

University of  
Dubuque  
Theological  
Seminary

# BI 672 / 673: Romans

Greek Exegesis/  
English Exegesis

Fall 2020

Online and  
Residential

## What's in the Syllabus?

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## Instructor Information

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Dr. Nicholas A. Elder

**E-mail:** [nelder@dbq.edu](mailto:nelder@dbq.edu)

**Phone #:** 913-221-1901

**Virtual Office Hours:** T/Th 1PM-  
3PM and by appt.

## Course Description

The artistic centerpiece for this course is Lovis Corinth's 1911 oil painting, *Der Apostel Paulus* (above). Corinth offers a compellingly repugnant portrait of Paul. He is wild-eyed, pale, disheveled, and looks like he might be a danger to himself and others. His right hand is raised in a classic iconographic teaching pose. But the hand is not airy and serene as in most depictions of the apostle; it is tense and impassioned, like Paul's message. Paul (anachronistically) holds a Bible, but his gaze is not on it. Rather, he glowers at the viewer, and the more one stares back into his gaunt eyes, the more captivating he becomes.

This class explores the religious, theological, historical, and social worlds of Paul's letter to the Romans. It also attends to the reception of Paul throughout history and how this letter is presently read in various social contexts. Students will practice and develop various exegetical skillsets related to the interpretation of the New Testament in general, Pauline letters more specifically, and Romans most specifically. In the act of interpretation, they will merge their own intersectional social worlds with Paul's.

Paul is polarizing. Many find him either repugnant or compelling, like Corinth's portrayal of him, though not usually both at the same time. For some, he is theological genius *par excellence* as Christianity's founder. For others, his message is stiff and repressive. By the end of this course, as we gaze at the apostle and his letter to the Romans, my hope is that disagreeable impressions of Paul will be refined by something compelling and liberative. Likewise, I hope strictly amiable and goodly portrayals of the apostle might be besmirched by something ribald and indecorous.



## Curricular Objectives

*Be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the church (MDiv)*

*Interpret the Christian Scriptures through faithful exegesis and in light of the Christian tradition (MDiv)*

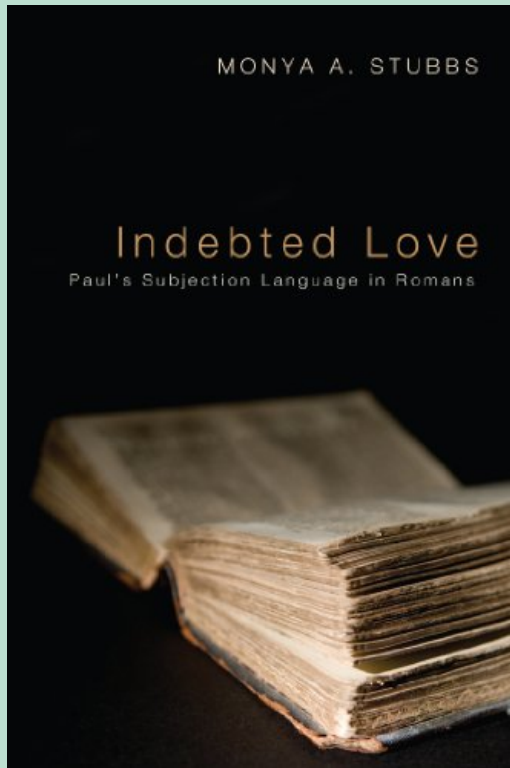
*Preach the Word of God with faithfulness and clarity (MDiv)*

*Articulate and reflect critically and constructively on the biblical and theological foundations of God's mission to the world (MAMD)*

*Be able to identify and interpret key themes from the Christian scriptures (MACL)*

