

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago Course Profile - Spring Term 2008

B-511 Reading Romans in Its Social, Political, and Religious Contexts

Instructor: Robert Brawley

Statement of goals: The course is designed to enable participants to develop an informed understanding of Paul's Epistle to the Romans and to develop skills in interpretation. By the end of the course, the student should have acquired (1) knowledge of the nature and content of Romans, (2) an understanding of the theology of Paul, (3) skills in using interpretive methods, and (4) an appreciation of interpreting Romans as a cross-cultural experience.

Outline and content of course:

In addition to traditional philological, grammatical, and literary approaches, the course will employ social identity theory with a post-colonial perspective on empire. Attention will also be given to the so-called "new perspective on Paul" with a critique. The course will consider the character and purposes of Romans; the literary frame of the epistle; the use of Romans in debates about same sex eroticism; Paul, the Law, and Israel; relationships with those who have power to rule; the problem of "the weak" and "the strong."

Required work for course:

Reading Romans, textbooks, and assigned articles in preparation for class discussion. Each participant will write three brief interpretative papers (no more than 3 pages) on Romans 3:21-31; 7:7-25; 11:25-32. Each participant will make a brief oral presentation on an article. Each participant will submit an exegetical paper at the end of the term.

Bibliography:

In addition to standard commentaries (e.g. Fitzmyer, Dunn, Jewett).

Esler, Philip. *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.

Elliott, Neil. *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Restraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.

Brooten, B.. "Paul's Views on the Nature of Women and Female Homoeroticism," in *Homosexuality and Religion and Philosophy*. Ed. W. Dynes and S. Donaldson. New York: London, 1992, pp. 57-83.

Smith, M. "Ancient Bisexuality and the Interpretation of Rom 1:26-27." *JAAR* 64 (1996): 223-56.

Brawley, R. "Multivocality in Romans 4," in *Reading Israel in Romans*. Ed. C. Grenholm & D. Patte. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000, pp. 74-95.

Stendahl, K. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976, pp. 78-96.

Morgan, R. *Romans*. New Testament Guides; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

Horsley, R., ed. *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.

- Horsley, R., ed. *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation*; FS Krister Stendahl. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000.
- Donfried, K. *The Romans Debate*. Edinburgh: Clark, 1991.
- Campbell, William. *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context*. Frankfurt: Lang, 1991.
- Ehrensperger, K. *That We May be Mutually Encouraged*. New York: Clark, 2004.
- Támez, E. *The Amnesty of Grace: Justification by Faith from a Latin American Perspective*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.
- Támez, E. "God's Election, Exclusion, and Mercy: A Bible Study of Romans 9-11." *International Review of Mission* 82 (1993): 29-37.
- Nanos, M. *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- Nanos, M. "The Jewish Context of the Gentile Audience Addressed in Paul's Letter to the Romans." *CBQ* 61 (1999): 283-304

Additional information:

Philip Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Ministry*; Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Restraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*. Additional readings will be articles posted on Jenzabar.