GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2011
Instructor: Dr. Julian Hills
Course #: THEO 8317
Course Title: Letter to the Romans

Content:
This engagement with Romans will have the following chief aims, listed here from most narrow to most broad: (1) to wrestle with the original text at a level which enables us to discern the major lexical and grammatical decisions that the interpreter faces; (2) to uncover and describe the persuasive (“ancient rhetoric”) and exegetical (“use of the OT”) strategies that Paul employs to develop his argument(s); (3) in light of (1) and (2), to attempt a coherent “reading” (or perhaps multiple “readings”) of the entire letter to which each of the various parts contributes, if not equally then at least substantially; (4) to test the various theories as to the communal situation that prompted the letter’s composition; (5) to situate Romans within Paul’s extant literary output, and within NT and early Christian theology more generally; and (6) to identify some of the principal “moments” in the history of the interpretation of the letter — from the earliest period through the Middle Ages and the Reformation to modern times.

Format:
Exegetical lectures early on, then seminar discussion based chiefly on shared secondary readings, student reports, presentations, and draft papers.

Assignments and/or Examinations:

- Several presentations and reports; two short papers; a final paper — already presented in penultimate draft form for in-class discussion. Non-JCA specialists will be encouraged to work towards final papers that combine the full rigor of historical-critical Scripture study with the perspectives and interests of their own specialty.

Language Pre-requisites:

- Minimally, the ability to “follow along” in the Greek NT — to write the Greek alphabet and be able to type words in Greek, and to use a Greek lexicon and other reference works, at least with the assistance of the instructor or fellow students. If it seems desirable, I shall be glad to set up some “beginning Greek” sessions outside of class time. French and German: Not required; but in a collegial way I shall push you to consult commentaries and articles in these languages, even beyond what you have supposed to be your proficiency in them.