

Preaching NT Epistolary Literature

VIRGINIA BEACH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

(Fall) 2025

Sept 22–26, 2025

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Meeting: Room #107 / **M:** 1-5 pm, **T/W/Th:** 8-noon; 1-5 pm, **F:** 8-noon

*Thursday we will meet from 8-9 am in the church chapel.

Course Description

This course focuses on preaching from the epistolary literature of the New Testament with special emphasis on how sound exegesis informs exposition. Attention will be given to each NT epistle's unique situation, including discussion of its main exegetical and theological challenges and its predominant message.

4 credit hours.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of reading, research, writing, presentation, peer-review, and class discussion, the student will be able to ...

- 1) determine the main propositional truth(s) of a NT paragraph
- 2) arrange a coherent speaking outline that follows the outline of a NT text
- 3) preach a sermon on a NT epistolary text with clarity and conviction
- 4) articulate proper exegetical practices for NT epistles
- 5) identify common exegetical fallacies

Required Texts

Students are required to read 2,250 pages. The following books are required and students should read from the recommended resources near the end of this syllabus to finish the total reading requirements.

- 1) Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Third Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2025. (*a pre-publication copy will be provided for students electronically*)

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- 2) Erickson, Richard J. *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Exegesis: Taking the Fear Out of Critical Method*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005.
- 3) Gallaty, Robby, and Steven Smith. *Preaching for the Rest of Us: Essentials for Text-Driven Preaching*. Nashville: B & H, 2018.
- 4) Naselli, Andrew D. *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps From Exegesis to Theology*. Philadelphia: P & R Publishing, 2017.
- 5) Schreiner, Thomas R. *1–2 Peter and Jude*. The Christian Standard Commentary. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020. (*Read the 1 Peter section of the commentary*)
- 6) Schreiner, Thomas R. *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Course Requirements

1. **Required Reading (25 %)** - Students are required to read 2,250 pages of reading. All reading is due by midnight, **November 1**. Once reading is completed, students must report their reading through populi.
2. **NT Epistles Situation Analysis (15 %)** – Students are to summarize important details relating to the author, audience, presenting problems, structure, point, and exegetical/theological challenges in each epistle. The summaries can follow the format presented by the professor in class. Each summary should consist in one paragraph per epistle. The entire projects should consist of 21 paragraphs, one for each NT epistle. This analysis is due by midnight, **November 9**.
3. **Contemporary Preachers Analysis (15 %)** - Students will explore the expository style of five contemporary preachers and write a two-page, single-spaced review of their practices and methods in epistolary sermons. Students should note characteristics of each preacher's style: introductions, outlines, propositions/big ideas, applications, illustrations, conclusions, and overall effectiveness. Students should briefly introduce the preacher that they are studying in the opening paragraph of their review, noting what texts the preacher covered and (if possible) a brief summary of the preacher's background and the audience that he addressed. The following preachers are approved for the sake of this project: *John Piper, John MacArthur, David Platt, Ligon Duncan, Al Mohler, Mark Dever, H.B. Charles, Steven Davey, Daniel Davey, and D.A. Carson*. If previously approved by the professor, students may review other contemporary preachers as well. This evaluation is due by midnight, **November 16**.
4. **Sermon (Notes, In-class Preaching) (25%)** – Students must preach from a text in 1 Peter during Friday of class and are required to present a manuscript sermon on the day of their presentation. The notes should be 12 pt. font and should be at least 4 pages in length. The students may or may not speak from his manuscript, but diligent effort must be given not to read from the manuscript. Students have 20–25 minutes to preach their sermon. The professors will schedule preaching assignments two weeks before the class starts. Students are required to report their preaching texts in advance. The sermon will be delivered in class on **September 26**.

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5. **In-class Participation (5%)** – An important part of growth in expositional preaching is learning from the comments and perspectives of the professor and other students. After preaching assignments, students and professors will review sermons for approximately 20 minutes. Student participation is mandatory.
6. **Arcing Project (15%)** – Students are required to “arc” a pericope of an Epistle, according to the instructions given in class. In the opening days of the class, students will be taught the basic principles of arcing. Additional instruction on arcing is also provided through the required textbook reading. Supplementary resources on arcing are also available on biblearc.com. Each student will need a subscription to biblearc.com during this course. Each student must upload a PDF of his completed arc to Populi by midnight on **November 23**.

