



BL 621 *Advanced Greek Exegesis – Acts (3)*¹

Fall 2011

Instructor: R. R. Remin

Contacting the Instructor

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Course Description

An advanced study of Greek grammar for the purpose of gaining insight in the meaning of the New Testament text. This study will enable the student to understand a text in more detail as well as how the grammatical structures of Greek may have lent themselves to different interpretations. May be repeated for credit depending on the biblical books selected for study. *Prerequisite: BL522.*

This year the Greek reading will be primarily the speeches in the *Acts of the Apostles*. The Attic style of *Acts* is somewhat distinctive in the New Testament and serves as a good place for Greek students to practice their skills and develop their understanding of Greek syntax. The speeches have been chosen because in ancient historiography author's used speeches as a vehicle for the characters to express their points of view and values which in the case of *Acts* would be their theology.

Student Outcomes

1. The student will prepare before class and read and discuss in class as many of the speeches of *Acts* in Greek as the students' abilities and the limitations of the academic semester allow.
2. Each student will improve their understanding of Greek grammatical structures *per se* and how these structures relate to exegesis. The professor will work with each student in order to assist the student in setting goals for themselves in their development of their knowledge and abilities in Greek.
3. Each student will learn the text critical, exegetical, and hermeneutical issues of *Acts* and the implications for preaching and teaching *Acts*.
4. Each student will read more of *Acts* in Greek and English than is actually dealt with in class.

¹ NT 710 New Testament Book Study in Greek – Acts (3) is the companion course.

Required Texts

1. The fourth edition of the United Bible Society's Greek New Testament.
2. Danker, Frederick William. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd ed., revised and edited by F.W. Danker, University of Chicago Press, 2000).²
Note: You now need to know the Hebrew alphabet in order to count in the subsections.
Note 2: As with all the best books, the colour of this edition is burgundy. First English edition was blue; the second was green.
3. Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Zondervan, 1996).
4. A list of commentaries and monographs for *Acts* will be distributed and discussed in class. Students are encouraged to read extensively from the better ones.

Course Schedule

This course meets on Thursdays from 8:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. every week of the semester.

Special dates to remember are:

September 29 (Thursday)	Community / Spiritual Emphasis Days – No class.
October 6	First paper is due
November 3	Two papers are due
December 1	Last two papers are due
December 8 (Thursday)	Last Class in this course
December 16	Last Day of Semester (November 28)

Course Requirements

² Previous edition was Bauer, W., Gingrich, F., and Danker, F. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (2nd Eng. ed. revised and augmented by F.W. Gingrich and F.W. Danker incorporating the additions and corrections of the 5th German ed., Chicago, 1979).

1. Attend all scheduled sessions of this course. The purpose of this course is not “an information dump.” Exegesis is a skill and an art both of which improve as a result of the interaction in class between instructor and students and between students. This is how students learn methodology and passion for the task at hand. Students will not receive marks for attendance but absences will directly affect their final grade.
2. Read *Acts* in Greek as directed for class sessions. The class sessions will be taken with discussion of Greek grammatical structures, discussions of implications of grammatical structures for interpretation and translation. If students are finding a particular text difficult, students need to prepare the text by formulating and articulating their questions. The professor will also systematically teach grammar as the need arises.
3. Read in the various reference works available to students. Keep a record of this reading. Demonstrate initiative.
 - Use and read entries in Danker’s NT Greek-English lexicon as part of preparing for class and/or as directed by the professor. Students are expected to demonstrate some initiative in the use of Danker.
 - Read in Greek grammars sections relevant to the Greek text being read. The professor will regularly identify relevant sections. Students should take the initiative to identify the relevant sections in grammars by using the indices of the grammars and Robert Hanna’s *A Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament* (1983).
 - Read Bruce Malina, John Pilch, *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (2008). Everyone needs to read the first eleven pages.
 - Read Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods, The Strange Triumph of Christianity* (The Free Press, 1999).
 - Read F.F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James & John, Studies in Non-Pauline Christianity* (Eerdmans, 1979).
 - Read and report on reading in commentaries and monographs on *Acts*.
 - Watch the HBO “Rome” series of videos! Easy “reading” and it will put *Acts* into the ancient context. Switch the commentary on.
4. Read (only read) Daniel Wallace’s *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (1996).

