



Syllabus for *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes* Eternity Bible College, Spring 2019

Professor: Jackson Wu

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the influence of cultural context on biblical interpretation, particularly in Paul's letter to the Romans. More broadly, it focuses on the interaction between biblical interpretation, the ancient biblical context, and the influence of our own cultural lenses on interpretation. Students are further challenged to reflect on the interrelationship between biblical theology, systematic theology, and so-called "cultural theologies."

KEY GOALS

As a result of this course, students will be able to interpret Romans with a more robust, holistic cultural lens. Furthermore, they will

- identify key themes in Romans that are especially salient in East Asian cultures.
- sketch basic principles and methodology for intentionally interpreting the Bible through cultural eyes.
- discern ways that one's cultural perspective influences one's interpretation of the Bible and theology.
- find fresh applications from Romans that honor Christ in one's community.

READING

(a) The following *two* books are *required* reading:

Jackson W. [*Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission*](#). IVP Academic, 2019. [192 pages]

Haley Goranson Jacob. [*Conformed to the Image of His Son: Reconsidering Paul's Theology of Glory in Romans*](#). IVP Academic, 2018. [266 pages]

(b) Choose **ONE** of the following books. Your choice must be a book that you have not read for another academic class.

Gener, Timoteo D., and Stephen T. Pardue, eds. [*Asian Christian Theology: Evangelical Perspectives*](#). London, UK: Langham Publishing, 2019.

McKnight, Scot. [*Reading Romans Backwards: A Gospel of Peace in the Midst of Empire*](#). Baylor University Press. 2019.

Ott, Craig and Harold Netland. [*Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*](#). Baker, 2006.

Richards, E. Randolph, and Brandon J. O'Brien. [*Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*](#). IVP, 2012.

Tennent, Timothy C. [*Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology*](#). Zondervan, 2007.

Wu, Jackson. [*Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*](#). EMS Dissertation Series. WCIUP, 2012.

Wu, Jackson. [*One Gospel for All Nations: A Practical Approach to Biblical Contextualization*](#). William Carey Library, 2015.

Schedule (March 30, 2020 -- April 3, 2020)

Monday (3/30/2020)

6:30-9:30 pm (credit only) Doing Theology Our Cultural Contexts

Tuesday (3/31/2020)

8:30-11:30 am Perspectives on Contextual Interpretation & Theology

1:30-4:30 pm Honor & Shame in Biblical and Cultural Contexts

7-9 pm The Purpose(s) of Romans

7-9 pm The Gospel of Honor and the Sin of Shame

Wednesday (4/1/2020)

8:30-11:30 am Righteousness and Justification

1:30-4:30 pm Vindicating God's Honor

7-9 pm Glorified through Shame

Thursday (4/2/2020)

8:30-11:30 am Honoring Our Ancestors

1:30-4:30 pm They Will Not Be Put to Shame

7-9 pm The Glory of Christ in Wrong Theology

Friday (4/3/2020)

8:30-11:30 am TBA & Final Exam

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Book Reviews

25%

All students will review two books. They will review *Conformed to the Image of His Son* as well as the other book they personally choose to read for this class. Each review will be assessed strictly on the basis of the following required format. The content of each book review will have a length of 800-1100 words. Each book review should have these four sections:

- a) identify the book's key content/insights (25%)
- b) assess the book's strengths (25%)
- c) assess potential weaknesses or limitations (25%)
- d) identify potential implications for practice (25%)

The above percentages reflect both the required *length* of each section as well as the *grade weight* of each section.

Use 12-font, single spacing. Paragraphs should communicate distinct ideas. Students who use good grammar, topic sentences, and coherent arguments generally earn higher grades. Submit paper as a Microsoft Word or Pages file, but not as a PDF.

2. Book Questions

10%

For each chapter of *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes*, each student will submit at least 3 questions that they personally have about the content in the chapter. This assignment equips students to ask questions they would like the professor to answer during class. The questions should be distinct from each other and not be overly general.

Since most all questions included in the appendix are answered in the book, students may not use those questions for this assignment. In order to get full credit, the questions must demonstrate that the student has thoughtfully interacted with the material.

