

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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NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

COURSE PURPOSE, CORE VALUE FOCUS, AND CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:

The seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. The core value focus for this academic year is spiritual vitality. We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word.

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 will especially address 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 approval of the Director of the Baptist College Partnership Program is required for entrance into this course.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course seeks to realize the following in student learning:

- 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.

- Student should enhance their 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.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE:

- **REQUIRED PRE-READINGS:** (read one from each of the three numbered groups)

(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

OR Gary Burge and Lynn Cohick, *The NT in Antiquity*, Zondervan

(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 (2-3 pages if single-spaced), is due on the first day of the seminar. The review should include the following: Bibliographic entry for the book, information about the author/s, a brief overview of the content of the book, and your reaction to the book. The overview of the contents may give the broad approach with only 3-5 selected topics covered with more details.

- **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, with information below regarding that standard.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help info is provided on this website.

WRITING STYLE GUIDE:

Writing assignments should follow the **NOBTS/Leavell College Manual of Form and Style** (*revised August 2019*). To access this manual on the seminary website, please use the following link: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>.

PLAGIARISM ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

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.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND RESEARCH TOPICS:

Monday: The Cultural and Historical Setting of the New Testament

- The Maccabean Revolt
- Jewish Sects in the 1st century
- The Rule of Herod the Great
- Roman rule and rulers in Palestine in the 1st century B.C. and A.D.
- Jewish rulers in Palestine in the 1st c. A.D.
- The Jewish-Roman revolt of 66-70 A.D.
- Jewish Institutions in the 1st 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 1st century
- Wedding practices in Jewish and Greco-Roman 1st c. culture
- Galilee in the 1st 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 1st 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 1st 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

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

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