

North Park Theological Seminary
3225 W. Foster Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625

BIBL 5151 (Section 1; 3hrs)
Interpreting the New Testament 2
Spring 2010 *Syllabus* (subject to revision: 10/31/09)

Instructor	Dr. Max J. Lee Associate Professor of New Testament
Class Hours/Location:	Thurs evening 6:30–9:45pm; Rm TBA
Office:	Nyvall-26
Phone	773-244-5258
Office Hours	Mon 9:30-11am; Tues 10am-12pm; Wed 9:30-11am * Please reserve a time to meet by signing up on the office hours sheet posted on the instructor's door, or make an appointment with the instructor for other hours
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Note: *Before* the semester starts, begin (and try to finish) reading Luke Timothy **Johnson's book *Scripture and Discernment*** (see below). You will be responsible for reading *all* of it plus select articles by the 2nd class session! Since we only meet once a week, please have your reading for the 1st week done prior to the start of class on the topic of "**Philemon as a Test Case for the Historical-Critical Method.**"

As part of the course, you will be required to attend the evening session of the **Wheaton Theology Conference** on "Paul and the People of God," and encouraged to join the professor and other classmates in attending the entire day's sessions. Within the first two weeks of class, you will be asked to registered for one day of the conference (**Sat. Apr. 17, 2010**) at the discount rate of \$17.50 (discount code: LeeGroup): http://www.wheaton.edu/Theology/theo_conf/index.html

Introductory Comments

Greetings! Welcome to *Interpreting the New Testament II*! I am looking forward to spending this semester together in our journey into the world of the first century AD. And it's an exciting world indeed from which early Christianity originated and spread to transform the entire Roman Empire. At the end of the experience, it is my prayer that your thirst for God's word will deepen, as we endeavor to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ from the life, testimony, and writings of the first-century church which together (in)form our New Testament canon.

Catalog Description

This course is a survey of Acts through Revelation with a special emphasis on the interpretive issues, historical context, distinctive content, theological peculiarities, and contemporary relevance of Acts and the New Testament letters. Three credit hours.

Learning Objectives for Course:

The overarching goal for this course is *to build a common vocabulary* with the authors of the New Testament (i.e., the task of **exegesis** and the historical critical method) and *theologically reflect* upon how their original message can be applied to our present Christian context (the task of **hermeneutics**). To accomplish this overall goal for the course, students will fulfill the following course objectives:

- 1. Students will acquire knowledge of the history, cultural climate, social and religious value systems, and politics of Palestine and of the wider Roman world during the late Republic to early imperial period (ca. 1st century B.C.E. to the 2nd century C.E.)*
- 2. Students will interpret the major theological themes for the Book of Acts, the Pauline Letters, the General Letters, and the Apocalypse and indicate literary points in the texts where several interpretative options are possible.*
- 3. Students will incorporate and utilize the historical, cultural, social, political, and religious knowledge that they have gained from their reading and engagement in the course (see objective #1) to argue for a particular reading of the text in its contingent setting even though there may be several possible interpretative options (see objective #2).*
- 4. Students will apply the major theological themes of Acts through Revelation to their own communal setting and explain a theme's contemporary implications for the present day church.*

Required Textbooks

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996

A former Benedictine monk, now a lay Roman Catholic, married with children, and a Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Origins at Emory University, Johnson writes with a constant preoccupation of how to read the Scriptures for the life of the church. Although we may not agree with all of Johnson's applications, we will be reading his short treatise on how to discern the will of God as a corporate practice (i.e., as a body of believers) in our study of the book of Acts.

The Wheaton Theology Conference [Sat. Apr. 17, 2010]: Registration Fee of \$17.50

As part of the course, you will be required to attend the plenary evening session of the **Wheaton Theology Conference** by Tom Wright entitled: "Paul and the People of God." You are encouraged to join the professor and other classmates in attending the entire day's sessions. Within the first two weeks of class, you will be asked to register for one day of the conference (**Sat. Apr. 17, 2010**) at the discount rate of \$17.50 (discount code: LeeGroup). You *must* register. They will *not* allow non-registered students to attend. Go to http://www.wheaton.edu/Theology/theo_conf/index.html for more info. Students who cannot attend the conference can, in its stead, write a critical review of a book written by Wright about Paul as a replacement assignment (the book must be approved by the instructor; it will either be *Justification* or *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*).

