

Bibl 5240 The New Testament Texts and Their World

Fall 2018

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Instructor

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### *Introduction*

This course is a survey of the entire New Testament. The second course in the sequence will spend more time in careful examination of key theological and historical issues. This course will include brief overviews of each book in the New Testament, and explorations of the Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts for early Christianity. Students will also be introduced to exegetical methodologies and contemporary approaches to interpreting the New Testament. Special attention will be given to introducing the life and teachings of Jesus and the ministry and letters of Paul and to the manner in which Christian eschatological expectations give coherence to the New Testament.

Through this course the students will:

1. Be introduced to the content of the varied books of the New Testament and the processes that brought them into being.
2. Be introduced to the life and ministry of Jesus and the critical questions associated with his life and the study of the Gospels.
3. Be introduced to the life and ministry of Paul and the historical and theological questions arising from his letters.
4. Be introduced to contemporary exegetical and hermeneutical questions and approaches to interpreting the New Testament.
5. Explore biblical eschatology as a key integrative factor in the study of the New Testament.
6. Develop skills as readers of the New Testament text.
7. Reflect on the New Testament as a source for Christian ministry and personal spiritual growth.

### *Required Texts*

The three dictionaries listed below will be used extensively in class assignments. They are all available online through the Brandel Library website. So, you are not required to purchase your own copies.

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, Green, et. al, eds. InterVarsity Press, 2013 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)

*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Hawthorne, et. al. eds. InterVarsity Press, 1993

*Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments*, Martin, et. al, eds. InterVarsity Press, 1997

It is required to have your own copies of the following;

*Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, M. Gorman, Eerdmans, 2004  
*Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, M. Gorman, Hendrickson, 2001  
*The Lost Letters of Pergamum*, Bruce W. Longenecker

### *Assignments and Expectations*

Each week will normally include:

1. Readings from assigned texts, articles scanned, and attached videos.
2. Bible readings.
3. Posts in response to a prompt from the instructor.
4. Reading all and responding to at least one of the posts from others in the student's group.
5. Videos (many weeks, but not all).
6. Posts to an online journal that will be more informal and personal.

Grading based on:

1. Posts: five points max for each post, three points max each week for each response (only one response will receive the points but the student is free to respond to as many as she or he wishes).
2. Reading: 100 points for completing all reading.
3. Online journal; 5 points a week for writing in online journal.
4. Midterm: 100 points
5. Final: 100 points
6. Exegesis paper: 100 points

Grades

- A 535-582
- A- 517-534
- B+ 495-516
- B 477-494
- B- 459-476
- C+ 436-458
- C 419-435
- C- 401-418
- D+ 378-400
- D 361-377
- D- 343-360
- F Under 343

Posting Requirements:

Students are expected to post their weekly forum posts by *Saturday* of the week of the assignment. They are expected to respond to their colleagues by *Monday* the

following week. The instructor will be reading and grading the posts and responses between *Tuesday* and *Thursday* of the following week. Unexcused late posts will be graded down. Grading rubrics for posts are found on the front page of the course. The same schedule applies to the Online Journal.

### Exams

There will be a midterm and final exam. Both will follow the same format. There will be ten identification questions and two essays questions. A week before the exams the instructor will post thirty or so possible identification questions and six or so essay questions out of which he will choose the contents of the exam.

### Exegetical Paper

As instructed below the student will select a passage for an exegesis paper. The procedure to be followed is described in Appendix B of Gorman's *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* pp. 241-246. While there are many ways to do an exegesis paper, the student is required to use this process as a discipline. Students who have Greek should demonstrate their facility with the language. Gorman provides some helpful examples of papers at the end of his book.

Students will find rubrics for the evaluations of posts, and other work posted on the Moodle course site.

### *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 accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services at 773-244-5619 as soon as possible. If desired and necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Acts Services is found in the Student Academic Handbook or by visiting the following website:  
<http://www.northpark.edu/ada>.

### *Academic Honesty*

Students are reminded of the regulations concerning plagiarism and cheating which can be found in the Student Academic Handbook. Do not be tempted to plagiarize as a way out of difficulties in completing your assignments. If you are having difficulty, please see the instructor.

### *Title IX*

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Dean of Students (773-244-5565) or Director of Human Resources (773-244-5599) for information about campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As a member of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking.

