

THE SOCIAL SETTING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT NTEN 5395

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

New Testament Department, Biblical Studies Division

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WORKSHOP, OCTOBER 2016

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NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

COURSE PURPOSE, CORE VALUE FOCUS, AND CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “academic excellence” especially highlighted in this course. The seminary is emphasizing the core value of “academic excellence” this year and encourages all at the seminary to focus especially on this emphasis.

NOBTS has seven basic competencies guiding our Masters degree programs: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual & Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. This course addresses the “Biblical Exposition” competency by helping the student learn to interpret the Bible accurately.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to involve the student in an extensive study of various social, political, religious, and economic backgrounds that can serve as aids for understanding the message of the New Testament. An introduction to the study of social settings is followed by an analysis of the various backgrounds based upon the historical documents from the NT period.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The objectives of this course include the following:

1. Students should understand the history and state of research related to NT social settings
2. Students should gain an increased appreciation for how understanding the NT social settings aids in the study of the NT
3. Students should acquire the ability to apply their understanding of NT social settings to sound interpretation of the text

COURSE TEACHING METHODS:

This course will be taught via a combination of pedagogical methods, including but not limited to the following: lectures, discussions, student assignments, small group work, computer resources, textbook discussions, and student presentations. Both inductive and deductive approaches to learning will be utilized.

TEXTBOOKS:

1. David DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking NT Culture*
2. Richard Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and NT Interpretation*

And either

3a. Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*

Or:

3b. Brian Howell and Jenell Williams Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*

REQUIREMENTS IN THE COURSE:

1. Students are expected to participate in the conversations and take notes on the lectures for all class sessions and lectures. 10%

2. Students are expected to read the textbooks and submit reviews for each one. Written reviews can be submitted either electronically or via a hard copy. The book reviews should each be 2-4 single-spaced pages and include the following: (15% per review = 45% total)

1) Bibliographic Entry

2) Statement of the Author's Purpose

3) Summary of the Contents (the bulk of the review)

4) An Evaluation of the book, including consideration of the most suitable readership, the scope of the book (comprehensive? or lacking in major areas), the viewpoints presented (multiple viewpoints when pertinent, or only one, etc.), and your overall evaluation of the book.

Each summary should be general in nature, covering the broad topics and a selection of specific examples or scenarios. Due dates for the reviews are as follows:

1. Due the first day of the workshop at the beginning of class: David DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking NT Culture*

2. Due by the end of the workshop week: Richard Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and NT Interpretation*

3. Due within two weeks of the end of the workshop:

EITHER

Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*

Or:

Brian Howell and Jenell Williams Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*

3. A take-home final exam will be given, with a due date of two weeks after the end of the workshop (Saturday, Nov. 14th). 20%

4. Each student will prepare an exegesis paper on a New Testament passage that incorporates insights from the social setting of the NT for unfolding the background and historical meaning of the passage. Due date = 4 weeks after the end of the workshop (Saturday, Nov. 19). 25%

COURSE EVALUATION:

Book Reviews 45% (15% each)

Research Paper 25%

Final Exam 20%

Class Participation 10%

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- MONDAY: 1: Intro to the course
 Defining Cultural Anthropology
 A Brief History of the Field
 Anthropology and Biblical Studies
- 2: Ethnographies and Ethnologies
 How to Realize an Ethnographic Study
 The Major Components of a Culture
 Methods for Analyzing a Culture
 Concepts for Understanding a Culture
- TUESDAY: 1: Kinship Structures and Concepts
- 2: Political Structures and Concepts
- WEDNESDAY: 1: Social Structures, Values, and Concepts: Part 1
- 2: Social Structures, Values, and Concepts: Part 2
- THURSDAY: 1: Religious Structures, Values, and Concepts
- 2: Other Social Structures, Values, and Concepts, Open Discussion
- FRIDAY: Submission of research proposal and research on papers

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Balch, David, ed., *Social History of the Matthean Community*, 1991
- Barbour, Ian, *Myths, Models, & Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion*, 1974
- Bettini, Maurizio, *Anthropology and Roman Culture: Kinship, Time, Images of the Soul*, 1991
- Blasi, Anthony J., *Early Christianity as a Social Movement*, 1988
- Clements, R. E., ed., *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*, 1989
- Cohen, Ronald, and Elman R. Service, eds., *Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, 1978
- Crosby, Michael H., *House of Disciples: Church, Economics, and Justice in Matthew*, 1988
- Crossan, John Dominic, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, 1991
- Douglas, Mary Tew, and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods*, 1978
- Douglas, Mary Tew, *Cultural Bias*, 1978
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Hamel, G., *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C. E.*, 1990

Harris, Marvin, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture*, 1968

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Holmberg, Bengt, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal*, 1990

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MacDonald, Margaret Y., *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*, 1988

Mack, Burton L., *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins*, 1988

Malina, Bruce J., and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew*, 1988

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