New Testament 2 Reader (hence **NTR**)

This reader composes the core of your reading assignments for the course. The reader includes the writings of both past and present contributors to New Testament scholarship who have fundamentally shaped (for better or for worse) the way modern readers understand Acts, the Pauline letters, the General Letters, and Revelation. You will be reading either directly from these authors themselves or secondary descriptions of their work, including (but not limited to) the following heralds of New Testament scholarship: Bultmann, Käsemann, Stendahl, Barrett, Hengel, Beker, Sanders, Dunn, Hays, Wright, Segal, Conzelmann, and others. *NTR* is mostly available online through blackboard where you can download the articles/essays as PDF files under the general library use policy allowed for by the U.S. copyright office (an explanation of this policy is provided online in the forum for downloading articles). Other works will be available in the library reserves on campus.

[For all MDiv students; no exceptions unless otherwise permitted by the instructor of the course]:

The Greek New Testament (UBS⁴ or NA²⁷). MDiv students are required to work from the Greek New Testament at select points from the course. You are allowed, however, to bring your English Bible as well (see comments just below) as a *second* reference but all MDiv students (no exceptions unless permitted by the instructor) will be required to do assignments using their Greek New Testament.

[For non-MDiv students]: *The English Bible* in any contemporary translation, but preferably the NRSV or TNIV/NIV.

Please do not use a paraphrased translation (e.g., New Living Bible) or an idiomatic/colloquial one (e.g., Eugene Peterson's translation). A more literal translation of the Hebrew/Greek texts are needed for the course. If you have any questions concerning if a particular version or translation is acceptable or not, please do not hesitate to ask the instructor.

Summary: Assignments and Exam (Total possible = 1000 pts)

Assignment	Description	Max Value	Grade %
(Bi-)weekly Quizzes	about every other week taken on blackboard (6 quizzes = 6 X 50pts each)	300	30%
Critical Review of Johnson	due Feb. 11th (2nd week)	100	10%
The New Perspective(s) Project: * Wheaton Theology Conference on Wright's Understanding of Paul's Gospel	<u>100pts</u> : Conference Attendance + Reflection [or] Critical Book Review on Wright book <u>100pts</u> : Exegetical Exercises on Select Texts due Apr. 22nd (11th week)	200	20%
Final Exam	Thurs night May 6th during the regular class session: 6:30-8:30pm	400	40%
	<i>Total Possible Points/ Percentage</i>	1000	100%

(Bi-)Weekly Quizzes (6 quizzes X 50pts each = **300pts** total; 30% of your final grade)
[meets learning objectives #1-2]

About every other week, you will be asked to take a quiz **online on blackboard** focused on the reading material given for two weeks of instruction. This is the only time you will be using blackboard for the course.

Since this quiz cannot be procurated in person, *the quizzes will be open book and open note*. You are allowed to access your reading/lecture materials during the quiz. However, the quiz will be timed for exactly 25 minutes. What this means is that *if you do not study for the quiz and memorize the content of your preparation, or if you are too dependent on looking up answers to every single question you are asked in your book, you will most likely not complete the quiz. **Please study.*** Please be ready. If you have read the material and studied it, you will complete the quiz. If not, you probably will not finish it as there will not be enough time for you to comb through your reading material and notes to find the answers. *Many of the questions do not have the type of answers that you can look up on a particular page, but rather test your overall comprehension of the article and essay.*

The quiz will be a mixture of objective questions: multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and short answer. As much as possible I have tried to write the questions clearly and *without* any “trick” questions. The questions are detailed but should be read at face-value and without “reading into the question” something that is not being asked.

