

**Syllabus for
1 CORINTHIANS
GRK872**

Instructor: Dr. Andy Johnson

Spring, 2010

I. Catalogue Description and Course Objectives

Catalogue Description: An intensive exegetical study of 1 Corinthians in light of introductory issues and the distinctive themes of the Epistle (*Prerequisite: BIB550 or equivalent.*)

Enlarged Description: This course will consist of a careful study of major passages in the epistle in their socio-historical, literary/rhetorical, and theological dimensions. Special attention will be paid to the way Paul attempts to persuade the epistle's audience to share his theological and ecclesiological vision.

Objectives: Upon successful completion of the course you will have (R= Requirement):

1. Demonstrated a basic grasp of the content and theology of 1 Corinthians (R1, 2, 4, 5, 6).
2. Demonstrated a rudimentary understanding of the historical, socio-political, and literary background against which it is best understood (R 2, 4, 6).
3. Demonstrated an ability to translate the Greek of portions of 1 Corinthians and engage in critical conversation with regard to its potential for meaning (R5).
4. Demonstrated an ability to exercise creative theological imagination by evaluating one contemporary ecclesiological proposal and constructing your own in light of Paul's vision of Christian community in 1 Corinthians (R3, 6).

II. Required Textbooks and Journal Articles

Gorman, Michael J. *Reading Paul*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007. **(If you've never read the Longenecker book below and written a paper for me on it, buy Longenecker instead of this book).**

Harper, Brad and Paul Louis Metzger. *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009.

Hays, Richard. *First Corinthians*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997.

Johnson, Andy. "Firstfruits and Death's Defeat: Metaphor in Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28," *Word and World*, 16, 1996 (http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/22-2_Body_of_Christ/22-2_Johnson.pdf).

_____. "Turning the World Upside Down in 1 Corinthians 15: Apocalyptic Epistemology, the Resurrected Body, and the New Creation," *Evangelical Quarterly*, 75, 2003 (NTS library).

_____. "On Removing a Trump Card: Flesh and Blood and the Reign of God," *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 13, 2003 (http://www.ibr-bbr.org/IBRBulletin/BBR_2003/BBR_2003b_02_Johnson_FleshAndBlood.pdf).

Longenecker, Bruce. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003 (**If you have already read this book and written a paper based on it for one of my classes, buy the Gorman book above instead of this book**).

Witherington, Ben. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Winter, Bruce. *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Recommended Critical Commentaries:

Collins, Raymond. *First Corinthians*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007.

Fee, Gordon. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *First Corinthians*. Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Garland, David E. *1 Corinthians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.

Thiselton, Anthony. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

III. Helpful Websites (If you know of more, please let me know!)

<http://www.ntgateway.com/paul-the-apostle/>

This is the Paul section of the NT Gateway site. It is one of the best sites on the Web for generally reliable information on Paul and the rest of NT studies. (The following websites are also available as hyperlinks from this website.)

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/corinthians>

Conflict and Community in the Corinthian Church. Edited by J. Shannon Clarkson: excellent and extensive materials from The Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church. This well designed web-site is both scholarly and devotional. Current features include Corinth at the Time of Paul's Arrival, Maps Related to the Life of Paul and an Annotated Bibliography.

<http://www.luthersem.edu/ckoester/Paul/journey2/CorinthStreet.htm>

Journeys of Paul. By Craig Koester. Clearly presented and nicely illustrated pictures of Corinth.

IV. Requirements: All assignments that are to be posted into Moodle are due at 11:55 PM, CT (subject to change at my discretion).

Note: Most of the assignments below involve using the online classroom software, Moodle, in some way. To find out how to complete the task the assignment asks you to do, go into the Moodle website at <http://Moodle.nts.edu>. Sign in by using the user name and password sent to you by the IT department here at NTS. (If you do not have a user name and password, email support@NTS.edu immediately and they will send them to you.) From there, click on “Support” in the menu bar at the top of the page. Next, click on “Student Frequently Asked Questions.” In this resource you should be able to find instructions on any task that you will be required to do.

1. Reading 1 Corinthians. You must read 1 Corinthians through (preferably in one sitting but **in no more than two** sittings) at least ten times during this course. The due dates for each reading are listed in the Schedule of Assignments below. (**Note carefully: One of these readings is due on Thursday, February 11.**) By the due date/time of the reading, you must have posted a statement in the Reading 1 Cor. Forum in Moodle saying that you have completed that due date’s reading of the epistle. Each reading counts 10 points making all ten readings count for 100 points toward your final grade. **You cannot “make up” any of this reading. You can only get credit for what you actually read by the due date listed on the Schedule of Assignments below. Because these are basically “give away” points, this is an all or nothing assignment. You do not get credit for partial reading.**

****Note Carefully**** To save time, as you read 1 Corinthians, you should keep a running master list of *critical* questions and insights of comprehensive or theological significance that arise from a careful reading of the text. These questions and comments should not only note the scriptural context of the concern, but what matter of importance is at stake. These questions will later become a part of requirement 4 described below.

