

# BRIERCREST

## BLST 825 Romans Fall 2021

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Course Dates: October 25-29, 2021

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of Paul's letter to the Romans, with particular attention to its historical setting, its theological argument, and its continuing significance for the church.

### WHY STUDY ROMANS?

Romans is a complex, tightly-argued letter that is one of the most bewildering books in the New Testament. Many of the basic assumptions of Paul, the first century Jew, and the issues that preoccupied him, are foreign to a predominantly Gentile church twenty centuries later. And yet Paul's letter to the Romans has exerted a profound influence on many of the movers and shakers of Christian history:

- Augustine (354-430), the most influential Christian thinker between the New Testament and the Reformation, was converted after reading Romans 13:13-14.
- Martin Luther (1483-1546) "felt [him]self to have been born again" while studying Romans 1:17; his conclusions about the meaning of the "righteousness of God" triggered the Protestant Reformation.
- It was after reading the preface to Luther's commentary on Romans that John Wesley's (1703-1791) "heart was strangely warmed"; his subsequent preaching about salvation by faith played an instrumental role in England's Evangelical revival and in the founding of the Methodist movement.

Reading Paul's letter to the Romans in its historical context is worth the effort because, as Ernst Käsemann put it, "whenever [Paul] is rediscovered . . . there issues from him explosive power."

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course we will make a concentrated attempt to follow Paul's argument on his own terms and in his own context. We will examine what can be known about the historical setting and purpose of Romans and look at Paul's Greco-Roman and Jewish context as it relates to the interpretation of the text. We will become familiar with debated topics in current scholarship on Romans and pause to consider some of the many hermeneutical and theological questions raised by the letter. By the end of this course, you will be able to summarize your understanding of the structure of Paul's argument, and be able to justify it with evidence from the text. Perhaps most important, you will be equipped to engage Romans seriously as Christian Scripture, as Augustine, Luther and Wesley did before you.



It will take concentration and commitment to hold together the big picture of Paul's argument and also attend to the details of this demanding text. Consider this syllabus your learning contract: During our week together, we will participate in a learning community whose success depends on joint engagement with the subject matter, with the assigned readings and with each other. By choosing to take this course, you agree to prepare diligently, to participate actively, and to help create a positive learning environment for your fellow students.

## COURSE TEXTS

### *Required*

Barclay, John M. G. *Paul and the Power of Grace*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.

Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. *When in Romans: An Invitation to Linger with the Gospel According to Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.

Keck, Leander E. *Romans*. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.

Westerholm, Stephen. *Understanding Paul: The Early Christian Worldview of the Letter to the Romans*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

### *Reserve Reading (on Canvas)*

Dunn, James D. G. "The New Perspective on Paul." *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 65, no. 2 (1983): 95–122 (also online: <http://markgoodacre.org/PaulPage/New.html>).

Eastman, Susan. "Double Participation and the Responsible Self in Romans 5-8." Pages 93–110 in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5-8*. Edited by Beverly Roberts Gaventa. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013.

Gorman, Michael J. "'Justified by Faith ... Crucified with Christ': Reconciliation with God through Participation in Christ." Pages 111-131 in *Reading Paul*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.

Hays, Richard B. "'Have We Found Abraham to Be Our Forefather According to the Flesh': A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1." *Novum Testamentum* 27, no. 1 (1985): 76–98.

Käsemann, Ernst. "'The Righteousness of God' in Paul." Pages 168–82 in *New Testament Questions of Today*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969.

McCaulley, Esau. "Freedom Is No Fear: The New Testament and a Theology of Policing." Pages 25–46 in *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020.

Zoccali, Christopher. "'And so All Israel Will Be Saved': Competing Interpretations of Romans 11.26 in Pauline Scholarship." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30, no. 3 (2008): 289–318.

*Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.*

*These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.*

*Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.*

## COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Class Topic & Primary Reading	Secondary Reading
Mon Oct 25 AM	Introducing Romans; Romans 1	Käsemann 1969
Mon Oct 25 PM	Romans 2:1-3:20	
Tues Oct 26 AM	Romans 3:21-4:25	Dunn 1983; Gorman 2008; Hays 1985
Tues Oct 26 PM	Romans 5	
Wed Oct 27 AM	Romans 6-7	Eastman 2013
Wed Oct 27 PM	Romans 8	
Thurs Oct 28 AM	Romans 9-11	Zoccali 2008
Thurs Oct 28 PM	Romans 9-11 (cont'd); Romans 12	
Fri Oct 29 AM	Romans 13; Romans 14:1-15:13	McCaulley 2020
Fri Oct 29 PM	Romans 14-15 (cont'd); 15:14-16:27	

**Note:** This course will extend through the afternoon of Friday, October 29. We will aim to conclude class on Friday by 4:00 p.m.

**ASSIGNMENTS (TO BE SUBMITTED ON CANVAS)****PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**A. Romans Reading (10%):** Read Paul's letter to the Romans at least twice before class begins and at least once during the week of class. Fill in the Romans Reading Log on Canvas to indicate completion.

**B. Textbook Reading (30%): Due: Monday, October 25 at 9 a.m.**

**1. John Barclay, *Paul and the Power of Grace*:** Read pages 1-37, 75-159 in *Paul and the Power of Grace*, reading Romans alongside Barclay's chapters on Romans. In 2-3 double-spaced pages (600-900 words) (a) describe how, according to Barclay, Paul "perfects" grace in his letter to the Romans, referring to relevant passages in Romans where the "perfections" of grace appear; (b) reflect on how Barclay's study has affected your understanding of Romans and/or Paul's theology; (c) *optional*: respond with questions or by identifying aspects of Barclay's argument that you find unconvincing.

**2. Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *When in Romans*:** Read Gaventa's short *Invitation to Linger with the Gospel According to Paul* in its entirety. In 2-3 double-spaced pages (600-900 words), (a) summarize the argument of chapters 1-4, paying special attention to each chapter's theme and specific hermeneutical advice; (b) respond by noting aspects of Gaventa's argument that you find unconvincing and (briefly) explaining why.

**3. Stephen Westerholm, *Understanding Paul*:** Read through Romans in conjunction with Westerholm's introduction to the worldview of Romans. In 2-3 double-spaced pages (600-900 words), state how Westerholm would answer the following questions:

- 1) *Faith*: What does Paul mean when he says "the righteous will live by faith"? Note that the word translated 'faith' can also be translated 'faithfulness', 'belief' or 'trust', and that the verb normally translated 'believe' can also be translated 'to have faith' or 'to trust'.
- 2) *Righteousness*: What is the "righteousness of God" according to Romans? What does it mean to be "justified"? Note that the meaning of the noun normally translated 'righteousness' is related to the verb normally translated 'justify', which can also be translated 'to make righteous', 'to acquit' or 'to rectify'; Westerholm also discusses the topic using the Hebrew word, *tzedakah*.
- 3) *Works and the Obedience of Faith*: What does Romans say about the normal Christian life and how it is to be lived? What is the relationship between obedience and salvation?
- 4) *Israel*: What, according to Romans, is Israel's problem?

**MID-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**A. Romans Reading (cont'd):** Read the assigned chapters from Romans before each day of class, following the schedule in the course outline. Fill in the Romans Reading Log on Canvas to indicate completion.

**B. Essay Presentation (10%):** In a 10-minute presentation, briefly review and evaluate the argument of one of the assigned essays for the benefit of your fellow students. Your summary of the argument should aim to state the problem the essay addresses, its thesis, and (briefly) the evidence that supports the thesis. Evaluate the essay in light of evidence in Romans (and possibly other assigned readings), and raise two or three questions for discussion. Essays will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Please email me to indicate your preference.

**C. Romans Essays (10%):** Read the remaining essays, following the schedule in the course outline, and (a) indicate completion of each essay on Canvas before the day on which the essay is assigned; and (b) submit one developed discussion question / essay that relates the essay to the text of Romans.

