

MB Biblical Seminary
4824 East Butler Avenue
Fresno, CA. #93727

NT 632
Pastoral Letters
3 Units of Credit
Spring Semester, 2006
Thursdays, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
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Syllabus

Course Description

The letters to Timothy and Titus are unique within the body of New Testament writings commonly attributed to Paul. They alone are written to individuals, not communities, although the exhortations of these letters frequently concern the entire church, or groups within it. These three letters have a distinctive vocabulary and style that sets them apart from the other Pauline letters. All three portray a deep concern for the pastoral oversight of the church, especially for specific leadership roles within the community. For this reason, these three letters have, since the 18th century, been called the "Pastoral" Letters or Epistles.

There are good reasons for studying, teaching & preaching the pastoral letters in the 21st century church. Let me mention three good reasons. First, we study them because they will challenge our presuppositions and preoccupations. Many contemporary preachers avoid these letters because they challenge our conventional wisdom about the Christian life and the church. But that is why we need to teach & preach them today! We do not preach the Scriptures because they confirm our assumptions. We preach & teach these letters because they challenge our proclivities and platitudes. Second, we teach the PL's because they are part of the canon of the New Testament. Most modern scholars argue that the PL's were not written by Paul but by later members of a Pauline school. As a result, many contemporary preachers shy away from these letters. They assume that since Paul did not write these letters, they have no value for the church. But we read and preach the PL's because they are part of the NT canon. They have value for us quite apart from our ability to verify their author. We read these letters for what they say to the 21st century church, not simply for what they can teach us about the 1st century church. We teach these letters because we believe in the prophetic role of the biblical

text. These texts interpret us and for that reason we need to proclaim them in today's church. Third, we preach the PL's because they force the contemporary preacher to struggle with its doubly mediated message. These letters were written to individuals, not communities. The usual equation between Paul and the preacher as well as the automatic identification of Paul's audience with the preacher's congregation is broken. The implied readers of these letters are Paul's delegates - Timothy and Titus. This forces the preacher to ask: Is our situation analogous to the one implied by the text? Does what Paul says to his delegates apply to all of us, only to preachers & teachers, or to none of us? What are the enduring issues these letters address, and what issues are truly only of historical interest? In short, the literary character of these letters causes the preacher to struggle out of which creative preaching & teaching can come.

This course treats the text of each chapter of these three letters, exploring the flow and form of the text, explaining the text, and relating its message to the circumstances facing the church of the 21st century. Special attention will be given to teaching and preaching the Pastoral Letters in the setting of the church.

Course Objectives

NT 632 seeks to consider the text and teaching of 1st and 2nd Timothy & Titus as it relates to the church's participation in God's mission in the world. Participants will experience the following outcomes:

1. You will become more conversant with the origin, situation, and recipients of the pastoral letters;
2. You will acquire a better grasp of the teaching & theology of the pastoral letters in terms of their form, sources, and relevance for today;
3. You will adopt an interpretive position on a crucial New Testament text (I Timothy 2:9-15) that has influenced the question of the role of women in ministry in the church;
4. You will become acquainted with modern and classic Christian interpreters of the pastoral letters; and
5. You will grow in your ability to exegete, interpret & preach/teach the NT for today's church.

Degree Related Objectives

NT 632 seeks to address the following M. Div. Outcomes:

1. Knowledge of the assumptions and principles of the study and interpretation of the Bible, the biblical qualities of leadership and maturity;

2. Appreciation of the inspiration and authority of the Bible in the context of community, the importance of a biblical and theological frame of reference in addressing life issues, the personal application of the Bible to contemporary life in a spirit of obedience to its message, the importance of a godly life and pleasing social qualities;
3. Development of the skills of exegesis, theological reflection, and the skill of relating the gospel to our cultural context in North America.

Required Texts

- Mark Harding, ***What Are They Saying About the Pastoral Epistles?*** Paulist Press, 2001. ISBN = 0-8091-3975-8
- Gordon D. Fee, ***1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus: New International Biblical Commentary.*** Edited by W. Ward Gasque. Hendrikson, 1988. ISBN =0-94357510-9
- Luke Timothy Johnson, ***Paul's Letter to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. The New Testament in Context.*** Trinity Press International, 1996. ISBN = 1-56338-144-3
- Thomas C. Oden, ***First and Second Timothy and Titus. Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Teaching and Preaching.*** John Knox Press, 1989. ISBN = 0-8042-
- John D. Stackhouse, ***Finally Feminist: A Pragmatic Christian Understanding of Gender.*** Eerdmans, 2005. ISBN = 0-8010-3130-3

Course Outline

During the semester, the NT text units listed below will be treated in whole or in part. Classes will be conducted in a seminar style with the participants exchanging insights & posing questions based on prior study of the biblical passages in question. Participants should prepare for each class session in the following three ways: 1st - Read the biblical text in the original language (if you do not have a working knowledge of NT Greek, then prepare by reading the text in at least two modern translations); 2nd - Read the appropriate chapter in the commentaries by Oden, Fee and Johnson; and 3rd - Bring your interpretive questions & insights to the class for group discussion & reflection.

