

THEO3213/THEO5950 Special Topics on Biblical Studies I:

Roman Economy and New Testament Interpretation

經濟研究與新約詮釋

Prof. IP Hon Ho Alex

7:00 p.m -9:15 pm ELB 307 (Every Wed)

1. Course Overview:

This course aims at exploring the relevance and relationship between the New Testament and its economic context, Roman Economy, and how could it help the interpretation of NT in our contemporary capitalist society. There are three main parts in this course. Firstly, we will briefly explore the methodology of using economics to analyze the Roman economy and its relevance for new testament interpretation. Second, I will introduce the socio-rhetorical interpretation method as a platform to bring economics as one of the “textures” in analyzing a text. The third part, which is the core section of the course, will introduce the core aspects and sectors of the roman economy. Finally, we will try to apply the socio-rhetorical interpretation in helping us to interpret selected passages in New Testament with respect to contemporary economic issues. **Important Note to Students:** The course material, PPT and readings, are mainly in **English** and be delivered in Cantonese during lecture. Students are expected to have basic knowledge of economics, e.g. Introduction to economics in undergraduate.

2. Learning outcome:

After the course, students are expected to:

- 2.1 be able to conduct their own economic research, asking question and finding relevant information, concerning the New Testament context.
- 2.2 be able to apply socio-rhetorical interpretation method in bringing economic context as one of the textures for New Testament exegesis.
- 2.3 be equipped with the ability to look for relevant New Testament interpretation in response to contemporary economic issues.

## 3. List of Topics:

Topic	Content
Methodology in analyzing Ancient Economy.	In what ways can contemporary economic theory be relevant to ancient economy.
New Institutional Economics	A brief introduction to the basic method of new institutional economics and how it could be applied to analyze roman economy
Overview of Roman Economy	To have an overview of roman economy, we will go through the following economic aspects From NIE perspective: production, land, slavery, financial sectors, poverty and the relevant political and legal system.
Socio-rhetorical interpretation (SI)	Learning the methodology of SI and how it could help us to bring the economic “texture” into biblical exegesis.
Interpretation of bible in response to current economic matters	Learning how to make use of the SI in response to current economic matter with the help of chosen passages in New Testament

## 4. Assessment scheme:

Assessment(% Share):	Main Criteria:
1. Analytical Book report (30)	Students have to to choose to read one of books in the list and doing a general review of the book and one section of contextual analysis related to his/her chosen topic.
2. Individual Presentation (20)	Each student should choose one passage in the New Testament and a relevant economic aspect of the relevant context. Each student is expected to do a detail research on the chosen context and show how it could be incorporated in the New Testament exegesis with the help of the socio-rhetorical interpretation. <u>Contemporary application is not required</u> . Each presentation is limited in no more than 20 mins.
3. Final paper (50)	A full analysis is expected from the paper. Students are expected to produce a paper which can show their understanding of a specific area of the Roman economy, how it could be used to understand a chosen passage of New Testament with the help of socio-rhetorical interpretation, and how to interpret the passage to answer certain contemporary economic issue. No more than 5000 words (no more than 6000 in Chinese)

## 4. Learning schedule

Date	Main Topics
6/9	Course introduction and the methodology in analyzing Ancient Economy and the relevance of NIE to ancient economy.
13/9	Introduction of Socio-rhetorical interpretation as a platform to bring economic context into New Testament interpretation
20/9	Brief History of the development of Roman Economy
27/9	Introduction to Roman Economy in 1 <sup>st</sup> Century (Context of NT)
4/10	Roman major production
11/10	Roman Distribution of Resources: Politics and land distribution and Poverty
18/10	Roman major economic relationships 1: Roman Slavery
25/10	No Lecture
1/11	Roman major economic relationships 2: Patron clients
8/11	New Testament Interpretation (Poverty) + Presentation 1
15/11	New Testament Interpretation (Slavery) + Presentation 2
22/11	No Lecture
29/11	New Testament Interpretation (Labour) +Presentation 3
6/12 (supple)	Conclusion + Final Presentation

## 6. Learning activities

There are various learning activities in this course.