**D. Keck Reading (10%) -** Read Romans carefully, along with Keck's commentary on Romans. In 2-3 double-spaced pages (600-900 words), (a) briefly evaluate Keck's commentary and develop 3-5 questions about specific aspects of Keck's interpretation of Romans, explaining why you are not persuaded by Keck's exegesis in each case; and (b) indicate completion of the commentary. *Note:* Keck packs a lot into his excellent 385-page commentary. For your own sake, plan to complete the Keck reading before the beginning of mod-week if at all possible. The reading log is **due at the beginning of class on Friday, October 29, 2021.**

**POST-COURSE ASSIGNMENT:**

**A. Major Essay (30%):** Write a thesis-driven research essay. Sometimes the topic will be an obvious debated issue. For others it will be an exploration of a central aspect of a passage. The topic should be something that you find puzzling, something that invites further reflection. The following is a partial list of good paper topics:

Paul's interpretation of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17  
 The meaning of "God gave them over" in Rom 1:18-32  
 The identity of the true Jew in Rom 2:28-29  
 Paul's argument from Scripture in Rom 3:10-18  
 The meaning of the "faith of Jesus Christ" in Rom 3:22  
 The meaning of "propitiation"/"expiation" in Rom 3:25  
 Boasting in Romans 4  
 The meaning of Rom 5:12  
 The significance of death with Christ in Rom 6:1-11

Resurrection with Christ in Romans 6  
 The function of the Law in Romans 7  
 The identity of the "I" in Romans 7  
 The meaning of Rom 8:4  
 The new creation in Romans 8  
 The meaning of election in Rom 9  
 The meaning of Rom 10:4  
 The proclamation of the gospel in Romans 10  
 The meaning of "all Israel will be saved" in Rom 11:26  
 The transformation of the mind in Romans 12  
 The Christian and government in Rom 13:1-7  
 The identity of the "weaker" and "stronger" in Rom 14:1-15:13

The paper should be between **10-12 pages (3000-3600 words)** in length (not including outline and bibliography) and is **due on December 24, 2021 (submitted to Canvas)**. More details will be provided in class.

**Note:** In lieu of the major essay, students may choose to memorize the book of Romans in its entirety, and to recite it at some point during the week of class. Please contact me in advance if you intend to memorize Romans.

## SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

### ***Attendance Policy***

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

### ***Modular Courses***

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

### ***Online Courses***

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

### ***Semester-Based Courses***

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

### ***Course Schedules***

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

### ***Assignment Submission***

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week

after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

### ***Return of Graded Assignments***

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of Student Success in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email ([egordon@briercrest.ca](mailto:egordon@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Note:* Especially significant books are marked with an asterisk (\*) and are on 'reserve' in the library.

### **Some Important Modern Commentaries on Romans**

- \*Achteemeier, Paul J. *Romans*. Interpretation. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.
- \*Barrett, C. K. *The Epistle to the Romans*. 2d ed. Black's New Testament Commentary. London: Black, 1991.
- \*Barth, Karl. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- \*Bird, Michael F. *Romans*. Story of God. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Black, Matthew. *Romans*. NCB. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973.
- Boers, Hendrikus. *The Justification of the Gentiles: Paul's Letters to the Galatians and Romans*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- \*Byrne, Brendan. *Romans*. Sacra Pagina 6. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996.
- \*Cranfield, C. E. B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 2 vols. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975, 1979.
- \*Cranfield, C. E. B. *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Dodd, C. H. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. 1932. Repr. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954.
- \*Dunn, James D. G. *Romans 1-16*. 2 vols. WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1988.
- \*Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB. New York: Doubleday, 1993.
- Godet, Frederic Louis. *Commentary on Romans*. 1883. Repr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977.
- Harvey, John D. *Romans*. EGGNT. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017.
- Hodge, Charles. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 1886. Repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950.
- Holland, Tom. *Romans: The Divine Marriage: A Biblical Theological Commentary*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011.