Please refer to North Park's Safe Community site for contact information and further details. <http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Safe-Community>

### *Class Sessions*

## **Week One: Reading the New Testament**

### Purpose:

1. To introduce students to the history of the collection and canonization of the New Testament.
2. To explore the history of interpretation of the New Testament.
3. To acquaint students with the idea of the New Testament as Scripture.
4. To introduce students to resources for the study of the New Testament.

### Assignments

1. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (hereinafter DJG): Canon, Historicisms and Historiography, Mark, Gospel of.
  2. *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, (hereinafter, DPL): Canon
  3. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Development* (hereinafter DLNT): Canon
  4. *Global Dictionary of Theology*, Dyrness and Karkkainen, Hermeneutics. (scan)
  5. "Teaching the Bible Confessionally in the Church", Ellen Davis and "Nine Theses on the Interpretation of Scripture" in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, Davis, et. al. (scan)
- Bible Reading: Gospel of Mark (in one sitting out loud, if possible).

Post 500 words on *one* of the following and in this and subsequent weeks read *all* the posts from your group responding to at least *one* of them.

1. Paul Ricoeur speaks of the "world behind the text", the "world of the text" and the "world in front of the text." What do you take these to mean? What are the implications of this for the study of the Bible?
2. How do you understand the process of canonicity to have proceeded? Why were some books received as authoritative and others not?

Online journal: Record your initial thoughts as you begin this journey of study and discovery.

## **Week Two: Historical and Cultural Context of the New Testament: Second Temple Judaism**

### Purpose:

1. To introduce students to Second Temple Judaism as a major context for early Christianity.
2. To introduce major first century groups and individuals impinging on the origins of Christianity and the New Testament.
3. To sensitize students to the challenge of fairly representing early Judaism.

### Assignments:

1. DJG: Rabbinical Traditions and Writings, Pharisees, Sanhedrin, Sadducees, Essenes, Temple, Josephus, Matthew, Gospel of.
2. *Jewish Annotated New Testament* (hereinafter JANT): "Common Errors Made About Early Judaism," A. J. Levine; "Jewish History 331 BCE—135 CE," Martin Goodman.
3. Qumran and Temple Slide Shows.

### Bible Reading: Gospel of Matthew

After doing some additional research, post 500 words to introduce and assess the significance of one of the following:

Philo of Alexandria  
Hillel  
Shammai  
Herod the Great  
Mishnah  
Talmud  
Midrash

Video: Interview with A. J. Levine on "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly" (PBS).

Online journal: How do you respond to the interview with A. J. Levine?

## **Week Three: Historical and Cultural Contexts: The Greco Roman World**

### Purpose

1. To understand the impact of Hellenism and the Roman imperial system on Second Temple Judaism and the emerging Christian community.
2. To explore Greco-Roman philosophical and religious traditions.
3. To appreciate the reality of life in Greco-Roman cities.
4. To understand Roman governmental systems.

### Assignments

1. DJG: Hellenism, Rome, Gods, Greek and Roman, Economics, Luke, Gospel of.

2. DPL: Emperor, Roman; Hellenism; Religion, Greco-Roman;
3. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*, Bruce W. Longenecker

Bible Reading: Gospel of Luke

Post 500 words on the most significant learning from your reading of *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*.

Online journal: How would the gospel of Luke appeal to Gentiles?

### **Week Four: Introducing English Exegesis**

Purpose:

1. To introduce students to the grammatical/historical approach to the student of texts as well as the critique of and limitations of the method.
2. To practice certain skills needed to read and understand New Testament texts.
3. To explore available resources for reading and interpreting New Testament texts.

Assignment

1. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (hereinafter, Gorman): 9-59.
2. DJG: African-American Criticism, Feminist and Womanist Critiques, Latino/Latina Criticism.
3. Explore the NPU/NPTS Website resources:
  - a. Seminary: Academic Programs/Student Resources: New Testament Bibliography and Biblical and Theological Links.
  - b. Brandel Library: Research Resources/Online Resources.
4. In your online journal note resources that might be helpful in your future research projects.

Post 500 words on the advantages and disadvantages of the grammatical/historical approach to the New Testament. Include at least one critique from an ethnic perspective other than your own.

Online journal: as noted, cite resources you think may be important for further research.

## **Week Five: Practicing Exegesis**

### Purpose

1. To introduce the method of exegesis recommended by Michael Gorman.
2. To begin the process of working on the student's final paper.
3. For the student to select the passage they wish to study and research for their final paper.
4. To explore resources for their final paper.