Once you start the quiz, you will *not* be allowed to start over or take it again. Blackboard will time you as soon as you start the quiz and you have exactly the allotted time to finish it. If you do not finish within the prescribed time, you will be graded on the answers you have completed and marked off for those you have not. The timed nature of the quiz means you cannot depend on looking up every answer to complete it. Please be ready for the quiz at the time you start it.

No allowances will be made for computer glitches! *Please make sure you have created a situation at home and have the proper working equipment to take the quiz online without interruption.*

Critical Review on Johnson’s Scripture and Discernment (100pts; 10% of your final grade) [meets learning objective #1 & #4]

You will read and critically evaluate Luke Timothy Johnson’s book *Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church* and specially engage how Johnson’s approach applies to the case of homosexuality. Details on this writing assignment are in Appendix 1 below.

The New Perspective(s) Project (200pts; 20% of your final grade) [meets learning objectives #3–4]

The goal of the project is to critically interact with Bishop Tom Wright’s new/fresh redefinition of Paul’s gospel and justification through faith(fulness). As part of the course, you will be required to attend the plenary evening session given by Bishop Wright entitled “Paul and the People of God” at the **Wheaton Theology Conference** on **Sat. Apr. 17, 2010**. You are encouraged to join the professor and other classmates in attending the entire day’s sessions. Within the first two weeks of class, you will be asked to register for one day of the conference (Sat. Apr. 17, 2010) at the discount rate of \$17.50 (discount code: LeeGroup). Register online at: http://www.wheaton.edu/Theology/theo_conf/index.htm

If you are unable to attend the conference, you may opt to write a critical review of Tom Wright's latest book *Justification* (unless you took the J-term 2010 Pauline Theology course with Prof. Lee; then you must read Wright's *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*).

Whether based on the conference paper(s) or the alternative book on Wright, the whole class must write a paper interacting with some of the key Pauline texts that Wright uses for re-interpreting Paul's gospel. What are the strengths of Wright's re-reading of Paul? the weaknesses? Where you disagree with Wright, you will be asked to provide your own exegetical analysis of the text in question and how you would interpret the passage vis-à-vis Wright in conversation with secondary literature on the passage. Details on the New Perspective Project will be given separately from the syllabus after the start of class.

Late paper submissions are penalized/down-graded by 10pts for each weekday (excluding weekends) the paper is late. Late submissions of any papers beyond 1 week of the due date will not be accepted for any reason whatsoever. After 1 week past the due date, the late submission will be recorded as 0 points.

Final Exam (400pts; 40% of your final grade) [meets learning objectives #1-3]

There will be an *accumulative* final for the course, covering material from the first day until the last. The exam will be a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and short essay questions. You will be tested on both the lectures and your reading.

Attendance and Class Participation

No attendance or roll call will be taken but you are expected to be present during class throughout the evening. Each class period is equivalent to one week of instruction. Absences from part or all of the class may result in the lowering of your overall grade in the course. You are expected to be prepared to discuss the New Testament texts and the secondary reading for each class period.

Grading Scale

The following scale is used for your final grade:

930-1000	A	770-799	C+	600-629	D –
900-929	A–	730-769	C	0-599	F
870-899	B+	700-729	C –		
830-869	B	670-699	D +		
800-829	B –	630-669	D		

Academic Honesty

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park Theological Seminary is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion.

Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.

In the special instance of group work, the instructor will make clear his/her expectations with respect to individual vs. collaborative work. A violation of these expectations may be considered cheating as well. For further information on this subject you may refer to the Academic Dishonesty section of the University’s online catalog.

Disability Accommodations

North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services as soon as possible. If desired or necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Act Services is found in the Student Academic Handbook.