3. In class assignments (quizzes, participation, etc.) 10%

During class, the professor will engage in various in class assignments. For example, students may be given low-stakes quizzes concerning previous lecture material. Likewise, the professor will randomly verbally ask students review questions. Periodically, students will break up into small groups and be asked to present and defend their findings and opinions. This portion of your course grade will be assess based on quality and quantity.

4. Final Exam

25%

Students will take an hour, essay exam covering select major ideas covered in the class and in *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes*.

4. Paper or Application Project

30%

Students may choose to write an exegetical/theological paper OR an application paper.

*For those choosing to write an **exegetical or theological paper**:*

Students may select from ONE of the following two options for this assignment.

(a) *Using an “East Asian” perspective*, students may write an exegetical paper on a text of Romans not extensively addressed in the assignment reading. If students have questions about whether a text has been “extensively addressed,” consult the professor before the end of the week of class. Exegetical papers should engage the relevant biblical languages and interact with relevant scholarship.

(b) *Using an “East Asian” perspective*, students may trace a particular topic/theme in Romans (not extensively addressed in the assigned reading) or in any of Paul’s other letters. Papers should present a coherent, logical argument and interact with relevant scholarship. Students are warned against adding unnecessary “filler” and verbose sentences rather than substance. Do not quote biblical texts at length. Instead, cite the verse(s) and quote the most relevant portion of the text.

This paper should utilize *at least* 4 published journal articles and 2 scholarly monographs. The paper will be 3000-4000 words long, single-spaced and use SBL or Turabian format for *both* the footnotes and the attached bibliography. The word count does include footnotes *but* does NOT include the bibliography. Include page numbers and a title page (including contact information). Submit paper as a Microsoft Word or Pages file, but not as a PDF.

*For those choosing to write an **application project**:*

Students may select from ONE of the following two options for this assignment.

(a) Students may write a paper that explores a potential application of Romans in your own life and ministry. They will *very briefly* explain the aspect of Paul’s letter being applied. They should clearly identify a problem or needs within their life/ministry. As a part of their research, students can conduct interviews with relevant persons and incorporate their findings within their paper.

(b) Alternatively, students may select an evangelistic tool (e.g., gospel tracts, videos, ministry method) and evaluate how well it is contextualized for a target audience (chosen by the student). Students will assess the tool in light of our study of Romans and how suitable the tool is for honor-shame contexts. Finally, students will offer suggestions to improve the selected ministry tool.

The goal of the paper is to help students contextualize Paul's letter in a biblical faithful and culturally meaningful way. Papers will be assessed on this basis. Student application projects should interact with academic material.

Students are warned against adding unnecessary "filler" and verbose sentences rather than substance. Do not quote biblical texts at length. Instead, cite the verse(s) and quote the most relevant portion of the text.

The paper should be 3,000-4,000 words long, single-spaced and use SBL or Turabian format for *both* the footnotes and the attached bibliography (if needed). Submit paper as a Microsoft Word or Pages file, but not as a PDF.

What are the due dates?

1. Book Reviews	
a. <i>Conformed to the Image of His Son</i>	March 30 th (11:59pm PST)
b. First book selected by student	April 25 th (11:59pm PST)
2. Book Questions	March 29 th (7pm PST)
3. In class assignments	N/A
4. Exegetical <i>or</i> Theological Paper	May 9 th (11:59pm PST)
5. Application Project or Paper	May 16 th (11:59pm PST)

OTHER STUFF

Late Assignments:

Only under extreme circumstances, and with prior approval, will a late assignment be accepted. Late assignments will be assessed an initial 10 percent penalty and 1 percent for each day after the due date (i.e., 10/1 points for a 100-point assignment). No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original due date.

Revision of the Syllabus

The course syllabus is not a legal contract. Any syllabus revision will be preceded by a reasonable notice to students. The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the professor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class or by email notice.

Plagiarism

A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all students. Copying another person's work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. *Although anything cited in three sources is considered*

public domain, we require that all sources be cited. Any infraction will result in failing the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Students for further action.

Correspondence with the Professor

Every effort is made to respond to emails and phone calls within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends. Please feel free to contact the professor(s) with any question you may have regarding this course.

GENERAL GRADING CRITERIA

The following gives a general idea regarding the criteria used to assess each assignment. Certain aspects might be adapted to suit specific assignments.