2. Longenecker/Gorman Assignment: If you have not done so before in one of my classes, read Bruce Longenecker’s novel, *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*. Then read 1 Corinthians carefully (this will count as your **second** reading of 1 Corinthians). Assume for now that Longenecker’s historical novel accurately captures the socio-historical, cultural, and especially the **political** feel of the first century setting in which 1 Corinthians would have been first heard. Write a 1,000-1,250 word paper, typed, and double-spaced, answering the following question: How does understanding 1 Corinthians in light of this background change the way I read it? Give **specific examples from the text of 1 Corinthians** which sound different to you after reading Longenecker and **explain why they now sound different**.

If you have already read Longenecker for one of my classes, read Gorman instead. After carefully reading this book, briefly describe 25 insights you gained from the book that you consider to be significant. The book has 12 chapters (not counting the first and last “Why Paul” chapters). Make sure you draw at least 2 insights from each chapter **noting the chapter and page number from which you are drawing the insight**. The remaining insight may come from anywhere in the book. If you choose to disagree or question an aspect of the author’s treatment as one of your “insights,” **you must state the basis for your disagreement/question**. This assignment should be

1,000-1,250 words and will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) how well you appear to have understood the significance of the biblical/theological issues raised by Gorman; (3) your use of correct English; (3) your adherence to length requirements. An example of an “A” quality “Insights” assignment from another course will be available for you in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. It will be called “Model Insights Assignment.” **If you do this assignment, make sure you also post your second reading of 1 Corinthians by its due date.**

You will submit your paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for Longenecker/Gorman. On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. It must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM on Monday, February 15. You may earn up to 100 points for this Longenecker/Gorman assignment.

- 3. Fishbowl Discussion of Harper and Metzger’s *Exploring Ecclesiology*.** You may earn up to 75 points by actively participating in a “fishbowl” discussion of specific chapters in this book. The “fishbowl” will consist of a class discussion/critical analysis of this book. **I will not simply give these points away because you show up in class.** You must make regular contributions during this discussion period in a way that demonstrates an understanding of, **and a critical engagement with**, the assigned reading. Depending on how many students are in the class, I will split the class into groups with one group discussing one part of the book and the other group(s) discussing the other part(s) of the book. You will not know in advance which part of the book your group will discuss. **In any case, you are responsible for all of the book.** Hence, you should carefully read all of the assigned reading and take careful notes on it (in some form or fashion) or even bring a summary of it to refer to during the discussion. The fishbowl will take place on Monday, March 29.

I will attempt to focus the discussions by asking at least a couple of the following questions: (1) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the particular ecclesiological affirmations in the chapter(s) being discussed? (2) How does this proposal relate to Paul’s vision of Christian community expressed/implied in 1 Corinthians? (3) What are the pastoral ramifications of this discussion for how we might engage in shaping Christian communities in North America?

- 4. Critical Reading Responses (CRR) to 1 Corinthians, Hays, Witherington, Winter, (and Johnson in CRR2).** You will prepare two critical reading responses of **1250-1750 words** each in which you critically engage a portion of 1 Corinthians and the textbook reading associated with it. For the specific content and due dates of these CRR’s, see the Schedule of Assignments below.

These responses should have three sections: (1) *Critical* questions and insights of comprehensive or theological significance that arise from a careful reading of 1 Corinthians itself **prior to** reading the selections from the textbooks. These questions and comments should not only note the scriptural context of the concern, but what matter of importance is at stake. These questions should be an **edited version** of your running master list of *critical* questions and insights that you generated during your prior readings of 1 Corinthians. (2) *Critical* questions and observations (not just “insights”) that your reading of Hays, Witherington, and Winter (and Johnson in CRR 2) raises in your mind about the biblical text and/or vice-versa, critical questions and

observations that reading the biblical text raises in your mind about your reading of Hays, Witherington, and Winter (and Johnson in CRR 2). (3) A comparative section noting any significant disagreements or inconsistencies between Hays, Witherington, Winter (and Johnson in CRR 2) **as to how they address specific critical issues**. An example of an “A” quality CRR will be available in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. It will be called “Model CRR.”

You will submit your CRR’s in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for the particular CRR you are submitting (e.g., CRR1 or CRR2). On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. CRR1 must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM on Monday, March 15 and CRR2 by 11:55 PM on Monday, April 19. You may earn up to 100 points for each CRR making them both together count for 200 points toward your final grade. My assistant may be grading your CRRs.