Course Schedule

Wk	Date	Topic/Description	Reading Assignments
1	Feb 4	Introduction to the Class Contingency and Coherence in the Pauline Letters Philemon as a Test Case for Historical Criticism Quiz 1 (take the quiz on blackboard by 11:59pm the Tuesday before our next class)	NTR: Wiles, "Getting Started..." pp. 1-7; Beker, "Recasting Pauline Theology," pp. 15-24; Lewis, "Philemon–Paul–Onesimus," 232–46 Bible: Philemon 1
2	Feb 11	Discerning the Will of God in the Book of Acts and the Mission of the Early (Jewish-) Christian Church (Acts 1-15) Critical Book Review on Johnson due at the beginning of class	Book: Johnson, <i>Scripture and Discernment</i> (you should have read <i>all</i> of it already!) NTR: Johnson, "Scripture and Discernment: the Case of Homosexuality," pp. 59-65; Gagnon, "Sexuality," in <i>DTIB</i> Bible: Acts 1-15; 28
3	Feb 18	Perseverance and Apostasy in the General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter; Jude; 1-3 John Christology and Atonement in Hebrews Quiz 2 (take the quiz on blackboard by 11:59pm the Tuesday before our next class)	NTR: Osborne, "A Classic Arminian View," 86-128; Marshall, <i>Kept by the Power of God</i> , ch. 7 (pp. 158-71), ch. 8 (in part; pp. 186-90) Bible: Heb. 3, 6, 12; Jas. 2; 1 Pet. 1; 2 Pet. 2 (Prov. 26:11); Jude 1 NTR: Thielman, ch. 31 "Jesus' High Priesthood Is Superior to the Levitical High Priesthood" (pp. 593-602) Bible: Heb. 5, 7, 8-10
4	Feb 25	Historical-Critical Issues in the Study of Paul: Current Trends and Modern Debates The Education and Training of Saul the Pharisee / Paul in Acts (Acts 16-28)	NTR: Fisk, "Paul: Life and Letters," 283-325; Hengel, "Upbringing and Education: Tarsus or Jerusalem?" pp. 18-39; Murphy O'Connor, "Growing up in Tarsus," pp. 32-51 Bible: Acts 9; 22; 26
5	Mar 4	The Letter to the Galatians , Anatolian Folk Belief, and Paul's Critique of Jewish Soteriology Quiz 3 (take the quiz on blackboard by 11:59pm the Tuesday of the Spring Break)	NTR: Arnold, "... Paul and Anatolian Folk Belief," pp. 429-449; Das, "The Crisis in Galatia," 17-48; Hansen, "Paul's Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom in Galatians," 213-37 Bible: Gal. 1-6
SB	Mar 8–12	Spring Break (no class)	Get a start on the week 6 reading since it one of the longer and more difficult reading assignments
6	Mar 18	The New Perspective(s) on Paul	NTR: Westerholm, "The 'New Perspective' at Twenty-Five," pp. 1-38; Wright, "New Perspectives on Paul," pp. 243-64; Das, ch. 1 "Underserved Grace vs. Strict and Deserving Obedience in Early Judaism," 12-44.

