

NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUNDS READING COLLOQUIUM (NTSR9301)

**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
New Testament Department, Biblical Studies Division**

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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 “academic excellence” especially highlighted in this course.

The Ph.D. degree is an intensive program emphasizing specialization and research in the area of the degree major. This reading colloquium is a specialized study of the background to the New Testament.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Ph.D. reading colloquia in New Testament studies consist of assigned readings the faculty deems to be of special importance. Guided discussions of these works will comprise the bulk of class time.

This colloquium focuses on important works related to New Testament Backgrounds. Jewish literature of the Second Temple Period and to Greco-Roman history is emphasized. While students will read secondary sources, the colloquium will stress the importance of a careful reading of primary sources from the period.

OBJECTIVES:

Well-rounded New Testament scholars must be familiar with significant works in the field of New Testament studies even if these do not overlap with one’s area of specialization within the discipline. This breadth of knowledge is necessary to equip students for teaching at the university and seminary levels and prepares them to make important contributions through research and publication. In light of this overarching reality, the objectives of this course include the following:

1. Students should understand the various historical backgrounds & sources for the study of the NT
2. Students should gain an increased appreciation for how the study of the historical background and original sources relate to the field of NT studies
3. Students should acquire the ability to utilize and analyze the background data for both information and research purposes

COURSE TEACHING METHODS:

This course will be taught via a combination of pedagogical methods, including but not limited to the following: group discussion, student papers and reviews, and student presentations.

READING LIST BOOKS: (Those covered in this colloquium are in bold print)

Logan, Alistair and A. J. M. Wedderburn, eds. *The New Testament and Gnosis*. London: T. & T. Clark, 2004.

Josephus, Flavius. *The Wars of the Jews*.

***The Old Testament Apocrypha*. (See the NRSV)**

Introductions to all Old Testament books from *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. (6 vols.) Doubleday, 1990. (Recommended)

Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. Michael Grant, Penguin Classics, Viking Press, 1991.

Jeremias, Joachim. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. Fortress, 1969.

Sanders, E. P. *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE - 66 CE*. Trinity, 1992.

Vermes, Geza. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. 5th ed., Penguin, 1998 (or most recent ed.).

Lightfoot, J. B. Edited and completed by J. R. Harmer. Edited by M. W. Holmes. *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*. Revised Edition. Baker, 1999.

Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, Editor. R. M. Wilson, Translator. *New Testament Apocrypha: Gospels and Related Writings*. Vol. 1. Revised Ed. John Knox Press, 1991.

Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, Editor. R. M. Wilson, Translator. *New Testament Apocrypha: Writings Relating to the Apostles, Apocalypses, and Related Subjects*. Vol. 2. Revised Ed. John Knox Press, 1992 (or most recent ed.).

Carcopino, Jerome. *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*. New York: Yale University, 1968. (Rec.)

Helyer, Larry. *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period*. Downer's Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 2002.

Neusner, Jacob. *Mishnah: A New Translation*. New Haven: Yale University, 1988.

Evans, Craig A. *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*. Hendrickson, 1992. (Recommended)

Mason, Steven M. *Josephus and the New Testament*. Hendrickson, 2003. (Recommended)

DeSilva, David A. *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

REQUIREMENTS AND SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS:

The colloquium will convene on the following dates with the assignments for individual students as well as group assignments noted on the table below. Each meeting is 2 ½ hours. The day of class will be Fridays on the dates listed below. Individual assignments will be designated on the first day of class.

Session One: August 21

We will have a brief organizational meeting in the Online Learning Center. This meeting will be a brief meeting in order to organize the materials for the semester. We will discuss paper format, make individual assignments, and answer general questions you may have about the course. During the semester we will meet on the first Friday of each month for our two hour session. Reading assignments and papers will be due on the day they are assigned. Late penalties will be assessed for work not turned in on time.

Session Two September 4

Reading Assignment: **All Students**

- *OT Apocrypha (desilva = d)*
- Helyer's *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period* (Helyer = H)

Writing Assignment:

- Write a one-page single-spaced overview of the assigned books of the Apocrypha & the corresponding chapter in DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*
- Write a 2-3 page single-spaced summary of the assigned chapters in Helyer's

Session Three October 2

Reading Assignment:

- Sanders' *Judaism: Practice and Belief* (Sanders = S)
- Jeremias' *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (assigned sections) (Jeremias = Jer)
- Josephus' *Wars of Jews* (Josephus = Jo)
- Vermes' *Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (assigned sections) (Vermes = V)
- *Shabbath, Gittin, Sanhedrin, Aboth, and Yadaim* tractates of the *Mishnah* (Mishnah = M)

Writing Assignment:

- Prepare a critical review of Sanders' work (2-3 pages single-spaced)
- Write a one-page single-spaced overview of an assigned book from *Wars of the Jews* or assigned document(s) from the *Dead Sea Scrolls*
- Prepare to discuss the significance of the study of the *Mishnah* for NT studies

Session Four November 6

Reading Assignment:

- Suetonius' *The Twelve Emperors*
- Logan and Wedderburn's *New Testament and Gnosis*

Writing Assignments:

- Write a one-page single-spaced overview of each assigned emperor's life.
- Write a one-page single-spaced discussion of the contribution that Suetonius' chronicle makes to New Testament studies
- Based on Logan and Wedderburn's *New Testament and Gnosis*, write a 2-3 page summary of the background and development of Gnosticism.

Session Five December 4

Reading Assignments:

- Holmes' *Apostolic Fathers*
- Assigned books of the NT Apocrypha

Writing Assignments:

- Write a 2 page single-spaced analysis of the significance of the Apostolic Fathers for NT study
- Write a one-page single-spaced overview of each assigned document from the NT Apocrypha

Individual Writing Assignments

Student	Session One	Two	Three	Four
Cho, Yohan	Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther d: chs 3-5 H: Intro & chs 2, 3, & 14	Jewish Wars I, II, V Jer: I, III, IV, V	Julius Caesar, Wisdom of Ben Sirach, Augustus d: ch 7	Gospel of the Nazareans, Epistle to the Laodiceans, Gospel of the Hebrews, Acts of John, Apocalypse of Peter, Apocryphon of John
Kim, Kee Hyeun	Wisdom of Solomon, Baruch d: ch 6, 8 H: ch 4-5, 7	Jewish Wars III, IV Jer: VIII: VI, VII	Tiberius Gaius Claudius, Domitian	Gospel of Philip, Acts of Paul, Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Thomas
Nease, Owen	Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, 1-2 Maccabees d: chs 9-12 H: ch 1, 8-9	Jewish Wars VI Jer: IX, X, XI CD; 4Q174-175 4QM;1QpHab	Nero Galba	Protevangelium of James, Acts of Andrew, Gospel of Nicodemus, Acts of Pilate, Gospel of Peter
Soloman, Matt	1-2Esdras, Prayer of Manasseh, 3-4 Maccabees Psalm 151 d: chs 13-18 H: ch 10-14	1QS; 1QapGen, 1QSa, 1QM, H: ch 6 Jer: XIV, XV XVI, XVII, XVIII	Otho, Vitellius , Vespasian, & Titus	Apocalypse of Paul, Infancy Story of Acts of Peter, Thomas, Apocalypse of Thomas, Gospel of the Egyptians