

HIST9401 STUDIES IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY
NTGK9404 THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Dr. Dan Holcomb, John T. Westbrook Professor of Church History
Dr. Bill Warren, Landrum P. Leavell, II, Professor of NT and Greek

Office: Dodd 211

Phone: ext. 3258

E-Mail: DHolcomb@nobts.edu

Office: Hardin 260

Phone: ext. 8190/3735

E-Mail: Wwarren@nobts.edu

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 Ph.D. degree requires a research-intensive program that emphasizes specialization in the area of the degree major. This seminar is offered within the New Testament Ph.D. program as a specialized study of the textual background to the Greek New Testament.

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

This seminar involves a critical examination of the Christian movement during the first six centuries of its development, from the close of the apostolic period (A. D. 65+) to the pontificate of Gregory I (590-604). Attention is given to the political, social, philosophical and religious milieus of the Graeco-Roman world, as well as to the institutional, theological, and literary development of Christianity in this environment. The study of the development of the NT canon will encompass such topics as the motives which led to the New Testament Canon; the collection, use, and canonization of the various sections of the NT; the use of other non-canonical books by the early church; and the early witnesses to the development of the canon.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

Students successfully completing the seminar will demonstrate:

- 1) Appreciation of the nature and values of the historical study of early Christianity and the development of the NT canon;
- 2) Knowledge of pertinent primary and secondary sources in this area of study;
- 3) Grasp of foundational information regarding the historical development of early Christianity and the NT canon;
- 4) Perception of the dynamic and developmental nature of history and the reciprocal influence of early Christianity and its cultural settings;
- 5) Awareness of social and psychological as well as moral and theological forces that shaped early Christianity;
- 6) Perception of the enduring ecclesial tensions of authority and freedom, unity and diversity, structure and vitality, Scripture and tradition, catholicity and reform;

7) Commitment to developing sound research techniques and writing skills.

COURSE TEACHING METHODS:

This course is taught via a combination of pedagogical methods, including but not limited to the following: lectures, intensive individual reading and research, seminar discussions and presentations, and the presentation of research papers by the seminar participants.

TEXTBOOKS

W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984)

D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999)

Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprint edition, 1997)

Lee McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon, revised and expanded edition* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publ., 1995)

Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995)

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

A. Readings. All seminar members are to read the required texts and bring a brief review of the text 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, and a list of topics that can serve as a basis for discussion in class, and a listing of at least 3 reviews of the book (from journals, etc.). Students will be expected to dialogue on the basis of the reviews as well as their own reading. (2 pages, single spaced)

In addition to reading these books, each student will be assigned the responsibility of presenting a review of one or more primary source materials. The assignments will be made by the professors in one of the first three meetings of the seminar. The review should include data about the author of the work, the overall setting of the work, a summary of the contents, and a highlighting of the importance of the work for the topics of this seminar.

B. Book Review. Each student shall write a critical review of a book selected in consultation with the instructors. The review should be written in an acceptable style and be 8-12 double-spaced typewritten pages in length. The review should include: 1) a biographical sketch of the author, 2) a summary of contents (4-6 pages), 3) a statement of the author's purpose and the extent to which the purpose was realized, 4) a consideration of the uniqueness of the book, 5) a description of the author's style and biases, 6) a concluding evaluation including a statement about the book's contribution to early Christianity studies/NT Canon, and 7) a list of 3 to 4 critical book reviews that are available in various journals with a 1 paragraph/brief summary of each review.

An oral summary of the review will be presented to the seminar on the date indicated on the seminar schedule. The presentation should be 10 minutes in duration. It will be followed by a 10 minute period for discussion. Copies of the review should be distributed to the seminar members one week prior to the oral presentation.

C. Lecture. