

NT365 THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Exegesis of the Greek text of the Epistle to the Hebrews with consideration of the use of the Old Testament in the letter.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The student should gain the following as a result of this course:

- A. Increased proficiency in translation and using the grammar of the Greek New Testament.
- B. Further development in the theory and practice of exegesis, with special emphasis on techniques of independent study in the New Testament.
- C. A working knowledge of Hebrews, especially in regard to the sequence of thought, use of the Old Testament, and solution of major interpretive problems in the book.
- D. Firm personal convictions concerning how to teach and apply the content of this book.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

Attridge, Harold W. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Edited by Helmut Koester. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989.

B. Suggested

1. Fanning, Buist M. "A Theology of Hebrews." In *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, edited by Roy B. Zuck and Darrell L. Bock, 369-415. Chicago: Moody, 1994.
2. Lindars, Barnabas. *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
3. Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.
4. O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Hebrews*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
5. Schreiner, Thomas R. *Commentary on Hebrews*. Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation. Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2015.

C. Supplementary Bibliography

See the bibliography at the end of this syllabus for other works on Hebrews.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Translation of Greek Text

In preparation for the first 75-minute session on each passage, you are required to translate the Greek text of the passage assigned for the week. Any tool may be used in doing the translation and no written translation is required, but you must be prepared to discuss the translation and grammar of any of the verses in class.

Completion of the translation will be certified on a report-sheet, and your grade for this work will be based on your consistency in completing the translation on time.

B. Exegetical Meditation

Also in preparation for the first session on each passage, you are required to spend a minimum of thirty minutes of meditation on the passage assigned. The meditation time must be exclusive of time spent on translation of the passage or on work done in reference tools. As a result of this study of the passage, you are required to write out a tentative “subject-complement” statement for the passage. See the page on “Procedure for Exegetical Meditation” at the end of this syllabus for explanation of what is desired. Please hand in a sheet reporting (1) the time you have given to the meditation assignment, with (2) your subject-complement statement written out. Your grade will be based on your consistency in doing the assignments on time. You will be expected to contribute in class based on your study of the text in this way.

C. Reading of a Commentary and Related Literature

For the second 75-minute session on a passage, you are required to read the commentary on the passage by Attridge. Be prepared to contribute to class discussion from your commentary reading.

Completion of this assignment will be certified on a report-sheet, and your grade for this work will be based on your consistency in completing the reading on time.

In addition, for the second session on a passage, you are required to *read* one section of collateral reading of your choice. The collateral reading selection should be a periodical article or a relevant section from a book which deals with the passage in some significant way. It should be approximately twenty pages long. Consult the bibliographies in Attridge, O’Brien, or class notes for selections to choose from. Reading from a second commentary is not acceptable. Please *report* your reading on a sheet of paper giving bibliographical details and one paragraph of descriptive annotation concerning the selection you have read. Your grade will be based on your consistency in doing the assignments on time.

D. Semester Project

You are required to submit a major written project involving careful study of some portion of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is expected that you will take about thirty hours to prepare this assignment. The nature of the project is left to your individual choice and you are encouraged to design an assignment that will be of particular value to you. It may take the form of an exegetical paper on one of the passages in the epistle, a research paper on a crucial issue in Hebrews, a series of lessons or sermons from the book, careful word-studies of crucial terms in the epistle, a detailed grammatical study of a portion of the text, a series of devotional reflections on key themes in the book, and so forth.

Please consult with the professor as you think about what sort of project to undertake. The design and topic of your project must have prior approval from the professor. The project is due on Wednesday of Exam Week, **by 4:30 (December 19)**.

V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

The grade for this course will be based on the following items:

Translation and meditation assignments	20%
Commentary and collateral reading	25%
Semester project	40%
Class participation	15%.

B. Class Participation and Electronic Etiquette

You are expected to participate actively in the study and discussion of the passages in class. Be prepared to reflect on your meditation, outside reading, translation of the text, and so forth when you come to class. A portion of your grade for the course will reflect the quality of your contribution to class discussion. Please refrain from using electronic devices during class time in ways that distract from full participation in lectures and discussion (see DTS Student Handbook, § 1.16.1, for details).

C. Late Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of the session for which they are assigned. A grade penalty of four points per calendar day will be assessed for late assignments.

D. Absences

You are expected to attend class consistently. Frequent absences will affect your class participation grade.

E. Plagiarism

“Plagiarism constitutes a serious academic and ethical impropriety. For this reason any work submitted that gives clear evidence of plagiarism, whether committed deliberately or naively, will receive a grade of zero. Each case will be reported to the dean of students. Depending on the circumstances, the student may be subject to additional disciplinary action.” (DTS Student Handbook, § 1.17.3; see definition of plagiarism given in that section of the Handbook).

F. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

DTS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

DTS wants you to be aware of our emergency texting service. We strongly urge you to go to <https://www.dts.edu/account/alerts/> and sign up to receive emergency texts related to the weather or disaster school closing.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

No.	Date	Lecture Topic	Assignment Due
1	Aug 29	Introduction to the Course	
2	Aug 31	Introduction to the Epistle	Read introductory material in Attridge (pp. 1-32)
3	Sept 5	Hebrews 1:1-14	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
4	Sept 7	Hebrews 1:1-14 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
5	Sept 12	Hebrews 2:1-18	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
6	Sept 14	Hebrews 2:1-18 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
7	Sept 19	Hebrews 3:1-4:13	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
8	Sept 21	Hebrews 3:1-4:13 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
9	Sept 26	Hebrews 4:14-5:10	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
10	Sept 28	Hebrews 4:14-5:10 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
11	Oct 3	Hebrews 5:11-6:20	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
12	Oct 5	Hebrews 5:11-6:20 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
13	Oct 10	Hebrews 5:11-6:20 (cont.)	
14	Oct 12	Hebrews 7:1-28	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
15	Oct 17	Hebrews 7:1-28 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
16	Oct 19	Hebrews 8:1-13	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
17	Oct 24	Hebrews 8:1-13 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
18	Oct 26	Hebrews 9:1-28	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
19	Oct 31	Hebrews 9:1-28 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
20	Nov 2	Hebrews 10:1-39	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement

No.	Date	Lecture Topic	Assignment Due
21	Nov 7	Hebrews 10:1-39 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
22	Nov 9	Hebrews 11:1-40	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
	Nov 12-16	READING WEEK	
	Nov 19-23	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
23	Nov 28	Hebrews 11:1-40 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
24	Nov 30	Hebrews 12:1-29	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
25	Dec 5	Hebrews 12:1-29 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
26	Dec 7	Hebrews 13:1-25	Translation of Greek text Meditation and S/C statement
27	Dec 12	Hebrews 13:1-25 (cont.)	Commentary Collateral reading
28	Dec 14	Summary and Review	
	Dec 19		Semester Project due

VII. General Bibliography

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Barclay, William. *The Letter to the Hebrews: Translated with an Introduction and Interpretation*. Daily Study Bible. Rev. ed. Edinburgh: St. Andrew, 1976.

Brown, Raymond. *Christ Above All: The Message of Hebrews*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982.

Bruce, A. B. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The First Apology for Christianity*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899.

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- Hagen, Kenneth G. *Hebrews Commenting from Erasmus to Bèze 1516-1598*. Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese 23. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981.
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- Heen, Erik M., and Philip D. Krey, eds. *Hebrews*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, edited by Thomas C. Oden, vol. 10. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.
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PROCEDURE FOR EXEGETICAL MEDITATION

NT365

Buist M. Fanning

In doing the meditation assignments for this course, follow this procedure:

1. **Prayer:** Remember that even with careful study your insight into the Scriptures ultimately comes from the Lord. Take a moment to get in tune with him and seek his guidance.
2. **Translation:** Be sure you have thoroughly solved any translation difficulties and can read the Greek text smoothly at sight. For some issues (e.g., overview, larger flow of thought), you may be better off working for a time from a good English version, but most of your work should focus on the Greek text.
3. **Meditation:** With the Greek text open before you, spend time thinking about it. Probe the text with all the questions you can think of and try to arrive at interpretive answers. Special attention should be given to the main ideas of the passage and the sequence of thought (the way the statements of the text fit together and develop the idea).

As you think about the passage, try to place yourself in the situation of the author and his readers. How would they have understood the statements of the text in the light of the problems they faced, his reasons for writing, etc.? Concentrate also on clarification of ambiguities in the passage: words or phrases or grammatical connections which are simply unclear to you or which could have several different meanings. At times it is helpful to think through or write out a paraphrase of the passage in which you restate the thoughts of the text in a somewhat expanded form. This process helps to single out areas of ambiguity and also forces you to work on the sequence of thought.

If syntactical connections are unclear to you or if the constructions are extremely complex, do a rough diagram or layout of the phrases and clauses. However, save any time-consuming details or polishing of a final diagram for a later step in the exegetical process.

If lexical issues are important to investigate, do a quick check of BDAG or a concordance for further insight, but save any detailed lexical study for later.

4. **Exegetical Idea:** As a result of this study of the text, formulate an exegetical idea (or ideas) for the passage. If the verses fall into more than one natural unit, you should write an exegetical idea for each unit and show the verses included in each unit. Each idea should consist of two parts (leave them *separate* at this stage):

Subject: what is the author talking about? Try to narrow this as much as possible. Do not put “praise to God” if you can narrow it to “the reasons for praising God.”

Complement: what is he saying about his subject? Strive for focus and clarity, rather than for including every detail of the passage.