### Assignments

1. Gorman 63-125
2. Select one of the following for the text of your final exegesis paper:
  - a. Gospels: Luke 15
  - b. Epistles: Philemon
  - c. Gospels and Epistles: Matthew 24//Mark 13//1 Thessalonians 4,5. These three passages are meant to be compared and contrasted.
3. Explore the passage(s) you have chosen in one or more of the commentaries listed in the North Park online bibliography.
4. Explore key words and ideas pertinent to your passage in the appropriate dictionary: DJG, DPL, DLNT.

Post a 500 word essay on what you think are the key questions, issues, and words to explore in the passage you have selected. List the resources you will use to explore them.

Bible Reading: Philemon

Online journal: Was Paul for or against slavery?

## **Week Six: Introducing the study of the Gospels**

### Purpose

1. To introduce students to the study and interpretation of the Gospels.
2. To engage with and reflect on the methods and approaches to the study of the gospels.
3. To introduce the students to the unique areas of study within the synoptic tradition.

### Assignments

DJG: Gospel: Genre, John, Gospel of, Synoptic Problem, Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism, Gospels, History of Interpretation.  
Gorman: 127-172

Post 500 words on what are seen as the key issues and concerns for the study of *one* of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). What are the unique challenges and questions regarding the gospel you selected?

Bible Reading: John, Gospel of.

Online journal: which gospel appeals to you the most. Why?

### **Week Seven: The Life of Jesus and the Gospel of John**

Purpose

1. To explore the history of and methods for the study of the life of Jesus.
2. To introduce the Gospel of John and its particular challenges.
3. To introduce the Christology of the gospels.

Assignment

DJG: Quest of the Historical Jesus, Christology, Christ, Son of David, Son of Man, Son of God, Lord, Logos.

After additional research post 500 words on the meaning and significance of on one of the following:

Logos

Son of God

Son of Man

Christ

Lord

Online journal: What was right about and wrong with the quest of the historical Jesus?

### **Week Eight: Reading Week**

### **Week Nine: Teaching of Jesus and Midterm Exam**

Purpose

1. To introduce students to the content of the teaching of Jesus and his methods as a teacher.
2. To introduce students to the concept of the “gospel” of Jesus, that is, the good news he came to bring.

Assignment:

1. DJG: Kingdom of God/Heaven, Parables, Gospel: Good News, Miracles and Miracle Stories, Sermon on the Mount/Plain, Death of Jesus, Resurrection, ‘I am’ Sayings, Last Supper, Old Testament in the Gospels.
2. JANT: “Jesus in Modern Jewish Thought” (582-585—scan)



Post

Read Luke 4:16-30: In light of your reading and reflection on this passage write 500 words on your understanding of the gospel of Jesus.

Video: A. J. Levine's lecture on the Jewish Jesus—first 26 minutes.

Online journal: respond to and critique the depiction of Jesus by Levine.

### **Week Ten: Introducing the Early Church**

Purpose:

1. To explore issues of early Christianity especially as it relates to the life and ministry of Paul.
2. To engage the content and controversies associated with the book of Acts.
3. To introduce the person of Paul the Apostle.

Assignments

1. *Apostles of the Crucified Lord (ACL)*, 1-73.
2. DLNT: Acts of the Apostles; Church; Church Order, Government.
3. DJG: Holy Spirit

Post 500 words on the significance of one of the following after doing further research:

Pentecost

Conversion/Call of Saul/Paul

Conversion of Cornelius

The Council at Jerusalem

Paul's "Missionary Journeys"

Paul's Trials before various officials both Jewish and Gentile

Bible Reading: Acts of the Apostles

Online journal: Was Paul's Damascus road experience a conversion or a call? Or both?

### **Week Eleven: Paul's Letters: Law and Gospel**

Purpose

1. To introduce Paul as letter writer and theologian.
2. To explore the letters of Romans and Galatians.
3. To introduce the questions surrounding Paul's view of the law and the so-call "New Perspective" on Paul.

## Assignment

1. ACL 74-145, 183-226, 338-411
2. JANT: "The Law", Paul and Judaism", "Judaizers, Jewish Christians, and Others", "Paul in Jewish Thought." (scan)
3. DPL: Galatians, Letter to the; Romans, Letter to the; Justification, Law, Faith, Grace.

