



McMaster Divinity  
College

# JAMES

## NT 2XJ3 (GREEK EXEGESIS)

McMaster Divinity College  
Dr. Christopher D. Land  
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Winter 2023  
Monday 4:00–5:50pm

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Martin Luther is infamous for calling the Epistle of James “a right strawy epistle,” but most Christians ignore Luther’s straw man and embrace the Epistle as compelling and perennially relevant. Indeed, people often memorize and cherish the words of James, finding in them a practical yet radical ethic that is akin to Jesus’s teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. In this course, we will explore James’s teachings and reflect upon their relevance for life in the twenty-first century. We will explore the emphasis that James places on maturity and integrity as hallmarks of the human life lived well. We will also discuss the role that James the Just played in early Judaism and in the early Christian movement.

In addition, this course will provide an opportunity for further engagement with the Greek of the New Testament. Students will learn additional vocabulary, and will practice reading and exegeting passages from the Epistle of James

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Having completed this course successfully, students should:

#### KNOWING

- Remember the structure and content of the Epistle of James;
- Be familiar with introductory issues and scholarly debates concerning the Epistle;
- Understand the major theological and ethical teachings found in the Epistle;
- Be more familiar with the Greek of the NT.

#### BEING

- Appreciate the importance of participating in critical and respectful discussions concerning biblical texts;
- Be sensitive to the historical and cultural environment in which the early church first communicated the gospel;
- Embody the ethical seriousness that is so evident throughout the Epistle of James;
- Be cautious interpreters of Greek texts.

#### DOING

- Be able to read and understand books that engage with James in a critical manner;

- Be able to talk intelligently about James;
- Be able to explain and demonstrate how James is relevant to contemporary Christianity;
- Be cultivating habits of life that are consistent with the teachings of James;
- Be able to examine the Epistle of James in its original Greek.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: Students are required to complete all of the following assignments. No unfinished assignments are permitted. *Written assignments must be uploaded to Avenue to Learn either as Word documents (.doc, .docx) or in Rich Text Format (.rtf). A penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments. Assignments cannot be submitted after April 6th without written permission from the Office of the Registrar ([strickpd@mcmaster.ca](mailto:strickpd@mcmaster.ca)).*

### CLASS MEETINGS (0%)

Attendance at weekly meetings is expected, because class discussions are a significant part of the overall learning experience. Each week during class, Greek exegesis students will meet with the professor and/or his graduate assistant to discuss student progress on the assignments and any questions prompted by the work.

### WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS (5 x 20%)

These are due according to the Coursework Schedule below. In each assignment, students will perform the following tasks. Details will be disseminated on A2L.

1. Memorize a list of Greek words and complete a vocabulary/parsing quiz.
2. Read in Greek one of the biblical passages listed in the Coursework Schedule below.
3. Locate and read at least six resources that prove useful to you in exploring the Greek passage.
4. Identify at least five interpretive (or translational) issues in the passage and provide a discussion that illuminates the issue, citing your resources to show how they have helped you.
5. Answer four supplied interpretive questions that will help you to approach the language of your passage with a view towards its *overall* meaning and significance.
6. Come to class prepared to discuss your observations and questions with the professor or his GA.

## GRADING SUMMARY

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| <u>Weekly Assignments</u> | 5 x 20% |
| Total                     | 100%    |

## TEXTBOOKS

Students are required to possess the following:

An English translation of the New Testament;

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).

Students are recommended to have access to the following:

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.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the MDC chapel entrance. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, ON, M9A 3C3: phone 416.620.2934; mobile 416.668.3434; email [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

| Meeting Date | Lecture Topics                                 | Written Assignments<br>(Due @ 11:59pm) |
|--------------|--|--|
| Jan 9        | Introduction to the Course<br>Who Reads James? |  |
| Jan 16       | James the Just                                 |  |
| Jan 23       | James and Judaism                              | Jas 1:2–15                             |
| Jan 30       | James and Jesus                                |  |
| Feb 6        | James and “Christianity”                       |  |
| Feb 13       | The Epistle of James                           | Jas 1:16–2:26                          |
| Feb 20       | Family Day (No Class)                          |  |
| Feb 27       | Intensive Hybrid Week (No Class)               |  |
| Mar 6        | Suffering and Trust                            | Jas 3:1–4:12                           |
| Mar 13       | Mercy and Torah                                |  |
| Mar 20       | Maturity and Integrity                         | Jas 4:13–5:12                          |
| Mar 27       | Wealth and Justice                             |  |
| Apr 3        | Healing and Community                          | Jas 5:13–20                            |

## 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.

Diggle, James et al. *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*. 2 Vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

[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/ljs/>] [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>]

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Allison, Dale C., Jr. *The Epistle of James*. International Critical Commentary. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Blomberg, Craig L., and Mariam J. Kamell. *James*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.

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- Dibelius, Martin. *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*. Translated by Michael A. Williams. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.
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- . *The Letter of James*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
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## MONOGRAPHS & ESSAYS

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Bauckham, Richard. "For What Offence Was James Put to Death?" In *James the Just and Christian Origins*, edited by Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, 199–232. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 98. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

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## 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 McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses:

<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>

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 for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.