Or, if you are taking this as NT 710 *Advanced Biblical Study in Greek, Acts*, read Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar: The Abridgement of “Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, (2000).*

If you have read either of them before, read them again.

5. Research and write on any five (5) of the critical issues relating to *Acts* and write a concise summary of your findings. Appendix One contains a list of possible topics. All topics must

be approved by the professor. The paper which is submitted must be written concisely and reflect your analysis of the topic. The papers must be written standard academic format.

6. If the professor becomes convinced that a student or students are not working to their potential in this course, the student may be required to participate in an interview with professor at the semester's end in which interview the student and professor discuss a selected text from *Acts*.

Course Grade

The final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

Attendance, preparedness, participation in class and reading	20%
Mastery of Greek, as demonstrated in class	20%
Reading Wallace's grammar	10%
Critical Issues in <i>Acts</i> papers (5)	50%


Although marks are not given for attendance, marks will be deducted for absences.

Important Notes

1. You may **contact your professor** by various means.
 - a. Office Hours. These Office Hours on campus are subject to meetings called by higher authorities (president, dean, registrar), previously scheduled meetings with other students, the instructor's health (doctors' appointments, medical emergencies), snow storms, ice storms, highway closures, automobile failure, and/or "the crick don't raise." Book an appointment via email to ensure that I'm here, that you will receive notification of cancelation or you will not be preempted by another appointment (the above notwithstanding).
 - i. Monday Afternoons
 - ii. Tuesday Usually not on campus. By appointment only
 - iii. Wednesday Before the class period; after lunch.
 - iv. Thursday After chapel after my morning block class.
 - v. Friday Before the class period; late afternoon by appointment.
 - b. Email in the office: rremin@ambrose.edu
 - c. Voice in the office: 410-2000 ext 7906
2. Students will not use Greek-English interlinear editions of any sort in class. This rule is absolute. The same applies to translations. Do not insult the professor or yourself by bringing these to class. If you are using a computer program, turn the interlinear function off.

3. **Absences** are intolerable because of the nature of the subject being learned and the manner in which this course is taught, namely the inductive method. If you must miss a class please work through the lesson(s) missed and then come to the instructor with any problems or questions. In the event you cannot be prepared, you are better being in class unprepared than not in class at all. Too many absences will affect your final grade (either by examination or adjustment by the instructor.)

4. No *ad hominem* arguments on points of exegesis, interpretation, translation or theology derived from the same, will be tolerated in this class. *Ad hominem* arguments attack the person who proposed the idea instead of the idea itself. *Ad hominem* arguments have typically dismissed an idea by pointing out that the author of the idea was a socialist (Amos), or a Pentecostal (Gordon Fee), or used to play in a night club (Wimber). Students must argue their point on its own merits. More recently *ad hominem* arguments have taken the form of *who are you to disagree with....* This means you cannot dismiss a point of view by citing the name and point of view of your favorite theologian or theological tradition, nor your preferred translation. Likewise, students cannot dismiss a contrary point of view because it didn't come from a well known scholar or is different from a favorite published translation.