## Bible Reading: Galatians and Romans

### Videos:

1. Tom Wright and James Dunn: New Perspective.
2. Tom Wright: Galatians
3. Tom Wright: Romans
4. Optional: Paul and the Jewish Tradition, Mark Nanos.

Post 500 words on your understanding of the various options for understanding Paul and the Law.

Online journal: post your thoughts on one of the videos.

## **Week Twelve: Paul's Letters: The Corinthian Correspondence, Prison Epistles, and Pastoral Epistles.**

### Purpose

1. To introduce students to the Corinthian correspondence and the key issues associated with the letters.
2. To explore the concept of the church in Paul as seen in the Corinthians Correspondence, the Prison and Pastoral Epistles.
3. To explore Paul's understanding of the resurrection.

## Assignment

1. TTP: 227-337, 412-453, 471-579
2. DPL: Lord's Supper, Church, In Christ, Body, Body of Christ, Center of Paul's Theology; Resurrection; Corinthians, Letters to; Philippians, Letter to the; Colossians, Letter to the; Ephesians, Letter to the; Pastoral Letters.

Bible Reading: 1, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus

### Videos

1. The Apostle Paul's Corinth
2. Tom Wright: Resurrection
3. Tom Wright on Women

Post 500 words after additional research on your understanding of one of the topics below, including not only the Corinthians correspondence but relevant passages from the prison epistles and the pastoral epistles:

Paul's view of the Church  
Paul's view of the resurrection  
The Lord's Supper  
Women in the Church  
Leadership in the Church

Online journal: How would you talk to a believer who had lost a loved one about their fate?

### **Week Thirteen: In the End, the Beginning**

Purpose

1. To introduce NT Eschatology.
2. To explore key eschatological passages in Revelation, 1, 2 Thessalonians, and the Olivet Discourse.
3. To introduce the challenges on interpreting the Revelation.

Assignment

1. ACL 146-182
2. DJG: Eschatology, Apocalypticism and Apocalyptic teaching.
3. *Essential Eschatology* (hereinafter EE), Phelan: "Hope for Jesus' Return" (100-118) and "Hope in the Midst of Empire" (119-135) (scan)
4. DLNT: Revelation, book of.
5. DPL Thessalonians, Letters to the; Eschatology.
6. *Can I Get a Witness*, Blount, "The Revelation of Culture", pp. 1-36 (scan)

Bible Reading: Revelation, 1, 2 Thessalonians, Mark 13 and parallels.

Post 500 words after further research on your understanding of one of the following:

Parousia  
Millennium  
Olivet Discourse  
Judgment  
New Heavens, New Earth

Online journal: what is your personal response to Blount.

## **Week Fourteen: New Testament Themes: Gospel and Law, Christology, Soteriology**

### Purpose

1. To provide an overview and recapitulation of key themes in the New Testament.
2. To incorporate the General Epistles into a conversation with Jesus and Paul.
3. To engage the wider scholarly conversation about these issues.

### Assignment

1. ACL 580-592
2. DLNT: Christology; James, book of, Hebrews, James, Letter of, John, letters of.
3. DPL: Christology; Death of Christ;
4. DJG: Salvation, Servant of Yahweh.
5. GDT: Atonement (scan)

Bible Reading: James, Hebrews, 1-3 John

Video: Tom Wright: The Atonement Debate

Post 500 words after doing additional research on your understanding of one of the following passages:

Philippians 2:5-11

Colossians 1:15-23, 2:9-15

Hebrews 1:1-4

James 2:14-16

1 Peter 3:8-22

Online journal: what are your questions about the atonement?

## **Week Fifteen: Eschatology, Israel Church and Community, Mission of the Church**

### Purpose

1. To summarize what has been learned about eschatology.
2. To explore more carefully the issue of Israel and the Church.
3. To explicate the mission of the church.

### Assignment

DLNT: 1Peter, 2 Peter, Jude

DJG: Israel, Mission

EE: "Hope for Israel", 153-169 (scan)

Bible Reading: 1, 2 Peter, Jude, Romans 9-11

Post 500 words after further research on your understanding of one of the following passages:

Romans 11: 11-32

2 Peter 3:1-11

1 Peter 2:1-17

1 Peter 4:1-19

Online journal: what do you understand as the mission of the church?

**Week Sixteen: Final Exam and Final Paper**

The Exam will be open on Wednesday and must be finished by Thursday. The final paper is due on Friday.