Week 1	1 st Timothy 1:1-20
Week 2	1 st Timothy 2:1-15
Week 3	1 st Timothy 3:1-16
Week 4	1 st Timothy 4:1-16
Week 5	1 st Timothy 5:1-25
Week 6	1 st Timothy 6:1-21
Week 7	Titus 1:1-6
Week 8	Titus 2:1-15

Week 9	Module Week - March 6-10
Week 10	Titus 3:1-15
Week 11	2 nd Timothy 1:1-18
Week 12	2 nd Timothy 2:1-26
Week 13	2 nd Timothy 3:1-17
Week 14	Easter Week - April 13-16
Week 15	2 nd Timothy 4:1-22

Course Requirements

- **Research Essay/Project.** Participants may choose **ONE** of several research and/or project formats: a) an exegetical paper based on a selected literary unit of the pastoral letters; b) a sermon in manuscript form based on a specific pericope within the corpus of the pastoral letters; c) an adult education lesson on a selected unit of the pastoral letters; d) a small group Bible study guide on a selected portion of the pastoral letters, including a companion guide and/or commentary on the inductive study guide; e) a critical review of a key book that addresses some prominent theme in the pastoral letters. Whatever your chosen form of study and research, it must meet the following four criteria: i) it must be pre-approved by the instructor; ii) it must be 20 pages double-spaced; iii) it must use footnotes or end-notes; and iv) it must include a select bibliography of not less than 10 sources (see the attached select bibliography). Here are a few specific suggestions:
 1. Exegetical Paper: Develop a paper on one of the "difficult passages" in the Pastoral Letters. For example, (a) 2 Tim 2:11-13 - Does God Remain Faithful When We are Faithless? (b) 1 Tim. 2:11-12 - No Women Teachers Please? (c) 1 Tim 2:13-15 - Salvation through Childbirth? (d) 1 Tim 5:8 - Worse Than An Unbeliever? (e) 1 Tim 5:23 - Wine for the Stomach?
 2. Sermon MSS: Design a sermon on sound doctrine and right living as expounded by one of the following passages: 1 Tim 4:6-10, 1 Tim 6:11-16, Titus 3:8b-11, Titus 3:1-2. Design a sermon on the *kerygma* or gospel message as expounded in one of the following text units: Titus 3:3-8, 1 Tim 1:8-11, 1 Tim 1:12-17.
 3. Study Guide: Write an inductive study guide on Jesus Christ as Mediator: 1 Tim 3:14-16; 1 Tim 2:3-7; 2 Tim. 2:8-10; 2 Tim 2:11-13; Titus 2:11-14. Or, write a guide for use in the context of the family/home based on 2 Tim 3:14-17 and 2 Tim 1:3-7.
 4. Critical Essay: Write an essay that critiques the "health and wealth gospel" on the basis of the message

of the Pastoral Letters, especially 1 Tim 6:7-10 and 6:17-19.

5. Critical Review: Critique one of the following two books: **Biblical Eldership** by Alexander Strauch or **Elders in Congregational Life** by Mark Dever. in light of your study of the pastoral letters, especially the materials pertaining to elders and/or church leaders.

- **Position Paper.** Each participant is expected to write a position paper on 1 Timothy 2:9-15. The position paper must be based on the participant's exegesis of this text unit and reading of John D. Stackhouse, **Finally Feminist**. Participants are to be prepared to share a one-page summary of their position paper during the final class day of the semester.
- **Oral Presentation.** Each participant will select ONE text unit and then prepare to teach it to the class (30 minutes maximum). Participants will select, exegete & interpret one distinct unit of the Pastoral Letters for class presentation. Using the commentaries listed as required readings, participants are expected to present their interpretive findings to the class, providing a one-page handout that summarizes their best understanding of the text and its message for today. The presentation should aim to surface the text's exegetical and hermeneutical problems for class discussion.

Course Time Investments*

	<u>3 Units</u>
Readings	60 hours
Research Project	30 hours
Position Paper	10 hours
Oral Presentation	10 hours
Class Participation	<u>40 hours</u>
	150 hours

* To earn one unit of graduate credit participants are expected to do 45 hours of work. Reading time is based on the rate of 20 pages per hour. Time allotment for writing papers or reports is based on the rate of 125 words per hour or 1/2 page per hour.

Course Grading

The grade for the course is a letter grade. Late assignments will be accepted, but the grade will be reduced by 1/2 grade for each late day (for example, an **A** paper will be reduced to an **A-** if late one day). Also, if you miss more than 10% of the class

time (4.5 hours) you risk failing the course. The relative weight for course assignments will be as follows:

Research Project	40%	
Class Participation	10%	
Position Paper	25%	
Oral Presentation		<u>25%</u>
		100%

MBBS is committed to the use of non-discriminatory language in both class and assignments.

Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to the professor or consult the Registrar or Academic Dean.

Select Bibliography

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