

## **SEMINAR IN NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION**

### **Baptist College Partnership Program, BCNT5400**

**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**

**New Testament Department, Biblical Studies Division**

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**January II Workshop, 2015**

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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 spiritual vitality this year and encourages all at the seminary to focus especially on this emphasis.

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

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The purpose of this course is to augment the student’s knowledge of the areas covered in the course NTEN 5300, Exploring the New Testament (plus one elective hour in NT is gained). Besides reviewing the content of this course through textbook readings prior to the start of the seminar, the seminar also will provide students with the opportunity to research and discuss specific topics related to the New Testament. The prerequisites to taking this seminar are the completion with a “B” or better of at least two college courses in the area of New Testament Introduction, Survey, or Exegesis, and the approval of the Director of the Baptist College Partnership Program for entrance into the course.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of this course include the following:

- The student should be able to describe the background for interpreting the New Testament, including being able to give an overview of the inter-biblical period, Jewish institutions and groups, and Greco-Roman cultural forces.

- The student should be able to situate the NT books in their historical setting with respect to authorship discussions, date, occasion, and recipients, and summarize the dominant theological and literary focuses of each of the NT books.
- The student should gain an appreciation for the importance of understanding the historical and literary backgrounds for interpreting the NT.
- The student should enhance research capabilities and the ability to effectively present information to a group for discussion.

### **COURSE TEACHING METHODS:**

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

### **I. REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE:**

- **REQUIRED PRE-READINGS:**

(1) Wenham, Walton, Marshall, Travis, and Paul, *Exploring the New Testament*, 2 vol., InterVarsity (2 short books)

**OR**

Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Zondervan

**OR**

John Drane, *Introducing the New Testament*, Fortress

(2) C. K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background*, Harper/San Francisco

**OR**

Gerd Theissen, *The Shadow of the Galilean*, Augsburg/Fortress

**OR**

Bruce Longenecker, *The Lost Letters of Pergamum: A Story from the NT World*, Baker

**OR**

Craig Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature*

**OR**

Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*

(3) Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, Eerdmans (3d ed.)

Read/Review these three books prior to the first class meeting of the seminar. A review of each of the books, 4-5 pages double-spaced per book, is due on the first day of the seminar.

- **SEMINAR RESEARCH:**

Each student will engage in research in the library on specific topics each day. The results of the research will be presented in class for discussion. A written outline of the research will be submitted to the professor each day as well, giving sources consulted, a summary of findings, and the conclusions drawn by the student.

- **RESEARCH PAPER POST-ASSIGNMENT:**

A 15-20 page, double-spaced paper on a specific research topic is to be submitted within three weeks of completing the seminar. This paper should be of publication quality, demonstrating the student's ability to engage in research, dialogue honestly with differing viewpoints, and reach defensible conclusions. The form of the paper should follow the seminary standard of Turabian, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. For an example of correct form, look at the file "NOBTSPapers.pdf" at the following link:

<http://drkoine.com/resources/PDF/Home/NOBTSPapers.pdf>

## II. GRADING:

Grading is on a pass/fail basis, with pre-assignments, seminar assignments, and the post-assignment each counting one-third of the total grade. Attendance in the seminar is part of the seminar assignment grade.

## III. SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND RESEARCH TOPICS:

Monday: The Cultural and Historical Setting of the New Testament

- The Maccabean Revolt
- Jewish Sects in the 1<sup>st</sup> century
- The Rule of Herod the Great
- Roman rule and rulers in Palestine in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. and A.D.
- Jewish rulers in Palestine in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. A.D.
- The Jewish-Roman revolt of 66-70 A.D.
- Jewish Institutions in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. A.D. ]

Tuesday: The Synoptic Gospels and Palestinian Judaism

- The Synoptic Problem
- The Theological message of Mt., Mk., or Lk.
- The Historical Setting of Mt., Mk., or Lk.
- The Search for the Historical Jesus
- Family life in Palestine in the 1<sup>st</sup> century
- Wedding practices in Jewish and Greco-Roman 1<sup>st</sup> c. culture
- Galilee in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. A.D.
- The chronology of the birth of Jesus
- The chronology of the ministry of Jesus
- The language(s) of Jesus

Wednesday: The Pauline Writings, Hellenistic Judaism, Hellenism and the Greco-Roman Culture, and the shift to inclusion of Gentiles in the church

- The Chronology of the life of Paul
- The Theological Message of Paul or a specific book
- Discussions of the authorship and date of the Pauline books (one or several books)
- Gnosticism
- Greco-Roman religions
- The Search for the Historical Paul

- The background of a specific church setting (Antioch, Corinth, etc.)
- Spiritual Gifts in the Pauline Epistles
- Church leadership in the Pauline Epistles
- Paul's view of the Law in light of current debates (esp. E. P. Sanders)
- Jewish synagogues and house churches
- The teachings of Paul on a specific topic (topic approved by professor in advance)
- The genre of Epistle

Thursday: Acts, Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, and unity/diversity issues

- The theological message of Acts, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, or Jude
- The organization of the book of Acts
- The Church at Jerusalem
- Paul's missionary journeys according to Acts
- Judicial trials and judgments in the 1<sup>st</sup> c.
- The historical setting of the book of Hebrews
- The historical setting of the book of James
- The question of authorship on 2 Peter
- The teachings of a given book on a specific topic (topic approved by professor)
- The authorship of Hebrews
- The understanding of faith in James and Judaism

Friday: The Johannine Writings and the purpose of apocalyptic literature

- The theological message of the Gospel of John
- The concept of the Spirit in John
- The historical setting of the Gospel of John
- The identity of the "Jews" in the Gospel of John
- Hospitality in the 1<sup>st</sup> c.. in light of 2 and 3 John
- The theological message of the Book of Revelation
- The theological message of the Epistles of John
- The historical setting of the book of Revelation
- The genre of apocalyptic
- A review of historical approaches to the book of revelation
- The soteriology of the Gospel of John
- The Christology of the book of Revelation

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