

**CAREY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**BIBL 612 Hebrews: Ancient Encouragement for Today's Church**  
**Online Winter 2017**

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January 9-March 17, 2017  
3 credit hours

### **Course Description**

The Letter to the Hebrews is probably the least understood letter in the NT, and yet one of the most profound as it deals with the superiority of Christ as mediator and priest, and the covenant He initiates through the lens of the OT. The author does this while never losing sight of his audience's need of encouragement to be the people of God in trying times and persecution. Today's church faces the same problem of becoming subsumed into the secular culture, thereby making it impotent. The author of Hebrews wakes up his audience with a cold splash of biblical exegesis and application, encouraging his readers to push out into the culture and not to retreat. Hebrews is a timely message for a people longing to be the church in new and dynamic ways.

### **Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain in detail the message of Hebrews.
2. Trace the author's argument and structure and by examining the particular contextual issues facing the first century recipients.
3. Bridge the hermeneutical gap and apply the text to the contemporary church situation through teaching, preaching and spiritual formation.
4. Grow in your relationship with Christ through reflection and application.

### **Required Reading**

*Textbooks:*

Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Rev. ed. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Gordon, R. P. *Hebrews*. 2nd ed. Readings, a New Biblical Commentary. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.

*Secondary Reading:*

DeSilva, David A. "Hebrews" in *An Introduction to the New Testament*.  
Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004.

Lane, William L. *Hebrews 1-8, 9-13*. Vol. 47a,b WBC. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991.

*Commentaries (see list in Bibliography below):*

### **Course Requirements**

### *Content of Course*

This course will consist of recorded lectures, on-line discussion and written work. The goal of the lectures is to provide a framework for understanding the historical context of Hebrews and the author's intention for writing. Through the discussions, students will wrestle with the interpretive options and application of the texts. The written requirements will allow the students to go into depth in understanding the cultural issue the readers are facing, exegeting a text and applying the meaning of the text to today's context.

### *Reading for Class*

- There are two required books for the course. The relevant section should be read before the class commences. For example, for Unit #1 read the Introduction of RG and FB and the section on 1:1-4 in both commentaries and the material in DD (see below under Course Outline). In addition, there will be several journal articles to read for the discussion groups.

The abbreviations for the readings are:

- Required Reading
  - FB F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*
  - RG R.P. Gordon, *Hebrews*
- Recommended Reading
  - DeSilva, David A. "Hebrews" in *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004.

Lane, William L. *Hebrews 1-8, 9-13*. Vol. 47a, b WBC. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991.

### *Discussions/Participation*

Based on the readings and lecture material for each week, students will participate in the online discussions. There will be questions posted each week that will provide the framework for the discussions. Every student is expected to make one initial posting for each discussion topic and provide two brief responses to the postings of other students. A general rule of thumb is for initial postings to be done by Wednesday evening of each week and responses by Saturday night. (In other words, for every discussion each student will provide a minimum of three postings.) This shows your active participation in the course. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO POST ANYTHING FOR THAT UNIT AFTER SATURDAY EVENING AT MIDNIGHT.

Your *initial posting* is expected to demonstrate informed interaction with the topic and readings. The length of your initial posting will vary, but 200 – 250 words should be adequate for an analytical and thoughtful contribution to the discussion. Imagine you are in a classroom and everyone in the group needs to add to a discussion. The goal is not to submit monologues on the topic, but to show that you have understood the question, examined the material and gleaned insights. You do not need to add something new to the discussion – but your initial post should feature your own insights, questions, or summary according to the question(s) posted. Do not make personal experience or feelings the central feature of your post. The professor is looking for critical thinking and thoughtful answers that incorporate what you have learned through your readings, lectures and outside reading.

Your *responses* to other students' postings need to demonstrate a considered reply. It is not sufficient to simply state that you agree with him/her. You may agree or disagree with what your classmate posts, but in 150 words you need to communicate why. Keep your responses concise – remember you are reading a lot of them over the course of the term! Encouraging comments in your responses are fine, but they must be a small part of your response (you can email them personally with your personal more pastoral comments). Each discussion is monitored and marked. Your discussion posting mark reflects your participation in the class.

