



TYNDALE
Seminary

**Course Syllabus
Fall Semester 2012**

**ROMANS: FAITH IN THE GOD WHO RESCUES
NEWT 0622**

September 11 to December 4, 2012

TUESDAYS, 8:30-11:20 AM

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Office Hours: Tues. 1:30-2:30 pm; Wed. 5-6 pm or by appointment

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

As he prepared for his last, fateful journey to Jerusalem, Paul sent the Roman churches a summary and defense of his controversial preaching. More than any other New Testament document, it is this letter to the Romans that has gone on to shape the thought of key leaders like Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Barth. In this course we will trace the argument of Paul's letter, setting it in the context of his mission and the realities of the Roman church. Along the way we will explore the radical theological and ethical vision Paul developed, and we will examine some of the very different ways in which Paul's readers have understood that vision.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- offer a historically plausible reconstruction of the letter's first audience and thoughtfully discuss the impact Paul wanted to have on their (a) thoughts, (b) actions, and (c) attitudes and emotions.
- plausibly and thoughtfully locate a passage in Romans within a plausible interpretation of the letter's overall argument;
- accurately summarize and thoughtfully discuss several different scholarly interpretations of a passage in Romans, identifying the evidence on which each approach is based and evaluating the alternatives;
- accurately identify and thoughtfully discuss Paul's use of Old Testament allusions and quotations in a given passage, paying special attention to his interpretive approach;
- plausibly analyze the rhetoric and logic of a passage in Romans, paying special attention to the Apostle's use of ancient diatribe;
- outline a specific, contextual message one may hear in the passage today, based on a valid and thoughtful analogy between one's own contemporary situation and the situation of the letter's first audience.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Burns, J. Patout, Jr., *Romans: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*. Church's Bible. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. (ISBN-10: 0802825753 | ISBN-13: 978-0802825759)

Matera, Frank J. *Romans*. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. (ISBN-10: 0801031893 | ISBN-13: 978-0801031892)

A copy of the Bible in one of the following translations: NIV, TNIV, NRSV, NJB, NET Bible, CEV, ESV

(Note that the NASB is not preferred, and please do not use the KJV or Authorized Version, or the RSV. Loose translations such as the New Living Translation, the New English Bible, and the Message are also not appropriate for this kind of study. If you do not own an appropriate translation you may use the electronic copies available online at Bible Gateway, <http://www.biblegateway.com/>).

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There are four principles of learning that undergird the assignments for this course. *First, we learn best when we put new knowledge to use right away.* Rather than simply feeding information back to an instructor, we learn best when we are engaged in a project or problem that requires us to apply our new skills and information. So, throughout this course we will focus on applying our new knowledge in the interpretation of NT passages.

Second, we learn better when we acquire new knowledge in the context of the same activities we will pursue outside the course. If we learn by pursuing artificial “textbook” problems, then we will not necessarily transfer that knowledge into real-world contexts. On the other hand, if we practice real-world activities from the beginning, then we are likely to use new skills and information beyond the course. Although students will put their Seminary education to use in many different ways, we will all be involved somehow in reading and interpreting Scripture. This activity is, in many ways, the common core of our multi-faceted roles in God’s kingdom. It is central to our personal devotional lives, our leading of small groups, our strategizing about community outreach, our preaching, our teaching, our spiritual direction, our counseling, our visiting of prisoners, our creation of music and works of art, etc. So as we learn about the New Testament in its context, we will focus at each stage on how this new knowledge helps us to interpret specific passages in each biblical book.

Third, we learn best when we are pursuing questions we form for ourselves, rather than questions that are set for us by an instructor. When we help to set the direction of our own learning, we are immediately more motivated and more likely to connect what we learn with other areas of knowledge. So students will decide for themselves what questions they want to make the focus of their blog discussions and what passage they want to examine in their final interpretation essay.

Fourth, we learn best when we help one another grapple with questions. Much of the North American educational system is oriented toward isolated, individual learning. This fosters a competitive, status-driven mindset in which I evaluate my learning based on my victory over others (“top-of-the-class”) and based on self-centred external rewards (“grades” and a good transcript). The problem is that both of these tendencies run directly counter to the values of God’s kingdom in which we are called to “build up” the community and sacrifice our own status for the sake of others. So most of your learning activities in this course will consist of co-operative, group activities. You will

not just be graded on your own contribution. You will also be graded on how further the learning of others in your group. This does not mean being an “expert” and dispensing knowledge. It also means helping your group members to ask good questions. In many cases we build others up best by allowing *them* to teach *us*. So part of your group assignments will also involve inviting your group members to reflect on your own suggestions—what is strong and what is missing or incorrect. This is often a threatening experience for all of us, particularly in such an individualistic society.

- **Contribution to In-Class Group Discussions:** 45% of final grade

Students will participate in small-group discussions in class, based on reading questions set by the instructor. Students are expected to demonstrate in the discussions that they have (a) read and understood the week's sections in Romans and in the textbook; (b) reflected on the set reading questions enough to offer a substantial response; (c) reflected enough on the reading to formulate questions of their own to share with the group. **After each class, students will provide the instructor with a peer evaluation grade out of 10 for each of their fellow group members via a web-app provided at <http://ian-w-scott.webfactional.com/peergrades>**). Students should use the rubric posted on the class web-page in order to formulate these marks. The instructor will also observe the discussions and will reserve the right to balance peer grades that he judges not to reflect a student's actual learning and contribution.

- **Interpretation Essay:** Due by midnight on **Friday, November 23rd**; 45% of final grade.

Students will write an essay of 13-15 pages in length providing and defending an interpretation of one passage from Romans in light of what we have learned over the term. A grading rubric and full instructions for the essay are provided on the class web-page.

- **Outlines and Themes Quiz:** 10% of final grade

Students will write a brief quiz during the final class period in which they will reproduce from memory the detailed structural outline of Romans that has been provided by the instructor over the term.

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

- Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.
- For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254.
- All assignments must be submitted on deadline. Late interpretation essays will be penalized according to the policy laid out in the current academic calendar. **Students absent from class will receive 0/10 for their class discussion contributions** unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor or the student can demonstrate that the lateness is the result of a medical emergency.
- The student's **interpretive essay should be submitted by email attachment** to iscott@tyndale.ca. Please DO NOT submit paper copies. Email confirmation that the essay has been received will be provided within 36 hours. Feedback on the interpretive essay will be provided by email **to the email account from which the essay was submitted**. These assignments may be submitted in any standard word processing file format (.ODT .DOC .DOCX .WPD or .RTF).

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignment:

Contributions to In-Class Discussions	45 %
Interpretation Essay	45 %
Outline Quiz	10 %
Total Grade	100 %

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Each week students should read the set passages from Romans, along with the commentary on those passages in the two textbooks. Students must also prepare for an oral discussion of the week's reading questions.

Sept. 11	Introduction: Romans in Context
Sept. 18	Rom 1:1-2:11
Sept. 25	2:12-3:20
Oct. 2	3:21-4:25
Oct. 9	5:1-21
Oct. 16	6:1-7:25
Oct. 23	** Reading days – no class **
Oct. 27	8:1-39
Nov. 6	9:1-11:36
Nov. 13	12:1-13:14
Nov. 20	14:1-15:13 Essay due the following Friday, Nov. 23rd
Nov. 27	15:14-16:27
Dec. 4	Romans Today: Conclusions and Review Outline quiz in class

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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