Far Below (0 - 69%) Approach (70-79%) Meet (80-89%) Above Average (90-95%) Excellent (96-100%)

1) Content 60%

Far Below: Content includes little or none of the assignment criteria. Major points are unclear. No support is evident.

Approach: Assignment content omits some required criteria. Major points lack clarity. Little or no effective support is evident.

Meet: Most of the required assignment content is present. Major points are adequately clear and addressed. Some support is evident and relevant.

Above Average: All of the required assignment content is present. Major points are clear and effectively addressed. Support is comprehensive and relevant.

Excellent: All of the required assignment content is present. Major points are exceptionally clear and thoroughly addressed. Significant and best possible support is evident, relevant and convincing.

2) Use of Sources 10%

Far Below: No outside academic sources were used to support major points.

Approach: Few relevant sources beyond assigned readings were used to support major points. Important relevant sources were neglected. Quoted material and paraphrasing were overused.

Meet: Sources were adequate, relevant and extended beyond assigned readings. Quoted material and paraphrasing are included to support major points and writer's idea development.

Above Average: Sources are academic, current and/or relevant to support major points. Quoted material and paraphrasing is used effectively and consistently to support the major points and writer's idea development.

Excellent: Sources are academic, comprehensive, current and/or relevant. Quoted material and paraphrasing expertly support, extend, and inform ideas but do not substitute for the writer's own idea development. Sources are well synthesized to support major points.

3) Thesis Development and Purpose 7%

Far Below: Paper lacks any discernible overall purpose or organizing claim.

Approach: Thesis and/or main claim are insufficiently developed and/or vague; purpose is not clear.

Meet: Thesis and/or main claim are apparent and appropriate to purpose.

Above Average: Thesis and/or main claim are clear and forecast the development of the paper. It is descriptive and reflective of the arguments and appropriate to the purpose.

Excellent: Thesis and/or main claim are comprehensive; contained within the thesis is the essence of the paper. Thesis statement makes the purpose of the paper clear.

4) Argument Logic and Construction 8%

Far Below: Statement of purpose is not justified by the conclusion. The conclusion does not support the claim made. Argument is incoherent.

Approach: Sufficient justification of claims is lacking. Argument lacks consistent unity. There are obvious flaws in the logic.

Meet: Argument is orderly but may have a few inconsistencies. The argument presents minimal justification of claims. Argument logically, but not thoroughly, supports the purpose. Introduction and conclusion bracket the thesis.

Above Average: Argument shows logical progression. Techniques of argumentation are evident. There is a smooth progression of claims from introduction to conclusion.

Excellent: Clear and convincing argument presents a persuasive claim in a distinctive and compelling manner.

5) Mechanics of Writing (includes spelling, punctuation, grammar, and language use) 5%

Far Below: Surface errors are pervasive enough that they impede communication of meaning. Inappropriate word choice and/or sentence construction are used.

Approach: Frequent and repetitive mechanical errors distract the reader. Inconsistencies in language choice (register), sentence structure, and/or word choice are present.

Meet: Some mechanical errors or typos are present, but are not overly distracting to the reader. Correct sentence structure and audience- appropriate language are used.

Above Average: Prose is largely free of mechanical errors, although a few may be present. A variety of sentence structures and effective figures of speech are used.

Excellent: Writer is clearly in command of standard, written, academic English.

6) Paper Format (use of appropriate style for the major and assignment) 5%

Far Below: Template is not used appropriately, or documentation format is rarely followed correctly.

Approach: Appropriate template is used, but some elements are missing or mistaken. A lack of control with formatting is apparent.

Meet: Appropriate template is used. Formatting is correct, although some minor errors may be present.

Above Average: Appropriate template is fully used. There are virtually no errors in formatting style.

Excellent: All format elements are correct.

7) Research Citations (in-text citations for paraphrasing and direct quotes, and reference page listing and formatting, as appropriate to assignment) 5%

Far Below: No reference page is included. No citations are used. **Approach:** Reference page is present. Citations are inconsistently used.

Meet: Reference page is included and lists sources used in the paper. Sources are appropriately documented, although some errors may be present.

Above Average: Reference page is present and fully inclusive of all cited sources. Documentation is appropriate and citation style is usually correct.

Excellent: In-text citations and a reference page are complete and correct. The documentation of cited sources is free of error.