### *Reflection (14 hours)*

Each student may choose to do one of the following:

- Produce a journal reflecting on one text from Hebrews in terms of its impact on your personal faith and/or ministry. The purpose of this exercise is not to write out your exegesis of the passage but you may use your exegesis as the basis for your reflection. (1500 words max.). The goal here is engagement with God through the written text.
- Produce a creative work (e.g., song, poetry, video) based on a text (or texts) from Hebrews. Include the following:
  - An explanation of your work (1000 words) in terms of your personal experience of your interpretation of the text/s from the Epistle to the Hebrews
  - Why you created this work
  - Why you chose this particular text, medium of expression etc.
  - Explain why this text is significant to you

What is important is the expression of how and in what ways the Epistle to the Hebrews has affected your inner world.

**Due Jan. 30, 2017**

### *Sermon*

Each student will write a sermon (2,000 words = 16 hours) on a passage from Hebrews (excluding the text used for the "Exegetical Paper"). The sermon is to be written out in full, complete with transitions, illustrations etc.

- On a separate page include the following:
  - Aim of the passage (one sentence)
  - Aim of the sermon (one sentence)
  - Audience (to whom you are preaching)
  - Outline of the *passage* (one page)

Sermon: The sermon must be written out in full. The following components are required and should be **clearly marked** in your sermon:

- Introduction
- Transitions
- Body (n.b. this section must not read like an exegesis paper; it must be written in the genre of a sermon that is exegetically sound). Within the body of the sermon, indicate the main points you are making.
- Conclusion

**Due Feb. 15, 2017**

*Exegetical Paper*

Each student will write a 2,500 word exegetical paper (20 hours) on Hebrews 12:1-13. The focus on this paper will be interpreting the text, the historical situation and the implications for the intended audience and for today's readers. The following sets out what is expected in the paper:

Passage Interpretation

- A thorough understanding of the passage is clearly present
- The meaning is developed throughout the paper as a result of consultation/dialogue with commentaries, & scholarly work.
- Evidence of personal theological reflection

Structure of Passage

- Establish the structure of the passage and use this structure for headings in paper
- Clearly relates to the passage

Literary Context discussed and developed

- Immediate context
- Greater context of the book

Parallel Passages noted and examined

- How do they differ / how are they similar?
- How do these differences inform our understanding of the passage?
- How is the material woven together for effective presentation?

Significant Elements

- Identify significant words & how they are used / repeated / emphasized in Hebrews, the NT or OT
- Identify literary form
- Identify rhetorical or literary devices
- Social &/or historical background of passage / cultural elements discussed

Scholarly Works consulted

- Source, form and historical critical materials used – used & summarized, cited
- Evidence of personal engagement with this material – dialogue and reflection

Conventions of Writing

- Organization
- Paragraphing – clear Ideas & supporting points
- Sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, citations
- Consistent format of footnotes and bibliography
- Double-spaced

**Due November 15, 2017**

**Course Outline**

The course will follow the basic structure of Hebrews:

