

Greek Exegesis: The Epistle of James 2XJ3

McMaster Divinity College
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Winter 2020
Monday 11:00am–12:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Being able to read the Greek New Testament opens up the possibility of a deeper and richer encounter with the scriptures. Also, being able to explicitly analyze the possible meaning(s) of a Greek wording makes it possible to discuss with clarity the foundation on which all interpretive and theological discussions must rest. In this class, students will grow in their ability to read and analyze the Greek New Testament through assigned readings and exercises, as well as through classroom lectures and discussions. By the end of the course, students will be better able to read through a passage of the Greek New Testament and appreciate how the wording of the text factors into interpretive debates regarding its meaning.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Having completed this course successfully, students should:

Knowing

- Understand how languages make meanings;
- Recognize more Greek words;
- Learn about the grammatical structures of Greek.

Being

- Appreciate the benefits of collaborative close reading;
- Become humble interpreters who are moving towards competency in Greek;
- Practice listening carefully to the original wording of the New Testament.

Doing

- Learn how to use a textual apparatus;
- Learn how to use a Greek lexicon;
- Learn how to analyze Greek wordings as meaningful structures;
- Practice moving from the Greek text to responsible interpretations and applications.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Students entering the course must have completed a minimum of two semesters in Greek language study.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: Students are required to complete all of the following assignments. No unfinished assignments are permitted. *Each written assignment should be uploaded in Microsoft Word format to Avenue to Learn. A penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments. Assignments cannot be submitted after April 8th without written permission from the Office of the Registrar (thomn@mcmaster.ca).*

Vocabulary Quizzes (10%)

Prior to **February 17th at 11:00am**, each student must complete a brief vocabulary quiz using A2L. Students can take the quiz up to five times (receiving randomly selected items each time), with the highest achieved score counting towards the final grade. The vocabulary for the quizzes includes all of the words assigned in Porter, Reed, and O'Donnell, *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). The relevant vocabulary lists are available on A2L, and some free study aids are available at www.quizlet.com. There is also a separate practice quiz on A2L that students can take as many times as they wish.

Book Reports (2 x 10% = 20%)

During the first half of the semester, each student will read the two required books on Greek grammar (see below) and produce a brief book report on each. The reports should each be 1,500-words in length and should follow the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*. There should be three sections: (1) The Aims of the Book; (2) The Most Interesting Content in the Book; and (3) An Evaluation of the Book. Both reports must be submitted on A2L prior to **February 17th at 11:00am**.

Seminar Participation (20%)

Students are expected to attend seminar meetings and to participate in seminar discussions. For those weeks where a passage from the Greek New Testament is assigned as preparatory reading, each student will receive credit for showing up to class prepared to read aloud from the Greek and to inquire about anything in the grammar that is unclear. For those weeks where an exegetical assignment is due, students should bring a hard copy of the assignment so that it can be discussed in class. If a student is unable to attend class *due to extenuating circumstances*, the relevant classes (to a limit of two) will be factored out of the participation grade—provided the student discusses his or her absence with the professor in a punctual manner (preferably in advance of the missed class).

Exegetical Assignments (5 x 10% = 50%)

Over the course of five assignments, students will use their existing knowledge of Greek (including the two books used for the book reports) to read through the Epistle of James and to produce their own English translation of the text. In addition to this translation, each assignment must also record questions and insights related to the assigned Greek wording, its meaning, and its ancient and contemporary significance. This can be done in whatever format is most convenient to the student, including commentary-style paragraphs, organized bullet points, footnotes related to specific parts of the passage, etc. It is recommended that students consult a suitable commentary while doing their work. The primary goal of the student should be to draw clear connections between the Greek language in general and the specific function of this text both as an ancient letter and as Christian Scripture. Each exegetical assignment should be uploaded in Word or RTF format to A2L before class on the due date (see the schedule below). They should also be brought to class in hard copy so that the student can discuss it with the professor. While six assignments must be completed, only the five highest grades will count.

GRADING SUMMARY (NT 2XJ3)

Vocabulary Quizzes	10%
Book Reports	20%
Seminar Preparation	20%
<u>Exegetical Assignments</u>	<u>50%</u>
Total	100%

TEXTBOOKS

All students are required to possess the following:

A standard edition of the Greek New Testament, such as the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (26th–28th ed.) or the UBS *Greek New Testament* (4th–5th ed.).

A suitable Greek–English lexicon (see bibliography below).

Mathewson, David, and Elodie Ballantine Emig. *Intermediate Greek Grammar: Syntax for Students of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016.

Runge, Steven E., *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010.

All students are recommended to have access to the following:

McKnight, Scot. *The Letter of James*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

A parsing tool, such as biblewebapp.com, parabible.com, Bibleworks, Logos, or Accordance.

Porter, Stanley E. *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994

[Professional Degree Students:] Omanson, Roger L. *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.

[Research Degree Students:] Metzger, Bruce Manning. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994.

Note: Additional electronic readings will be made available through Avenue to Learn (A2L).

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, ON, M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Dates	Seminar Sessions	Reading (due @ 11am)	Assignments (due @ 11am)
Jan 6	Who Reads James?		
Jan 13	James the Just	James 1	
Jan 20	James and Judaism	James 2	
Jan 27	James and Jesus	James 3	
Feb 3	James and "Christianity"	James 4	
Feb 10	The Epistle of James	James 5	
Feb 17	Thanksgiving (No Class)		Vocab Quizzes Book Reports
Feb 24	Who Are the Faithful?		James 1:1–15
Mar 2	Suffering and Trust		James 1:16–2:4
Mar 9	Mercy and Torah		James 2:5–26
Mar 16	Maturity and Integrity		James 3

Mar 23	Wealth and Justice		James 4
Mar 30	Healing and Community		James 5
Apr 6	Who Will Speak Today?		

SUITABLE GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICONS

[BDAG:] Bauer, Walter, Frederick W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Danker, Frederick W. *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

[LSJ:] Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. [Available @ <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/lj/>] [8th edition available @ <https://archive.org/details/cu31924012909697>]

Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889. [Available @ <https://archive.org/details/intermediategree00lidd>]

Louw, J.P., and E.A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. 2 vols. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.

Thayer, J.H., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. New York: American Book Company, 1897. [Available @ <https://archive.org/details/04508981.1536.emory.edu>]

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at:

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) for plagiarism detection and the student's continuation in the course represents his or her consent to the use of this service. If a student has objections to the use of this service, alternate arrangements for assignment submission must be made with the professor in advance of the assignment deadlines.

A useful guide to avoiding plagiarism is the Harvard Guide to Using Sources:
<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>

STYLE

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the latest edition of the McMaster Divinity College *Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*, which is available on the MDC website.

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.