

NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUNDS READING COLLOQUIUM (NTSR9301)
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
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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” 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*. 7th ed., Penguin, 2012.

or

Wise, Abegg, and Cook. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*. HarperCollins Publisher, 2005.

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. Each meeting is 2 hours. The Instructor will use dropbox as a method for sharing papers. Please upload your assignments to dropbox two days prior to our class meeting. This will allow classmates to share papers.

Session One: September 12, HSC 290 6:30-8:30 PM

Reading Assignment:

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

Writing Assignment:

Write a 2-3 page, single-spaced book review for each of the reading assignments paying attention to the following criteria:

1. **Grammar and Style:** spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian
2. **Summary:** A fair, concise presentation of the book's content and what application this information will have for New Testament studies
3. **Evaluation:** A balanced, critical assessment of the book's strengths and weaknesses (think information for your oral exam here)

4. **Research Insight:** Awareness of the book's interpretive significance for understanding the intertestamental literature

Session Two: October 10, HSC 290 6:30-8:30 PM

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)
- *Dead Sea Scrolls* (assigned sections) (Vermes = V or Wise = W)
- *Mishnah Shabbath, Gittin, Sanhedrin, Aboth, and Yadaim* tractates of the *Mishnah* (Mishnah = M)

Writing Assignment:

Write a 2-3 page, single-spaced book review for each of the text reading assignments.

- Write a one-page single-spaced overview of each **assigned** document from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Mishnah
- We will assign these in a class meeting prior to Session Two

paying attention to the following criteria:

1. **Grammar and Style:** spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian style
2. **Summary:** A fair, concise presentation of the book/primary source content and what application this information will have for New Testament studies
3. **Evaluation:** A balanced, critical assessment of the book's strengths and weaknesses. Think information for your oral exam here. For primary source information, summarize the information in a way you can use to prepare for your oral exam.
4. **Research Insight:** Awareness of the book's interpretive significance for understanding the intertestamental literature

Session Three: November 7, HSC 290 6:30-8:30 PM

Reading Assignment:

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

Writing Assignments:

Write a 1 page, single-spaced summary for each of the twelve emperors covered by Suetonius. Write a 2-3 page, single-spaced book review of Logan and Wedderburn using the following criteria:

1. **Grammar and Style:** spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian
2. **Summary:** A fair, concise presentation of the book and what application this information will have for New Testament studies

3. **Evaluation:** A balanced, critical assessment of the book's strengths and weaknesses. Think information for your oral exam here. For Logan and Wedderburn, include a summary of the topic of Gnosticism and discuss how NT studies is impacted by Gnostic thought.
4. **Research Insight:** Awareness of the book's interpretive significance and place in the intertestamental literature

Session Four: December 5, HSC 290 6:30-8:30 PM

Reading Assignments:

- Holmes' *Apostolic Fathers*
- New Testament Apocrypha (2 vols) by Schneemelcher; Assigned books of the NT Apocrypha (Schneemelcher's Apoc = A)

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignments:

- Write a 2 page single-spaced analysis of the significance of the Apostolic Fathers for NT study
- Write a one –page summary on an assigned work of an Apostolic Father(s)
- Write a one-page single-spaced overview of each **assigned** document from Schneemelcher's NT Apocrypha
- We will assign these in a class meeting prior to Session Four

For each of the reading assignments paying attention to the following criteria:

1. **Grammar and Style:** spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to Turabian
2. **Summary:** A fair, concise presentation of the book/primary source content and what application this information will have for New Testament studies
3. **Evaluation:** A balanced, critical assessment of the book's/primary source's strengths and weaknesses. Summarize the primary source information in a way you can use this to study for your oral exam.
4. **Research Insight:** Awareness of the book's interpretive significance and place in the intertestamental literature