## Required Texts (Greek and English Exegesis)

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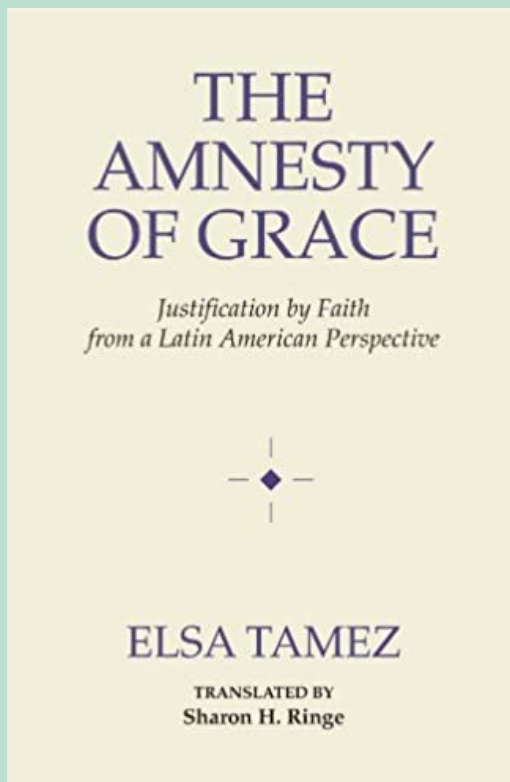


Monya A. Stubbs

***Indebted Love:  
Paul's Subjection  
Language in  
Romans***

Pickwick, 2013.

ISBN: 1620327694



Elsa Tamez (Author)  
Sharon H. Ringe  
(Translator)

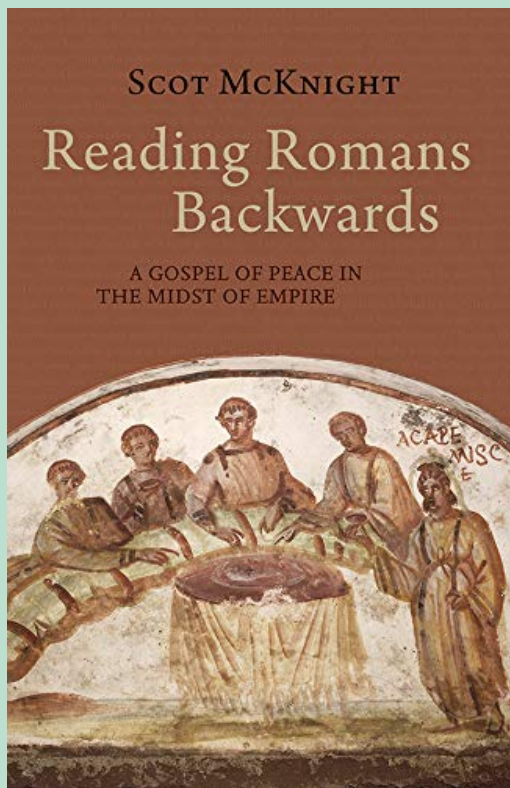
***The Amnesty of  
Grace: Justification  
by Faith from a  
Latin American  
Perspective***

Wipf and Stock, 2002

ISBN: 1579108652



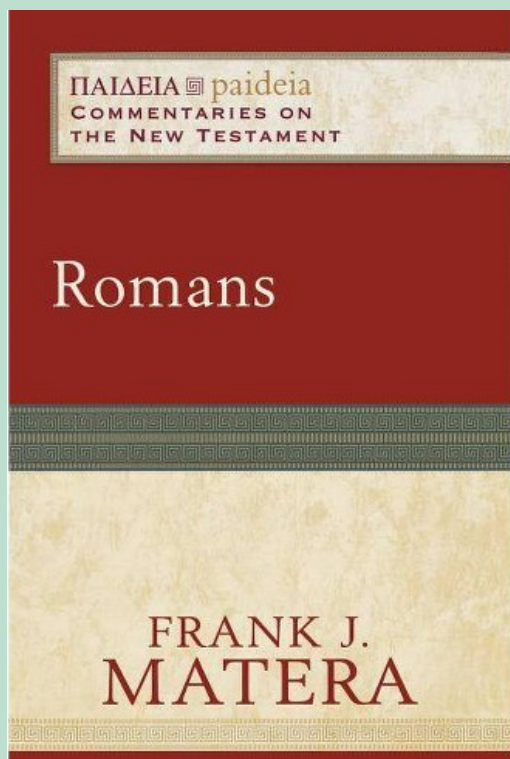
# Required Texts (Greek and English Exegesis)



Scot McKnight  
***Reading Romans  
Backwards: A  
Gospel of Peace in  
the Midst of Empire***

Baylor University  
Press, 2019

ISBN: 1481308777



Frank J. Matera  
***Romans (Paideia  
Commentary  
Series)***  
Baker Academic Press,  
2010

ISBN: 0801031893





## Commentaries (Choose One or More)

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Each student will choose one of the following commentaries on Romans. Reading from this commentary will inform his or her forum posts. The intention is that several different interpretive perspectives will be brought into the online discussion on a given portion of the gospel. Of course students may purchase more than one of these commentaries (and this is recommended for the purpose of future preaching, teaching, and research), but students will only be responsible to read and report on one of these commentaries for the purposes of the course.

Greek Exegesis students **\*must\*** choose a commentary from the second list. The reason for this is that the commentaries in the second list presume knowledge of Greek and attend to issues of translation and grammar to a much greater extent than the commentaries in the first list. English Exegesis students may choose a commentary from either list but should be aware that commentaries in the second list presume a working knowledge of Greek.

### English Exegesis Students:

Bird, Michael F. *Romans*. Story of God Biblical Commentary. Zondervan Academic, 2016.

Byrne, Brendan. *Sacra Pagina: Romans*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007.

Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Short Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.

Keck, Leander E. *Romans*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

Moo, Douglas J. *Romans: The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2000.

### Greek Exegesis Students:

Dunn, James D. G. *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans*. 2 vols. Waco: Thomas Nelson, 1988.

Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Commentary*. Edited by Eldon Jay Epp. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

Moo, Douglas J. *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Romans*. 2nd ed. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018.

Thielman, Frank S. *Romans*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2018.

## **Optional Texts: General Recommendations and English Exegesis**

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The following are all “optional” texts. “Optional” here has several meanings and each is explained in the italics below that comes before the list. Some of these text will be necessary to complete the course’s objectives. Many will appear in assignment instructions as resources to consult. However, there is no need to acquire all of the books in the lists below.

### **General Recommendations for All Students:**

*None of these texts is required to pass or even earn an “A” in the course. They will not be required reading. However, they come highly recommended by the professor as helpful resources.*

Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. *When in Romans*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018.

Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.

Marchal, Joseph A., ed. *Studying Paul’s Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

### **Texts for English Exegesis Students:**

*As part of the grade specifications for this class, English Exegesis students may complete a book report on one of these texts or another that is approved by the professor:*

Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. *Our Mother Saint Paul*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.

Smith, Eric C. *Paul the Progressive?: The Compassionate Christian’s Guide to Reclaiming the Apostle as an Ally*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2019.

Works, Carla Swafford. *The Least of These: Paul and the Marginalized*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.

*As part of the grade specifications for this class, English Exegesis students may write a report on perspectives and approaches to Paul, explaining how their own theology and perspective on Paul relate to them. One or more of these texts will be particularly helpful for that report:*

Anderson, Garwood P. *Paul’s New Perspective: Charting a Soteriological Journey*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016.

Bird, Michael F., ed. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012.

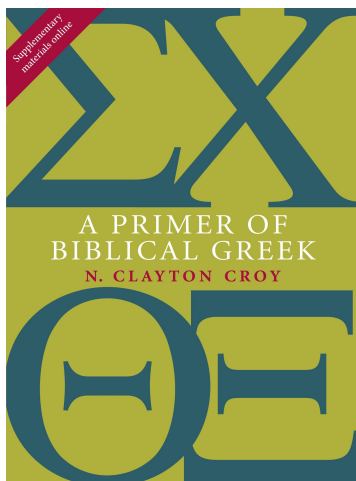
Westerholm, Stephen. *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Zetterholm, Magnus. *Approaches to Paul: A Student’s Guide to Recent Scholarship*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009.

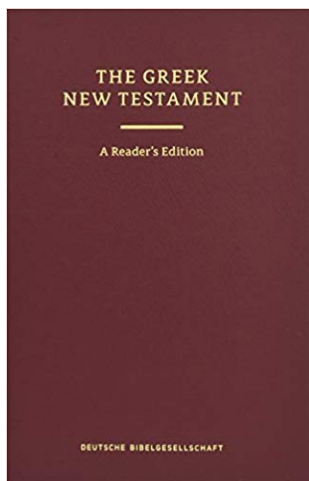
## Additional Texts: Greek Exegesis

The following texts are only relevant to Greek Exegesis students. Some are required, some are recommended, and some were likely acquired for the introductory Greek course.