**Unit 1     Introductory Issues in Hebrews**

DD chapter 24 pp. 885-932

Prologue: God Has Spoken through His Son 1:1-4

The Covenant and Its Mediators 1:5-7:28

Christ is Superior to the Angels 1:5-2:18

**Unit 2     Proof that Christ is Superior to the Angels 1:5-14**

**Unit 3     Warning #1: Pay Heed to the Son's Message or Suffer Punishment 2:1-4**

Incarnation Secures the Son's Lordship 2:5-9

**Unit 4     Incarnation Benefits Humankind 2:10-18**

Christ is Superior to Moses 3:1-4:13

**Unit 5     Contrast of the Status of Jesus and Moses 3:1-6**

Warning #2: Do not Ignore God's Word, the Consequences are Eternal 3:7-19

**Unit 6     Exhortation for Believers to Enter the Promise of Rest 4:1-14**

Christ is Superior to Aaron & Melchizedek 4:13-7:28

**Unit 7     Qualitative Superiority of the True High Priest 4:15-5:10**

**Unit 8     Warning #3: Beware of Spiritual Immaturity 5:11-6:12**

Perseverance and Hope are the Only Cures 6:13-20

Superiority of Christ to Aaron and Melchizedek 7:1-28

Christ's Superior Covenant and Ministry 8:1-10:18

**Unit 9     Nature of Christ's Superior Covenant 8:1-13**

Christ the Superior Mediator 9:1-28

Christ the Superior Sacrifice 10:1-18

The Covenant, Its Requirements and Its Obligations 10:19-13:17

**Unit 10    Requirement of Perseverance 10:19-39**

Requirement of Faith 11:1-40

Requirement of Discipline 12:1-13

Requirement of Holy Reverence 12:14-29

Social Obligations 13:1-6

Spiritual Obligations 13:7-17

Prayers and Greetings 13:18-25

### Time Investment

Reading for Class	50 hours
On-line Class Discussion	35 hours
Exegetical Paper	20 hours
Sermon	16 hours
Reflection	14 hours
Total	135 hours

### Evaluation

Discussions/Participation	15%
Exegetical Paper	40%
Sermon	30%
Reflection	15%
Total	100%

### Bibliography

#### Commentaries

Attridge, Harold W., and Helmut Koester. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989.

Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Rev. ed. NICNT . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

DeSilva, David Arthur. *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000.

Donelson, Lewis R. *From Hebrews to Revelation: A Theological Introduction*. 1st ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Ellingworth, Paul. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993.

Gordon, R. P. *Hebrews*. 2nd ed. Readings, a New Biblical Commentary. Sheffield Eng.: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.

- Hagner, Donald Alfred. *Hebrews*. 1st ed. Good News Commentary. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Harrington, Daniel J. *The Letter to the Hebrews* The New Collegeville Bible Commentary New Testament. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2006.
- Jewett, Robert. *Letter to Pilgrims: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Hebrews: A Commentary*. 1st ed. The New Testament Library. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Lane, William L. *Hebrews 1-8*. Vol. 47a WBC. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hebrews 9-13*. Vol. 47b WBC. V. 47b. Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1991.
- Long, Thomas G. *Hebrews Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1997.
- Milligan, G. "The Epistle to the Hebrews." *The Expositor* 4, no. sixth (1901): 437-448.
- Montefiore, Hugh. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. 1st ed. Harper's New Testament Commentaries. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.
- Morris, Leon. *Hebrews: Bible Study Commentary* Bible Study Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983.
- O'Brien, Peter Thomas. *The Letter to the Hebrews* The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2010.
- Royster, Dmitri. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003.
- Wilson, R. McL. *Hebrews* New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987.
- Witherington, Ben. *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007.

## Academic Policies

Please see the **Carey Academic Catalog** for more details:

<http://www.carey-edu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Academic-Catalog-2016-2017-FINAL.pdf>

### Course Attendance

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions to fulfil degree requirements. This includes on-line webinars and/or live-streamed portions of courses.

### Carey Grading Scale

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for details on the Carey grading scale.

### Course Withdrawal Policy

A student who withdraws after the period for which tuition refunds are available within the first half of the course will receive a “W” on their transcript. Beyond those dates, they will receive an “F.”

### Extensions

Extensions for course work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If an extension will make it impossible for the professor to submit the final grade no later than one month following the final assignment, the student must petition the Registrar’s Office. If the Registrar’s Office grants such a request, the final extension deadlines will be clearly established. Work granted an extension may receive a grade reduction of up to one-third of the final mark.

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest and responsible scholarship. Students are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas. Academic dishonesty is acting in a manner to gain unearned academic credit. Examples of academic dishonesty are:

- Plagiarizing by misrepresenting the work of another person (in whole or in part) as a student’s own work or failing to give credit for either wording or ideas that belong to another.
- Submitting the same material for credit in more than one course (whether the earlier submission was at Carey or another institution).
- Using unauthorized aids of any sort in examinations, completing work in unauthorized collaboration with others, or the unauthorized recording and use of class lectures.

Penalty for a lack of academic integrity may include a failing grade in the assignment, examination or course, depending on the severity of the offense. All students should become familiar with the plagiarism student resource at: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/>.

### Gender Language

As language usage changes, the church must discern where its language must change in order to bear faithful witness to the gospel. Modern English usage has moved away from using masculine terms to refer to groups that include women. Using of such terms in worship, writing, or conversation miscommunicates the invitation of the gospel and the nature of the church. Assignments that don’t conform to the gender language policy will be returned to the student for resubmissions.

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for more details on this policy.