

BRIERCREST

BLST 825 Romans Fall 2019

Course Instructor: David M. Miller, PhD
Email: dmiller@briercrest.ca
Phone: 306-756-3438
Course Dates: October 21-25, 2019

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of Paul's letter to the Romans, with particular attention to its historical setting, its theological argument, and its continuing significance for the church.

WHY STUDY ROMANS?

Romans is a complex, tightly-argued letter that is one of the most bewildering books in the New Testament. Many of the basic assumptions of Paul, the first century Jew, and the issues that preoccupied him, are foreign to a predominantly Gentile church twenty centuries later. And yet Paul's letter to the Romans has exerted a profound influence on many of the movers and shakers of Christian history:

- Augustine (354-430), the most influential Christian thinker between the New Testament and the Reformation, was converted after reading Romans 13:13-14.
- Martin Luther (1483-1546) "felt [him]self to have been born again" while studying Romans 1:17; his conclusions about the meaning of the "righteousness of God" triggered the Protestant Reformation.
- It was after reading the preface to Luther's commentary on Romans that John Wesley's (1703-1791) "heart was strangely warmed"; his subsequent preaching about salvation by faith played an instrumental role in England's Evangelical revival and in the founding of the Methodist movement.

Reading Paul's letter to the Romans in its historical context is worth the effort because, as Ernst Käsemann put it, "whenever [Paul] is rediscovered . . . there issues from him explosive power."

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course we will make a concentrated attempt to follow Paul's argument on his own terms and in his own context. We will examine what can be known about the historical setting and purpose of Romans, and look at Paul's Greco-Roman and Jewish context as it relates to the interpretation of the text. We will become familiar with debated topics in current scholarship on Romans, and pause to consider some of the many hermeneutical and theological questions raised by the letter. By the end of this course you will be able to summarize your understanding of the structure of Paul's argument,



and be able to justify it with evidence from the text. Perhaps most important, you will be equipped to engage Romans seriously as Christian Scripture, as Augustine, Luther and Wesley did before you. It will take concentration and commitment to hold together the big picture of Paul's argument and also attend to the details of this demanding text. Consider this syllabus your learning contract: During our week together we will participate in a learning community whose success depends on joint engagement with the subject matter, with the assigned readings and with each other. By choosing to take this course, you agree to prepare diligently, to participate actively, and to help create a positive learning environment for your fellow students.

COURSE TEXTS

Required

Keck, Leander E. *Romans*. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.

Westerholm, Stephen. *Understanding Paul: The Early Christian Worldview of the Letter to the Romans*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2004.

Reserve Reading (on Canvas)

Dunn, James D. G. "The New Perspective on Paul." *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 65, no. 2 (1983): 95-122 (also online: <http://markgoodacre.org/PaulPage/New.html>).

Gorman, Michael J. "'Justified by Faith ... Crucified with Christ': Reconciliation with God through Participation in Christ." Pages 111-131 in *Reading Paul*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Class Topic & Primary Reading	Keck Reading
Mon Oct 21 Morning	Introducing Romans; Romans 1	pp. 13-101
Mon Oct 21 Afternoon	Romans 2:1-3:20	
Tues Oct 22 Morning	Romans 3:21-4:25	pp. 101-156
Tues Oct 22 Afternoon	Romans 5	
Wed Oct 23 Morning	Romans 6-7	pp. 156-223
Wed Oct 23 Afternoon	Romans 8	
Thurs Oct 24 Morning	Romans 9-11	pp. 223-311
Thurs Oct 24 Afternoon	Romans 9-11 (cont'd); Romans 12	
Fri Oct 25 Morning	Romans 13; Romans 14:1-15:13	pp. 311-385
Fri Oct 25 Afternoon	Romans 14-15 (cont'd); Romans 15:14-16:27	

Note: This course will extend through the afternoon of Friday, October 25. We will aim to conclude class on Friday by 4:00 p.m.