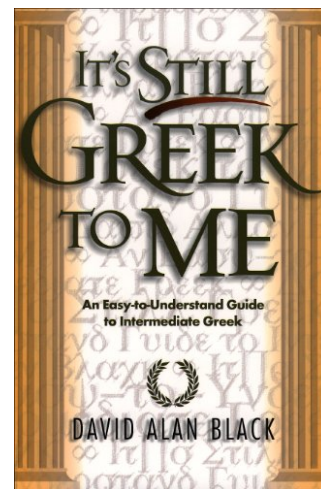
### Required Texts:



N. Clayton Croy, *A Primer of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011)  
ISBN: 9780802867339



UBS 5th Revised Greek New Testament Reader's Edition (German Bible Society, 2015)  
ISBN: 1619706180



David Alan Black, *It's Still Greek to Me: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998)  
ISBN: 0801021812.

### Recommended Texts:

The following are not strictly necessary to pass or to get an “A” in the class, but will be very helpful in completing the objectives for the course and for any students who will be taking the PCUSA Ordination Exam.

**Walter Bauer and Frederick W. Danker et al.** *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Commonly referred to as BDAG, this is the best lexicon for New Testament Greek. It is the “full version” of the required lexicon for the course. The price is steep, but serious Greek students will need to own this eventually. It is one to keep an eye out for at used book stores.

**Metzger, Bruce Manning.** *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*. 2nd ed. New York: United Bible Societies, 1994.

This book explains many of the “textual variants” that appear in the Greek New Testament. It is particularly helpful for the “establishing the text” portion of the PCUSA Ordination Exam.

**Köstenberger, Andreas J., Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer.** *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016.

This is a more expansive Greek grammar than the required grammar for the course. It goes deeper into and gives more explanation to many of the grammatical concepts introduced in Black's *It's Still Greek to Me*.

# Course Objectives

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Everything in this course, from readings to assignments to lectures, is designed to help students accomplish the objectives below. Moreover, grades in the course are determined by students ability to complete these objectives and doing so throughout the course of the semester. Objectives vary between the Greek and English Exegesis version of the course.

## Objectives

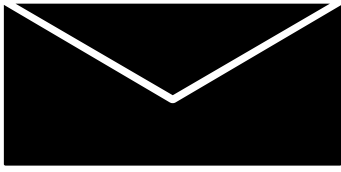
- #1:** Exegete a select passage from Romans, paying attention to the world behind, world of, and world in front of the text.
- #2:** Identify and articulate central tenets of your own social context, explaining how these effect how you interpret the New Testament and Romans in particular.
- #3:** As part of the interpretive process, make use of multiple biblical commentaries that adopt various exegetical, theological, and ideological perspective.
- #4 (Greek Exegesis Only):** Utilize Greek linguistic tools in service of interpretation of Romans and select passages from it.
- #4 (English Exegesis Only):** Engage a variety of contemporary perspectives on Pauline scholarship and determine how your own theology and understanding of Paul relates to them.





# Assignments

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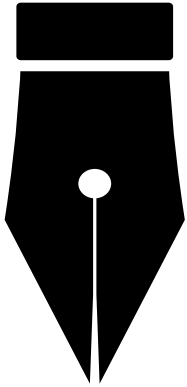
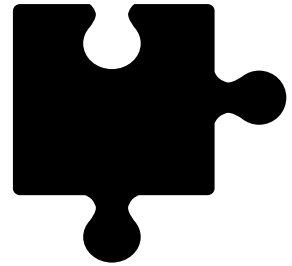


## Weekly Online Forum Discussions

The course will be built upon discussions of readings and translations. Students will be assigned to a discussion group and will post in Moodle forums, as well as respond to other students' posts in Moodle on a weekly basis.

## Greek Assignments (Greek Exegesis Only)

Students taking the Greek Exegesis version of the course will complete assignments related to Greek grammar, translation, and textual criticism. There will be one of these assignment available each week in the course, though student will not necessarily be required to complete all of them to achieve the grade they want in the class (see more in the grading section of the syllabus).