5. **Greek Translation Assignment.** During the semester, you will translate chapters 1–3, 5–6 and 13–15. You will prepare an original translation of these passages and we will meet three times during the semester to discuss them. You will be expected to be able to orally translate any portion of the passage assigned for that meeting. You **may not** bring a written translation to the meeting. You will be evaluated on the basis of how well you are able to: (a) translate various grammatical constructions; (b) articulate the various possibilities for meaning the Greek might have; (c) articulate the significance of all of this for interpreting 1 Corinthians as a whole. You may earn up to 75 points for this assignment. The dates for these translation meetings will be determined after the class starts so that we can determine what times/dates work best for everyone involved.
6. **Synthetic Essay Exam.** You will write a take-home essay on a question (or questions) that will be made available on Monday, April 19. If I approve it, you may write a research paper on some aspect of the interpretation of 1 Corinthians instead. The approximate length of the take-home essay should be 3,000-5,000 words and the research paper should be approximately 5,000-6,000. You may earn up to 450 points for this assignment. You will submit your Essay/Paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for “Essay/Paper.” On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. Your essay/paper must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM on Monday, May 10.

The take-home essay will be a question (or questions) related to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians and the ministry implications of the material we’ve covered in class and in the reading. Hence, to answer it, you will creatively draw on your class notes, all your course reading, and on your own theological reflections in the context of a ministry situation.

Unless you will have regular access to the NTS library or another equivalent theological library, you should **not** consider writing the research paper. As a research paper, it clearly **requires additional research over and above your class resources**. I must approve not only your doing it but also your **topic by no later than Monday, April 26**.

As general guidelines for the research paper, follow the instructions given by Joel Green in the document, “Some Comments on Research Papers.” It is located in Moodle in the

Course Resources topic area. **I will assume you have read and followed Green's directions when I grade your paper.** Note carefully: You should begin your research paper with a thesis statement that explicitly states the thesis you intend to argue and return to that thesis statement in your conclusion. While the paper should generally follow Turabian style, you may consult the *SBL Handbook of Style* for proper form for footnotes, abbreviations, etc. You may also use the document entitled "Ripples and Luke 24HBT.doc" located in Moodle in the Course Resources topic areas as a general guide as to how this paper should look in terms of footnotes and style.

V. Summary of Grading Policy

A Word about Grading: Evaluation in this kind of course, by its very nature, involves an element of subjectivity. It involves someone who is an expert in the field making a judgment on the kind of work you produce. That is a part of what you are paying for in this class. The primary factors I take into account in assessing "good solid graduate work," the sort of work to which I assign a "B" are (1) ability to demonstrate a breadth and depth of understanding of the material engaged; (2) ability to engage this material **in a critical way**; (3) ability to exhibit how the material is related to a larger theological and ecclesial context. If you demonstrate a **consistent** ability to do these things in all your coursework, you can expect to receive a B. If you demonstrate consistent ability to do them **incisively and with excellence**, you can expect to receive an A. If you demonstrate an ability to do these things **often, but not consistently**, you can expect to receive a C. (Hence, I assume that a C means "average," or "satisfactory" work. It does **not** mean "bad" or "unsatisfactory.") If you **seldom** demonstrate an ability to do these things, you can expect to receive a D.

The final grade will be computed using the following point scale. There are 1,000 possible points.

100 Points	Reading 1 Corinthians
100 Points	Longenecker/Gorman Assignment
75 Points	Harper & Metzger Fishbowl
200 Points	Critical Reading Responses
75 Points	Greek Translation Assignment
450 Points	Synthetic Essay/Research Paper

The following point scale will determine letter grades:

A	1,000-900
B	899-800
C	799-700
D	699-600
F	599-0

VI. Policy on Attendance and Tardiness

Attendance will be taken daily. I will abide by any attendance policy set by the NTS catalogue. An absence will only be excused in accordance with the guidelines established in the NTS catalogue.

VII. Schedule of Assignments: All assignments that must be submitted in Moodle are due at 11:55PM CT unless otherwise noted. (Subject to change at my discretion)

Date	Assignment Due
02/11	1 Corinthians Reading
02/15	1. 1 Corinthians Reading 2. Longenecker/Gorman Assignment
02/22	1 Corinthians Reading
03/01	1 Corinthians Reading
03/08	1 Corinthians Reading
03/15	1. 1 Corinthians Reading 2. CRR 1 (Includes 1 Cor 1:1-11:1 and comments thereon in Hays and Witherington; Winter 1-120)
03/29	Harper & Metzger FB
04/05	1 Corinthians Reading
04/12	1 Corinthians Reading
04/19	1. 1 Corinthians Reading 2. CRR 2 (Includes 1 Cor 11:2-16:24 and comments thereon in Hays and Witherington; Winter 121-301; Johnson, all three articles)
04/26	1. 1 Corinthians Reading 2. Research topic must be approved if doing research paper
05/03	Work on research paper
05/10	Final Essay/Paper