ASSIGNMENTS**PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (TO BE SUBMITTED TO CANVAS):**

A. Summary (5%): Read through the entire letter of Romans in one sitting. When you are finished, write a one-page (300-word) summary of the message of the letter, highlighting key ideas, reflecting on how they relate to each other, and showing how they contribute to the letter's overall argument and flow of thought. Your summary of Romans should also address why Paul wrote the letter. This assignment should be completed prior to reading secondary sources. **Due: Friday, October 4, 2019.**

B. Theme Notes (15%): Read through Romans a second time in conjunction with Westerholm's introduction to the worldview of Romans, Gorman's discussion of "justification by faith," and Dunn's seminal article on the "New Perspective" on Paul (see the reserve readings above).

Pre-work: As you read, compile a list of passages in both primary and secondary sources related to the following topics:

- 1) *Faith:* What does Paul mean when he says "the righteous will live by faith"? In addition to Romans 1:17, you should consider related passages in Romans (e.g., Romans 3, etc.) where the meaning and referent of 'faith' / 'believe' is in question. Note that the word translated 'faith' can also be translated 'faithfulness', 'belief' or 'trust', and that the verb normally translated 'believe' can also be translated 'to have faith' or 'to trust'.
- 2) *Righteousness:* What is the "righteousness of God" according to Romans? What does it mean to be "justified"? In addition to Romans 1:17, you should consider related passages in Romans that mention the noun 'righteousness' / 'justification', and the verb 'to justify'. Note that the meaning of the noun normally translated 'righteousness' (≈ 'rectitude' in Keck) is related to the verb normally translated 'justify', which can also be translated 'to make righteous', 'to acquit' or 'to rectify'.
- 3) *Works and the Obedience of Faith:* What does Romans say about the normal Christian life and how it is to be lived? What is the relationship between obedience and salvation?
- 4) *Israel:* What, according to Romans, is Israel's problem?

Written assignment: Address each theme in sequence, providing a list of all the relevant verse references in Romans and relevant page #'s in the secondary sources, and stating in paragraph form how Westerholm, Dunn and Gorman would answer the question(s). (Note that you are only required to summarize what the secondary sources say; you are not required to present your own conclusions. Note as well that Westerholm, Dunn and Gorman disagree at several key points!) Each theme should be addressed in 1-2 paragraphs, not including the list of relevant passages. Your grade for this assignment will be assessed on the basis of the quality of your notes (completeness, writing quality, depth of reflection, and thoughtful effort). **Due: Monday, October 21, 2019 at 9 a.m.**

MID-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

C. Keck Reading (5%) - Before each day's class, re-read the assigned passages from Romans carefully, along with Keck's commentary on Romans, and complete the reading log on the last page of the syllabus below. *Note:* Keck packs a lot into his excellent 385-page commentary. For your own sake, plan to complete the Keck reading before the beginning of mod-week if at all possible. The reading log is **due at the beginning of class on Friday, October 25, 2019.**

D. Book Review (15%) - Prior to coming to class, choose a book from the bibliography and prepare a written book review (about 1500 words), and a 10-15-minute oral presentation in which you introduce the book and interact with questions from other members of the class. Feel free to use handouts, PowerPoint, or simply read your book review to the class and answer any questions. Your review should state in your own words the general argument of the book and then critically interact

with it. Try to devote about one third of the review to evaluating the argument of the book and its usefulness for understanding Romans. You should also feel free to consult published reviews of the book as long as (1) you have completed a draft of your own review prior to consulting them; and (2) you cite any and all ideas from such reviews in footnotes that you incorporate into your paper. (Ideas that you get from other sources as well as quotations should always be referenced in footnotes!) Oral presentations will be scheduled throughout the week, beginning with Monday's session. *I will be happy to recommend a book if you are not sure which one to choose. In any case, please consult me before making a final decision about the book you wish to review.*

POST-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

E. Final Exam (25%) – For on-campus students, the final exam will take place on **Saturday, October 26** or on **Sunday, October 27** (exact time to be determined in class). Off-campus students may set-up a time to write the final exam under the supervision of a proctor after they return home. A study guide with information about the exam, including all short answer and essay questions, will be provided on the first day of class. *Note:* In lieu of the final exam, students may choose to memorize the book of Romans in its entirety, and to recite it at some point during the week of class.