## Short Papers (English Exegesis Only)

There will be the opportunity to write three short papers throughout the course of the semester. Students will not necessarily be required to write all three papers to achieve the grade that they want to in the class (see more in the grading section of the syllabus). The three short paper topics are as follows:

- Book Report
- Topical Paper
- Perspectives Paper

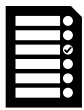
## “World” Assignments

There will be one assignment for each of the “worlds” of the text: the World Behind the Text, the World of the Text, and the World in Front of the Text. These three assignments are designed to scaffold learning the exegetical process. The final exegetical paper (detailed below) addresses all three of these worlds. The “world assignments” require students to address each of the three worlds separately from one another before bringing all the worlds together in one interpretive paper.



## Final Exegetical Paper

Students will write an exegetical paper on any passage from the Gospel of Mark. The exegetical paper represents the culmination of the student's learning in the course and thus requires him or her to consider the passage's historical and cultural context, it's narrative context, it's contemporary relevance, and to consult several articles and commentaries on the passage. Detailed instructions for the exegesis paper will be made available later in the semester.



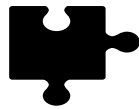
# Greek Exegesis Specifications Grading

This class uses what is called specifications or "specs" grading. All assignments are graded on a pass/fail basis. The instructions for each assignment will have detailed specs (read: requirements) for how to pass the assignment at an "acceptable" level. To achieve the grade you want in the class, you will need to complete the different specs for each letter grade. This will be slightly different for each "version" of the class (Greek online, Greek residential, English online, English residential). The rationale for using this grading system is that it removes much of the subjectivity of grading, restores rigor to academic work, and it is learning outcome oriented.

## To Earn a "D:"



1 "Acceptable" Exegesis Paper



5 Greek Assignments

8 Forums or Classes



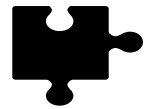
0 "World" Assignments



## To Earn a "C:"



1 "Acceptable" Exegesis Paper



7 Greek Assignments

9 Forums or Classes



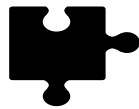
1 "World" Assignments



## To Earn a "B:"



1 "Acceptable" Exegesis Paper



9 Greek Assignments

10 Forums or Classes



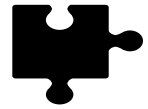
2 "World" Assignments



## To Earn an "A:"



1 "Advanced" Exegesis Paper



10 Greek Assignments

11 Forums or Classes



3 "World" Assignments



**Grace Tokens:** Every student receives three "grace tokens" that can be used at any time during the course. These "grace tokens" can be redeemed for any of the following with no explanation needed:

- Revising and resubmitting a paper that did not meet the specs to be deemed "acceptable"
- A 48-hour extension on a paper
- Excusing an unexcused absence
- A "free" credit for a week of discussion forum participation (i.e. getting credit for participating in one discussion forum without having participated in it)
- A "free" credit for a Greek assignment (i.e. getting credit for the assignment without having completed it)



# Greek Exegesis Specifications Grading

This class uses what is called specifications or "specs" grading. All assignments are graded on a pass/fail basis. The instructions for each assignment will have detailed specs (read: requirements) for how to pass the assignment at an "acceptable" level. To achieve the grade you want in the class, you will need to complete the different specs for each letter grade. This will be slightly different for each "version" of the class (Greek online, Greek residential, English online, English residential). The rationale for using this grading system is that it removes much of the subjectivity of grading, restores rigor to academic work, and it is learning outcome oriented.

## To Earn a "D:"



1 "Acceptable" Exegesis Paper



0 Papers

8 Forums or Classes



0 "World" Assignments



## To Earn a "C:"



1 "Acceptable" Exegesis Paper



1 Paper

9 Forums or Classes



1 "World" Assignments



## To Earn a "B:"



1 "Acceptable" Exegesis Paper



2 Papers

10 Forums or Classes



2 "World" Assignments



## To Earn an "A:"



1 "Advanced" Exegesis Paper



3 Papers

11 Forums or Classes



3 "World" Assignments



**Grace Tokens:** Every student receives three "grace tokens" that can be used at any time during the course. These "grace tokens" can be redeemed for any of the following with no explanation needed:

- Revising and resubmitting a paper that did not meet the specs to be deemed "acceptable"
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- A "free" credit for a Greek assignment (i.e. getting credit for the assignment without having completed it)



Please be advised that this is the advanced “course description” version of the syllabus and will likely undergo changes before the semester starts. Once the semester has begun, you should be certain to consult the syllabus posted to Moodle and not this document.