PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS
BIST390EA Bible Seminar: James
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Course Description
The Letter of James is a unique and fascinating text in the New Testament and a sometimes controversial document in the history of Christianity. The letter contains philosophical and ethical instruction that could have been written by a Hellenistic Jew around the period of the birth of Christianity. At least it gives us a glimpse into a Jewish Christian community and how that group was guided in their social and spiritual life together. We will explore the context of the letter and the theological, philosophical, and spiritual themes within the letter, particularly as they relate to Quaker thought and practice. Prerequisite: B/BIST 102. 3 semester hours

Course Overview
• We will first explore the historical issues related to James: date, authorship, canonicity, history of interpretation, etc.
• James is a wonderful mixture of Jewish and Hellenistic wisdom. It will be important to understand these traditions and how to approach the text of James. We will also compare this wisdom tradition with that of Mahayana Buddhism.
• There are important theological issues in James: faith vs. works (relation between Paul and James), absence of much Christology, eschatology, etc.
• James is also rich in topics of social justice and personal ethics.
• Students will be expected to have studied the text before class so that our time is spent on issues of interpretation that relate to theology, pastoral care, spirituality, social justice, ministry in the church.

Required Texts
Supplementary
Seid, Tim. Sermons on James. Electronic source.
Handouts/Electronic documents: Journal articles, collection of Quaker texts on James.

Recommended

Additional Bibliography