Individual work: A learning portfolio style of assessment to help students to construct their knowledge step by step.

Group discussion: Group presentation is involved to facilitate deeper group discussion and cooperative learning.

## 7. Recommended booklist:

Books for book report:

1. 華倫·卡特 (Warren Carter)。譯者：顧華德。《羅馬帝國與新約聖經要點指南》(聖經資源中心：2016)
2. Warren Carter. *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide*. Nashville, Abingdon, 2006. (with Kindle edition)
3. Scheidel, Walter ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

More will be supplied later in lecture.

Alfoldy, Geza. *The Social History of Rome*. London: Croom Helm, 1985.

- Atkins, Margaret, and Robin Osborne, eds. *Poverty in the Roman world*. New York : Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Bang, Peter Fibiger. "The Ancient Economy and New Institutional Economics," *JRS* 99 (2009): 194-206.
- . "Predation" in *Cambridge Companion to Roman Economy*, Walter Scheidel, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2012.
- Barclay, John M. G. "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-ownership," *JSNT* 37 (1991): 161-186.
- Blank, Rebecca M. *Do Justice: Linking Christian Faith and Modern Economic Life*. Ohio: United Church. 1992.
- Blank, Rebecca M., and McGurn William. *Is the Market Moral?* Washington: Brookings Institution. 2004.
- Brunt, Peter Asbury. *The Fall of the Roman Republic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- . *Social conflicts in the Roman Republic*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1971.
- Duff, A. M. *Freedmen in Early Roman Empire*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1958.
- Duncan-Jones, Richard. *The Economy of the Roman Empire : Quantitative Studies*. London : Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Dunn, James. *New Testament Theology in Dialogue*. London: SPCK, 1987.
- Finley, M. I. "The Ancient City: From Fustel de Coulanges to Max Weber and beyond." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19, no. 3 (1977): 305-327.
- . *The ancient economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999
- , ed. *Classical Slavery*. London: Frank Cass, 2003.
- . *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1980.
- Frank, Tenney. *An Economic History of Rome*. Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2004.
- Hopkins, Keith. *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies in Roman History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Keith, Roberts. *The Origins of Business, Money, and Markets*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Lendon, J. E. "Roman Honor," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Longenecker, Bruce W., and Kelly D. Liebengood, eds. *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception*. Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009.
- Mackay, Christopher S., *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Manning, Joseph G., and Ian Morris. *The Ancient Economy: Evidence and Models*. California: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians : the Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New

Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

Neyrey, Jerome H. *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*. Kentucky:

Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Neyrey, Jerome H., and Eric C. Stewart, eds. *The Social World of the New Testament*.

Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008.

Robbins, Vernon. "Response: Vernon Robbins's Socio-rhetorical interpretation: A

Review," *JSNT*, 70 (1998): 101-107.

-----..*Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-rhetorical Interpretation*. Valley

Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996.

-----..*The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. New

York: Routledge, 1996.

Rostovtzeff, Michael. *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*. Oxford:

Oxford University Press. 1998.

Sampley, Paul, ed. *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: a Handbook*. Harrisburg: Trinity

Press International, 2003.

Scheidel, Walter ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy*. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Scheidel, Walter, Ian Morris, and Richard Saller. *The Cambridge Economic History of*

*the Greco-Roman World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

葉漢浩 經濟與信仰 (12 月 2016). 基督教文藝出版社.

——— 經世致用 (10 月 2016) 文藝

——— 看見鄰舍、看見使命 (1 月 2016) FES Press.

——— 社會企業：信仰實踐與反思 (Fall 2013). 基督教文藝出版社.

## 8. Contact details:

Email: [dripromans2015@gmail.com](mailto:dripromans2015@gmail.com)

## 9. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. In the case of group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible should there be any plagiarized contents in the group project, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed directly or indirectly to the plagiarized contents. For assignments in the form of a

computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide. The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submission. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic.

#### 10. Feedback for evaluation

Feedback and recommendation are welcome. Students are advised to either give feedback during lecture or through email. Response will be made promptly based on the need of students.