5.  All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. (Do not submit electronic copies and expect me to print them.) Follow these guidelines!
 - a. All printing is in black ink and on white paper. Twelve point font. There are no other colors or shading. No borders around pages.
 - b. The cover page will have this information in this order, centered on the page, and nothing else at all.
 - i. The name of the assignment at the top of the page.
 - ii. Student's name two thirds of the way down the page. Student number is optional, but if included should be on the next line immediately below the name.
 - c. At least three quarters of the way down the page the words "Ambrose Seminary" must appear and on the next line the date on which the assignment was handed in.
 - d. The fonts used must be twelve point standard fonts. The basic fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, etc.
 - e. Any Greek and/or Hebrew in the assignment must be in a Greek or Hebrew font. Do not put quotation marks around nor italicize any Greek or Hebrew words in Greek or Hebrew fonts. Transliteration is not acceptable except in a direct quotation or a title of a published work. Students will be provided with fonts upon request. However, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the fonts are correctly printed before the paper is handed in. (Not all printers will correctly print all fonts.) This is the students responsibility. Papers with incorrectly printed fonts will not be read. In the effect of "font printing failure" the Greek or Hebrew words may be hand printed in black ink. (This was how it

was done from the time of the invention of the type writer until the passing of the same when the personal computer was invented.)

- f. Footnotes and bibliography must be consistent and in an acceptable format which identifies who wrote what, when and where it was published.
 - g. One (and only one) staple in the upper left corner. Do not use plastic covers, rings, binders, etc. Think “Adam’s ale!”
6. By means of a written examination, demonstration of preparation of Greek text and reading of the scholarly materials a student may challenge their final grade in this course.
 7. As the need may arise minor modifications to this syllabus and the class schedule may adopted from time to time.
 8. **Classroom Etiquette.** The following activities are considered poor classroom etiquette:
 - Coming in late,
 - Talking while someone else is talking,
 - Consumption of meals as opposed to minor snacks,
 - Consumption of snacks in a noisy, smelly and/or disruptive manner,
 - Use of electronic devices such as cell phones, *i-pods, etc.*,
 - Use of laptops for purposes (*e.g.* watching videos, playing solitaire) not directly connected to the class, and
 - The practice of any behaviours considered impolite in adult company.

Depending on the degree and/or frequency of the breach of etiquette, the professor may display his displeasure in any one or more of the following manners:

- Frown, scowl, rolling eye balls (his not yours),
- Utterance of sounds of disgust,
- Sarcastic comments,
- Utterance of specific prohibitions,
- Dismissal of a student from the class,
- Ending the class prematurely, or
- In extreme cases the professor’s immediate departure from the classroom.

9. **Grades for the course.** The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Satisfactory

C-	
D+	
D	Minimal Pass
F	Failure

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

An **appeal for change of grade** on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

10. Some more very important dates.

The **last day to enter** a course without permission and /or **voluntary withdrawal** from a course without financial penalty (**drop**) – **Friday, September 18, 2011** (Fall semester). These courses will not appear on the student’s transcript.

Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit, or drop out of the “audit” up to the “drop” date indicated above. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to **voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (withdraw)** – **Monday, November 14, 2011** (Fall semester). A grade of “W” will appear on the student’s transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

11. It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

12. Extensions and Alternative Examination Dates. Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period

unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the appropriate deadline (as listed in the Academic Calendar <http://www.ambrose.edu/publications/academiccalendar>). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.” The deadline this semester is **November 28**.

13. **Plagiarism and Cheating.** We at Ambrose are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.
14. Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Readings in Acts for 2011

Focus is on the speeches:

<i>Acts 7.2-7.60</i>	Stephen's speech
<i>Acts 1.1-2.42</i>	Introduction, two of Peter's speeches
<i>Acts 17.19-34</i>	Paul on the Aereopagus
<i>Acts 3.12-16</i>	Peter again in Solomon's portico
<i>Acts 4.6-20</i>	Peter before the leaders
<i>Acts 4.24-4.31</i>	A prayer
<i>Acts 5.27-5.39</i>	Peter, Gamaliel
<i>Acts 10.34-43</i>	Peter in Cornelius' house
<i>Acts 11.4-17</i>	Peter's accounting to the circumcised
<i>Acts 13.16-41(-51)</i>	Paul in synagogue in Antioch (interesting statements about devout women, destined Gentiles and blaspheming Jews).
<i>Acts 14.15-17.1</i>	Paul and Barnabus to the people and priest of Zeus who want to sacrifice.
<i>Acts 15.5(1-2)-21</i>	Peter in Jerusalem on Moses and the requirements of the law

Very Select Bibliography

F.F Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (3rd and enlarged ed., Eerdmans, 1990). Good on the Greek text and the historical and geographical details.