Course Policies

Institutional Grading Policy

“The Seminary employs a standardized frame of reference for the grading of all courses. Course work which attains to the completion of the minimum specified standard, as articulated in the course syllabus, if accomplished with average competency, will receive an average target grade of 85%. Higher grades will be given to students that produce qualitatively better work (e.g., appropriate creativity, cogent analysis, thoughtful critique, excellent documentation, adequate thoroughness, etc.).”

Grading Scale and Evaluation Criteria:

- A 96-100 – Outstanding work: superior achievement of course objectives
- A- 94-95
- B+ 92-93 – Good work: commendable achievement of course objectives
- B 89-91
- B- 87-88 – Acceptable work for 2 courses only, otherwise unacceptable work (F)
- C+ 85-86
- C 81-84
- F 0-80 – Failure: unacceptable work

Institutional Withdrawal Policy

“A student may withdraw from a class up to the end of the 11th week of the term or up to the end of the 5th day of a 2-week module or the end of the 3rd day of a 1-week module without academic penalty by completing a withdrawal request and submitting it to the Office of the Registrar. A grade of “W” will be recorded on the grade report and will become a permanent part of the student’s academic record. No withdrawals will be granted after the 11th week (or the equivalent).”

Institutional Incomplete Policy

“A professor has the option of assigning an Incomplete to a student record at the end of an academic term. The request for an incomplete status must be:

1. initiated and completed by the student;
2. based upon unusual circumstances that were unforeseen and unpreventable.
3. submitted to the Registrar by means of a completed Request for Incomplete Status form no later than the final due date for all material in the class as indicated in the course syllabus.

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All courses marked by the Registrar as an Incomplete must be completed no later than the last day of the next academic term. Incomplete courses not completed within the parameters of the next academic term will be marked with an F by the Registrar.”

Attendance Policy

Students are permitted to miss 4 hours (or one entire class session) without penalty. Additional class absences will result in a deduction from the final grade of 2% per hour of class missed. Failure to attend 70% of the class sessions (14 of the 20 hours of class) will result in failure of the course. Exceptions will be considered only for circumstances which are unforeseen and unpreventable.

Use of Electronic Devices

Cell phones are to be silenced for class. Responding to calls when class is in session (except in the case of emergency) is not permitted. Similarly, texting, emailing, and other forms of personal communication are inappropriate when class is in session. Internet service is supplied by the institution to enhance the educational value of classroom; use of the internet during class sessions is permitted only when relevant to the subject matter being addressed in class.

Submission of Assignments and Late Work

- Reading is reported in Populi on a percentage of completion basis, and is due midnight of the assigned date
- Class Preparation assignments (and completion of the related reading) are due at the beginning of class.
- Written assignments are submitted in Populi and are due at midnight of the assigned date
- All late work will receive a 10% deduction; a 25% deduction will apply for work that is more than one week late.
- Work will not be accepted after midnight, December 11.

Requests for Exception from Course Policies

It is not considered appropriate to request exemption from course policies for the sake of personal plans, or for circumstances which arise due to lack of preparation or planning. Consideration may be taken for extended illness, injury, bereavement, or other extenuating circumstances that were unforeseen and unpreventable.

Course Schedule

DATES	AGENDA
Sept 27	Intro to NT Exegesis
Sept 28	Epistles Situational Studies
Sept 29	Epistles Situational Studies/A Method for Preaching Epistles

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Sept 30	A Method for Preaching Epistles
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Oct 1	Preaching
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Bibliography

† recommended

Exegesis

Bateman, Herbert W. *Interpreting the General Letters: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013.

Chisholm, Robert B. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.

Kaiser, Walter C. *Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.

Schreiner, Thomas. *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Stein, Robert H. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

Exposition

Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

Gibson, Scott M. and Keith Willhite. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Greidanus, Sidney. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Preaching and Preachers*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972.

MacArthur, John. *Rediscovering Expository Preaching: Balancing the Science and Art of Biblical Exposition*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 1992.

Paul, Ian and David Wenham. *Preaching the New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.

Piper, John. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Message*. 3rd Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Stott, John R. *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.