Wk	Date	Topic/Description	Reading Assignments
7	Mar 25	Justification and Sanctification in the Letter to the Romans Quiz 4 (take the quiz on blackboard by 11:59pm the Tuesday before our next class)	NTR: Dunn, "Humankind under Indictment," ch. 3 pp.79-101; 111-127; Gundry, "The Nonimputation of Christ's Righteousness," pp. 17-45; Keck, "The Salvific Response," pp. 49-62 Bible: Romans 1-8
8	Apr 1	No Class in Observance of Maudy Thursday and the Easter weekend	
9	Apr 8	Discipleship, Imitation and Community in 1-2 Corinthians	NTR: Castelli, <i>Imitating Paul</i> , pp. 89-117; Lee, "Lending Nature a Helping Hand," pp. 1-19; Gunton, "§29 Baptism," 145-47. Bible: 1 Cor. 1-16; 2 Cor. 11-12; Acts 17:16-32, 18:1-28
10	Apr 15	Christ and Caesar in Philippians / An Excursus on Empire in Rom 12:14-13:14 Quiz 5 (take the quiz on blackboard by 11:59pm the Tuesday before our next class)	NTR: Cassidy, <i>Paul in Chains</i> , pp. 190-209 (Philippians); pp. 17-35 (Rom 13); Wright, "Gospel and Empire" in <i>Paul: Fresh Perspectives</i> , pp.59-79 Bible: Philip. 1-4; Acts 16:11-40
	Apr 17 (Sat)	—— Plenary Lecture: "Paul and the People of God" by Bishop Tom Wright 7–8:30pm at the Wheaton Theology Conference . You are encouraged to spend the whole day at the conference with the professor; rides to be arranged	
11	Apr 22	Engaging the Powers in the Letter to the Ephesians and the Colossians Paul and Gender The New Perspective(s) Critical Essay is due	NTR: Wink, <i>Naming the Powers</i> , pp. 103-48; idem, <i>Engaging the Powers</i> , 297-317; Belleville, "Teaching and Usurping Authority," pp. 205-23. Bible: Ephesians 1-6; Col. 1-4; Acts 19
12	Apr 29	The Justice of God in John's Apocalypse (aka Breaking the Code in Revelation) An Excursus on Eschatology in 1-2 Thessalonians Quiz 6 (take the quiz on blackboard by 11:59pm the Tuesday before our next class)	NTR: Blount, <i>Can I Get a Witness?</i> pp. 69-89; Lee, <i>Revelation</i> , "Introduction to" Bible: Revelation 1-5, 12-13, 17, 20-22; 1 Thess. 4-5; 2 Thess. 2; Acts 17:1-15
13	May 7	Final Exam - 6:30-8:30pm	<i>Congratulations! You made it!</i>

Appendix 1: Critical Essay on Johnson (100pts)

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996

Essay Objective:

To critically evaluate and offer a *professional, academic* review of Luke Timothy Johnson's book *Scripture and Discernment* for its contributions and deficiencies, its strengths and weaknesses, in elaborating the role of the church in the process of interpreting Scripture today

Content of the Review

1) *How does Luke Timothy Johnson understand the role of the church in relation to Scripture?* In using various narrative episodes in Acts concerning the decision making processes of the early church, what does Johnson see the early church doing in its interpretation of the Old Testament as it tries to understand the new activity of the Holy Spirit among Gentile converts/believers?

2) *When the church must discern together how it should respond to an ethical issue that is not explicitly addressed in Scripture, what interpretative principles can it follow in applying the biblical text to situations which the original authors never anticipated or intended their writings to address?*

3) *Take the example of homosexuality. Is homosexuality a permissible Christian ethic according to Johnson's reading of the biblical texts?* What texts does Johnson look at to discern this ethic? How does he read these texts? If you disagree with Johnson's interpretation, then how would you re-interpret or interpret alternatively the texts which Johnson used to defend his position?

4) *What are the strengths and weaknesses of Johnson's approach?* Be sure to defend what strengths and weaknesses you see in Johnson and never make criticisms without having shown the reason why you find a proposition deficient or incorrect.

Format:

Your paper/essay should be **1000 words max** (about 2 single-spaced pages; or 3-4 double-spaced pages). Please use Times Roman (or the like) and a 12pt font. Margins: 1 inch: top, bottom, right, left.

- **Document your work** using parenthetical notes or footnotes. If your citation format is improper or incorrect, you will be marked off. Consult *Turabian* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- **Avoid** slang, colloquialisms, dangling antecedents, contractions, and any other ungrammatical or informal use of language!
- **Use inclusive language.**
- **No quotations/excerpts period.** Summarize everything *in your own words*. Your paper will be downgraded for including quotations/excerpts.

Word to the Wise: As much as possible, *extraneous* information should be *avoided*. Omit long introductions. You should have a few sentences for your introduction and no more. Begin immediately with the core content of your review/essay. Note that your page requirement is limited to 1000 words; therefore, you have to think carefully about what information is really important, and what is not and can be excluded. *Too long of a paper generally reflects the person's lack of preparation more than anything else*. If you rush at the last minute to write your critical review, you will find yourself spending too long a time on tangential issues and not enough on the central points of your essay.