Bruce Malina, John Pilch, *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (2008).

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Anchor Books 1998).

Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Liturgical Press 1992).

Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Eerdmans 1997).

Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3rd ed., Eerdmans 2003).

Howard Marshal and David Peterson (eds.), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Eerdmans, 1998). 626 pages.

Reta Halteman Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Eerdmans, 2007). 336 pages.

Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 2004). 520 pages

Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1993). 491 pages

Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1996). 299 pages

David W.J. Gill, *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1994). 641 pages

Richard Bauckham (ed.), *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1995). 540 pages

Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1997). 923 pages.

David W. Kling, "Filled with the Holy Spirit": The Roots of Pentecostalism," *The Bible in History, How the Texts Have Shaped the Times* (Oxford,

[www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/articles/aker Acts2.pdf](http://www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/articles/aker_Acts2.pdf)

Appendix Two – Research Paper Topics

The following list is only illustrative. If you have another topic, talk with about it.

1. Recreating the NT (*Acts*) in the twenty-first century. Describe and evaluate the hermeneutic behind this use of *Acts*. In other words is *Acts* descriptive or prescriptive. Here is the most recent example of this hermeneutic as its author develops his apologetic for house churches:

- Frank Viola and George Barna, *Pagan Christianity* (2008).
- The internet sites advocating this approach are beyond number.
- Bruce Malina, John Pilch, *Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (2008) 9-11.

Here are some aspects of the topic.

- Compare *salafism* in Islam (which also advocates inerrancy) and Christian *fundamentalism* with this interpretation of *Acts*. For *salafism* and *fundamentalism*, see some discussions such as Norman Cohen (*ed.*), *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon* (1990) and especially chapter one by Jaroslav Pelikan.
- This approach to *Acts* as a characteristic of fundamentalism (salafism also holds a literalistic interpretation of an inerrant *Koran*).
- Does this interpretation of *Acts* work for the same reasons in Christianity as in Islam, especially among European Muslims?
 - the younger generation
 - rejecting their parents abuses
 - frustration with their lot in life both socially, religiously, economically
 - feeling of righteousness
- In as much as this movement among conservative Christians in NA is a reaction to the diversity and lack of unity among the same, always remember this – an abundant and immanent presence of HS does not guarantee absence of disagreement or controversy!
- Develop the details of the hermeneutic:
 - Arguments from silence, *e.g.* non-use of musical instruments.
 - Implication that there is a canon within the canon. (*Acts* absence of musical instruments trumps any other references to instruments.)
 - Accept no more and no less than the explicit (*cf. salafism*).
- The irony of course is that among North American Christian *salafists* they want it all from *Acts* but not common property nor the speaking in tongues, etc. VERY SELECTIVE!
- See some of the published reflections on the use of *Acts* to justify the charismatic/ Pentecostal phenomena of the twentieth century.

- Whereas *salafism* looks back to the first three generations, the practitioners of this hermeneutic for *Acts* only look back to the first generation.
 - However the revival of interest in early church worship is more an interest in those first three generations; the revival of interest in the Church Fathers, e.g. Thomas Oden (Ask yourself what pushed Oden to this interest!).
2. The nature of the sermons (speeches) in *Acts*. Are the speeches *verbatim*, summaries or Luke's creations? Start with Ward Gasque's "The Book of *Acts* and History," *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (Robert Guelich, ed., Eerdmans, 1978).
 3. What is actual content of $\text{ἀποστολικὴ κηρύξις}$ (*the proclamation, preaching*) in the book of *Acts*? See C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (1936) in which he makes distinction between $\text{ἀποστολικὴ κηρύξις}$ and ἐκδασκαλία (*teaching*), and E.G. Selwyn's comparison of Peter's sermons in *Acts* and 1 Peter in his *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (1969). Will this proclamation be effective in our context of the twenty-first century? Why??
 4. In what sense is *Acts* "history?" Is this history descriptive or prescriptive? How then does one use this history to edify the church? Start again with Gasque as cited in 6.2 above. See some of the published reflections on the use of *Acts* to justify the charismatic/ Pentecostal phenomena of the twentieth century.
 5. Change in *Acts*. Change is a theme in *Acts* but the word is never used
 - The divine agent in change.
 - Examples of change:
 - Outpouring of HS
 - Paul's conversion reflects a change in values
 - Stephen's theology of the temple, may not be new, but certainly a change with which even some Christians felt uncertain
 - Peter and the sheet from heaven (kosher as a symbol of traditional Jewish and early Christian *sharia'*)
 - Council of Jerusalem
 6. Spirituality in *Acts*. Describe what Christian spirituality consists of in *Acts*. Caution: speaking in tongues, miracles, etc. are evidence of the spirituality. What is the spirituality?

Here's another aspect to prompt your thinking. In contrast to Pauline epistles there is not much of the *greater jihad* (spiritual warfare) in *Acts*. The *lesser jihad* is limited to Paul's persecution of the first Christians but in a sense also a *jihad* against the Roman system or at least a use of the *pax Romana*.

The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative (Fortress, 1989). Moessner has a large section on *Acts*. Be sure to share your understanding of the implications of the subject for interpreting *Acts*. Compare the travel motif in *Hebrews* (Jewett, Robert. *Letter to Pilgrims: a Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981). BS2775.3 .J48)

12. Describe the changes in the nature and tone of the narrative of *Acts* at the point at which Luke adopts the first person.
13. What was the mission strategy of the early church as recorded in *Acts*? If *Acts* were the record of a missions society's activities, how would that mission have articulated its strategy? Just make it good
14. The optative mood of the Greek verb occurs only 69 times in the Greek New Testament of 28 of these are in Luke (11) and *Acts* (17). Write a description of the optative mood and its uses in Greek and in the books of Luke-*Acts*. Check out Goetchius lesson 50.
15. Greek style. Write a paper describing the Greek style of Luke-*Acts*. A basic knowledge of Hebrew is essential for this paper. Hint: previous generations of NT Greek professors described Luke's style as "Attic Greek." See F.F. Bruce's commentaries on Greek *Acts* on this point. However more recently Nigel Turner has become skeptical of the very existence of anything Attic in Luke's writing and has spent much time pointing out the abundant Semitisms in Luke-*Acts*.
 - Nigel Turner, *The Grammar of NT Greek, Vol. IV Style* (1976). Chapter 4 is all about Lucan style. Compare with chapter 8 which is on the book of Hebrews.
 - F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*³ (1990) 66-69. Bruce "finds more truly classical Greek in Luke's writings than anywhere else in the NT."
16. "What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens?" This is an example of metonymy as is the expression "The pen is mightier than the sword." In the case of the juxtaposition of Jerusalem and Athens, the source is often thought to be *Acts*. Is this accurate? What does the metonymy mean? How is it being used? For what purpose? By whom?
17. Among the non-cannonical books of the New Testament there are numerous *Acts of Apostles* (individual, pairs, groups). Read and investigate these non-cannonical *Acts* and compare and contrast them with the canonical equivalent. Deal specifically with differences and similarities in events, theologies, apparent purposes, etc. Though you may have to learn something about how the history of the development of the canon which we accept, DO NOT WRITE A PAPER ON THE HISTORY OF THE CANON!

