00 PM you should respond to at least 3 of the posts that were made by other students. Original posters should reply to all of the responses made to their comment—and others should also reply as appropriate to responses made to what they have posted.. You are expected to spend about one hour total participating on-line in this activity.

TUE AUG 16: Question addressed in Written Assignment #2—Option 2

AFTER OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON AUG 16 – students who have chosen to address Option 2 for Written Assignment # 2 (dealing with the letter of James and the issue of wealth and poverty) should post a brief comment addressing that theme (brief = less than 300 words).

All students: check in at various points during the day . . . before 9:00 PM you should respond to at least 3 of the posts that were made by other students. Original posters should reply to all of the responses made to their comment—and others should also reply as appropriate to responses made to what they have posted.. You are expected to spend about one hour total participating on-line in this activity.

WED AUG 17: Questions from Parishioners on the book of Revelation or Associated Themes

AFTER OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON AUG 17 -- each student is to post one question that they think a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the book of Revelation or associated themes (the Second Coming, the Final Judgment, Life after Death, etc.)

Check back in at various points during the day . . . before 9:00 PM you should respond to at least 3 different questions posted by other students, indicating how you would answer the question or address the concern—also, read responses that other students have given to the question you posted and reply as seems appropriate. You are expected to spend about one hour total participating on-line in this activity.

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work the work of another whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions: (1) warning; (2) probation; (3) suspension for the remainder of the course; (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio; (5) grade of Fail for the course. Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO ATTENDANCE POLICY

National policy from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) states that a student is expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing 20% or more of the classroom work shall not receive credit for the class. In the event of extenuating circumstances which require the student to miss up to 20% of a course (4 hours for an in-person class or 20% of synchronous time on Zoom for an online course), the student should contact both the instructor and the Director prior to the start of the class to get approval and discuss make-up work. Extenuating circumstances include emergency situations, illness, and dire circumstances, for example.

Cancellation and Withdrawal: Student must notify the COSSO office if they will be unable to attend class for which they are registered. Although there is no penalty when withdrawing more than two weeks in advance of the beginning of a term, registration fees are nontransferable and nonrefundable. A \$25.00 late withdrawal fee is charged for all withdrawals within two weeks of the start of a class. All tuition and housing payments are applied to a future term.

Students withdrawing after the start of a term will be assigned a grade of AW (Administrative Withdrawal) and will be responsible for the full \$270 tuition amount. Any annual conference scholarship applied to the student billing record becomes the student's responsibility and is due by the end of the term. Housing payment is non-refundable.

No Shows: Except in cases of immediate and dire emergencies, if a student misses any class without notifying the COSSO office, tuition and housing fees are due immediately, a \$25.00 no show fee is charged, and the student will receive an "F" in the class.