F. Major Essay (35%) – Write a thesis-driven research essay. Sometimes the topic will be an obvious debated issue. For others it will be an exploration of a central aspect of a passage. The topic should be something that you find puzzling, something that invites further reflection. The following is a partial list of good paper topics:

Paul's interpretation of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17	Resurrection with Christ in Romans 6
The meaning of "God gave them over" in Rom 1:18-32	The function of the Law in Romans 7
The identity of the true Jew in Rom 2:28-29	The identity of the "I" in Romans 7
Paul's argument from Scripture in Rom 3:10-18	The meaning of Rom 8:4
The meaning of the "faith of Jesus Christ" in Rom 3:22	The new creation in Romans 8
The meaning of "propitiation"/"expiation" in Rom 3:25	The meaning of election in Rom 9
Boasting in Romans 4	The meaning of Rom 10:4
The meaning of Rom 5:12	The proclamation of the gospel in Romans 10
The significance of death with Christ in Rom 6:1-11	The meaning of "all Israel will be saved" in Rom 11:26
	The transformation of the mind in Romans 12
	The Christian and government in Rom 13:1-7
	The identity of the "weaker" and "stronger" in Rom 14:1-15:13

The paper should be between **12-15 pages (3600-4500 words)** in length (not including outline and bibliography) and is **due on December 20, 2019 (submitted to Canvas)**. More details will be provided in class.

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Course Schedules

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: Especially significant books are marked with an asterisk (*) and are on 'reserve' in the library.

Some Important Modern Commentaries on Romans

*Achteemeier, Paul J. *Romans*. Interpretation. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.

*Barrett, C. K. *The Epistle to the Romans*. 2d ed. Black's New Testament Commentary. London: Black, 1991.

*Barth, Karl. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

*Bird, Michael F. *Romans*. Story of God. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

Black, Matthew. *Romans*. NCB. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973.

- Boers, Hendrikus. *The Justification of the Gentiles: Paul's Letters to the Galatians and Romans*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- *Byrne, Brendan. *Romans*. Sacra Pagina 6. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996.
- *Cranfield, C. E. B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 2 vols. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975, 1979.
- *Cranfield, C. E. B. *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Dodd, C. H. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. 1932. Repr. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954.
- *Dunn, James D. G. *Romans 1-16*. 2 vols. WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1988.
- *Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB. New York: Doubleday, 1993.
- Godet, Frederic Louis. *Commentary on Romans*. 1883. Repr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977.
- Harvey, John D. *Romans*. EGGNT. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017.
- Hodge, Charles. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 1886. Repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950.
- Holland, Tom. *Romans: The Divine Marriage: A Biblical Theological Commentary*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011.
- *Hultgren, Arland J. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- *Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- *Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Reading the New Testament. Crossroad, 1997.
- *Käsemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans*. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- *Keck, Leander E. *Romans*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.
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- *Longenecker, Richard N. *The Epistle to the Romans*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.
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- *Moo, Douglas J. *The Epistle to the Romans*. NICNT. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018.
- *_____. *Romans*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- *Morris, Leon. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- *Murray, John. *The Epistle to the Romans*. NICNT. 1968. Repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
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- *Sanday, William, and Arthur C. Headlam. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1955.
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Pre-critical Commentaries and the History of Interpretation

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- Soderlund, Sven K., and N.T. Wright. *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

*Sumney, Jerry L., ed. *Reading Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

Some Monographs on Romans

N.B. For additional studies on your passage consult ATLAS as well as the bibliographies in major commentaries.

Romans 1-4

Bell, Richard H. *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1:18-3:20*. WUNT 106. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1998.

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Romans 12-16

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BLST 825 KECK READING LOG

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Date	Keck Reading	% Completed On Time	% Completed Late
Mon Oct 21 @ 9:00 a.m.	pp. 13-101		
Tues Oct 22 @ 8:30 a.m.	pp. 101-156		
Wed Oct 23 @ 8:30 a.m.	pp. 156-223		
Thurs Oct 24 @ 8:30 a.m.	pp. 223-311		
Fri Oct 25 @ 8:30 a.m.	pp. 311-385		

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