- \*Hultgren, Arland J. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- \*Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- \*Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Reading the New Testament. Crossroad, 1997.
- \*Käsemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans*. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- \*Keck, Leander E. *Romans*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.
- Keener, Craig S. *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009.
- \*Kruse, Colin G. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Lloyd-Jones, Martin. *Romans*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- \*Longenecker, Richard N. *The Epistle to the Romans*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.
- \*Porter, Stanley E. *The Letter to the Romans: A Linguistic and Literary Commentary*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015.
- \*Matera, Frank J. *Romans*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
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- \*\_\_\_\_\_. *Romans*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- \*Morris, Leon. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- \*Murray, John. *The Epistle to the Romans*. NICNT. 1968. Repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- \*Pate, C. Marvin. *Romans*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013.
- \*Sanday, William, and Arthur C. Headlam. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1955.
- \*Schreiner, Thomas R. *Romans*. BECNT. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018.
- \*Stott, John R. W. *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001.
- \*Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1994.
- \*Talbert, Charles H. *Romans*. Macon, GA: Smyth&Helwys, 2002.
- \*Thielman, Frank S. *Romans*. ZEGNT. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.
- \*Witherington III, Ben, and Darlene Hyatt. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Wright, N.T. "The Letter to the Romans." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, 10.393-770. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002.
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### Pre-critical Commentaries and the History of Interpretation

- \*Bray, Gerald, ed. *Romans*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.
- \*Burns, J. Patout, and Constantine Newman, eds. *Romans: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
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- Campbell, William S., Peter S. Hawkins, and Brenda Deen Schildgen. *Medieval Readings of Romans*. New York: T & T Clark, 2007.
- Ehrensperger, Kathy, and R. Ward Holder, eds. *Reformation Readings of Romans*. London: T&T Clark, 2008.

- Gaca, Kathy, and L. L. Welborn. *Early Patristic Readings of Romans*. New York: T & T Clark, 2005.
- Gamble Jr., Harry. *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.
- Greenman, Jeffrey, and Timothy Larsen. *Reading Romans through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005.
- Levy, Ian Christopher, Philip D. Krey, and Thomas Ryan, eds. *The Letter to the Romans*. The Bible in Medieval Tradition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
- \*Luther, Martin. *Commentary on Romans*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977.
- Melanchthon, Philip. *Commentary on Romans*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1992.
- Patte, Daniel, and Vasile Mihoc, eds. *Greek Patristic and Eastern Orthodox Interpretations of Romans*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013.
- Reasoner, Mark. *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
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### Edited Volumes on Romans

- Blackwell, Ben C., John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston, eds. *Reading Romans in Context: Paul and Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.
- \*Donfried, Karl P., ed. *The Romans Debate*. Rev. and expanded ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991.
- \*Hay, David M., and E. Elizabeth Johnson, Editor. *Pauline Theology: Volume III: Romans*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995. Repr. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.
- McGinn, Sheila E., ed. *Celebrating Romans: Template for Pauline Theology: Essays in Honor of Robert Jewett*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- McKnight, Scot, and Joseph B. Modica, eds. *Preaching Romans: Four Perspectives*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019.
- Schnelle, U., ed. *The Letter to the Romans*. BETL. Leuven: Peeters, 2009.
- Soderlund, Sven K., and N.T. Wright. *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- \*Sumney, Jerry L., ed. *Reading Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

### Some Monographs on Romans

*N.B.* For additional studies on your passage consult ATLAS as well as the bibliographies in major commentaries.

#### Romans 1-4

- Bell, Richard H. *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1:18-3:20*. WUNT 106. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1998.
- Berkley, Timothy W. *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29*. Atlanta: Society of biblical Literature, 2000.
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### **Romans 5-8**

Agersnap, Soren. *Baptism and the New Life: A Study of Romans 6.1-14*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1999.

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### **Romans 9-11**

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**Romans 12-16**

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