



The Social Setting of the New Testament: NTGK9410
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division
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Mission Statement

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

Core Value Focus

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 Servant Leadership.

Curriculum Competencies

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The curriculum competency addressed in this course is Biblical Exposition.

Course Description

The purpose of this seminar 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 and the social-science methodology is followed by an analysis of the various social backgrounds based upon extensive study of the historical documents from the New Testament time period.

Student Learning Outcomes

The student learning outcomes of this course include the following:

- A. Students will become knowledgeable with respect to the primary and secondary literature that deals with the NT social setting
- B. Students will understand and be able to apply various social-science models
- C. Students will gain skills for developing the materials studied in the seminar into formats suitable for use in classroom teaching
- D. Students will gain skills for researching and writing
- E. Students will come to appreciate the NT books and their messages more as the texts are studied in their original context
- F. Students will gain an appreciation for understanding both other cultures and their own in light of the specific culture's social systems and settings

Course Teaching Methodology

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

Required Textbooks

Rohrbaugh, Richard, ed. *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*

Lawrence, Louis & Mario Aguilar. *Anthropology & Biblical Studies*

deSilva, David. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*

Pilch, John & Bruce Malina. *Handbook of Biblical Social Values, 3rd Edition*

Richards, Randy, and Brandon O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes*

Bailey, Kenneth. *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes*

Esler, Philip, ed., *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-scientific Studies of the NT & Its Context*

Skarsaune, Oskar, and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*

Johnson, William, & Holt Parker, *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece & Rome*

Girard, Rene. *The Scapegoat*

Matyszak, Philip. *Ancient Rome on 5 denarii a Day*

Yamauchi, Edwin M., and Marvin Wilson, Eds., *Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical and Post-biblical Antiquity*, 2017

REQUIREMENTS IN THE COURSE:

A. All seminar members are to read the required texts and bring a brief review to class on the day set for discussion of the book. The review should include the following items: bibliographic data, statement of the purpose and thesis of the book, a summary of the argument or social-science models, and a list of 2 to 3 published reviews on the book. (2-3 pages, single-spaced)

B. Students will read one or more background works as assigned by the professor. The works will generally include major historical writings of the Greco-Roman and Jewish settings from 100 BC to AD 200. A brief presentation of the work/s will be presented in class with a 2 to 3 page selection of passages from the writing noting the importance for understanding the related social context, with copies of the review distributed to seminar members.

G. Students will pick a social context topic from the course for their major paper, have it approved by the professor, and submit a preliminary bibliography on the theme (3 to 5 pages). Some sources in other languages are both encouraged and expected. The bibliography should include the following divisions: ancient sources related to the topic, methodological studies, application studies, and periodicals. These papers are due on Nov. 2 and will be submitted electronically.

H. Each student will prepare a teaching outline on the topic selected above for seminar discussion. The outline should be about 2-3 pages in length and copies should be made for the seminar members. The student will be expected to lead the seminar in a 10-minute discussion of the topic, using the outline to guide the discussion. The outline will detail the history of research on the topic, the major approaches to the topic, an overview of the dominant view of the topic as related to NT studies, and two examples of how the topic can be used in the exegesis of specific NT passages. These papers will be due on Nov. 9.

I. Each seminar member will present a book review on one of the works assigned by the professor. The review will include the bibliographical info, a clear presentation of the organization/approach and thesis of the work, and a lengthy critique of how well the thesis was supported. A copy of the table of contents of the book should be attached. Copies should be made for all seminar members.

J. Each seminar member will present a formal paper on an approved theme in relation to a NT text or texts. The problem statement and outline must be approved by the professor by Oct. 26, with the papers being driven by a falsifiable hypothesis. The papers will be distributed in advance of the presentation date, with copies for all seminar members (hard copy = professor).

K. Each seminar member will serve as the primary reviewer for one of the other papers. Assignments will be made when the paper dates are assigned. All seminar members are required to submit a 2 page review of each paper, with the following issues addressed: form/style/grammar, bibliography, organization, logic flow, and quality of research/content. A copy goes to the paper's author and to the professor.

V. CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the course and the study of the social setting of the NT
Aug. 24 Methodology for studying the social setting of the NT
Reading: R. Rohrbaugh, *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*
Reading: E. Randolph Richards & Brandon O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*
Review: David Scholer, ed., *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E. A. Judgea*

Week 2: Topic #1: Honor and Shame
Aug. 31 Reading: Louis Lawrence & Mario Aguilar, *Anthropology & Biblical Studies*
Reading: David deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*
Review: J. Peristiany & Julian Pitt-Rivers, *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*
Review: J. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Governmt in the Roman World*
Review: Neyrey, Jerome H., *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*

Week 3: Topic #2: Kinship
Sept. 7 Reading: John Pilch & Bruce Malina, *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*
Reading: Matyszak, Philip. *Ancient Rome on 5 denarii a Day*
Review: Carolyn Osiek & David Balch, *Families in the NT World*
Review: Joseph Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family*

Week 4: Topic #3: Interpersonal Behavior
Sept. 14 Review: John Fitzgerald, ed., *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*
Review: Bruce Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*
Review: Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284*
Review: Douglas Oakman, *Jesus and the Peasants*

Week 5: Topic #4: Purity Laws, Purity Systems, and Worship
Sept. 21 Reading: Kenneth Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes*
Review: Malina, Bruce J., and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul: An*

Archaeology of Ancient Personality

Review: Jeffrey Brodd & Jonathan Reed, eds., *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*

- Week 6: Sept. 28 Topic #5: Patron-Client Relationships
Reading: Philip Esler, ed., *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-scientific Studies of the NT and Its Context*
Review: Florence Dupont, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*
Review: Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*
- Week 7: Oct. 5 Topic #6: Boundary Markers, Cultural Mapping, and Social Relationships
Reading: Yamauchi, Edwin M., and Marvin Wilson, Eds., *Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical and Post-biblical Antiquity*, 2017 (4 parts)
Presentations of Original Sources: 1-5
- Week 8: Oct. 12 Topic #7: Jewish Christianity
Reading: Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*
Review: Matt Jackson-McCabe, *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered*
Review: Oakes, Peter, ed. *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*
Presentations of Original Sources: 6-10
- Week 9: Oct. 26 No class meeting, time to work on Teaching Outlines and Major Papers, submission via email of topic, research question, and hypothesis
- Week 10: Nov. 2 Topic #8: Literacy and Sacrifice
Reading: William Johnson and Holt Parker, *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*
Reading: Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat*
Presentations of Original Sources: 11-15
Submission of Bibliographies
- Week 11: Nov. 9 NT Interpretation in light of Social Science Criticism: Strengths and Limitations
History of the Early Church in light of Social Science Criticism
Presentations of Teaching Outlines
- Week 12: Nov. 16 No class meeting: ETS/SBL meetings
- Thanksgiving Break, Nov. 23
- Week 13: Nov. 30 Presentations of Major Papers (**MEETING = 1:00-4:30, 4 papers**)
- Week 14: Dec. 7 Presentations of Major Papers (**MEETING = 1:00-4:30, 4 papers**)
- Week 15: Dec. 14 Presentations of Major Papers (**MEETING = 9:00-4:00, 7 papers**)

Original Sources for Passages on Selected Themes

Greco-Roman Sources: Dio Chrysostom; Pliny the Elder, Dio Cassius, Suetonius, Tacitus, Quintillian, Pliny the Younger

Jewish Sources: Dead Sea Scrolls; Josephus; Philo; OT Apocrypha; Rabbinic selections, Talmudic selections

Early Christian Sources: Ignatius, Polycarp, 1 Clement, 2 Clement, Barnabas, Didache, Shepherd of Hermas (Pastor), NT Pseudepigrapha selections

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and information to help in becoming a better writer.

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.

NOBTS settings for help on technical issues:

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.

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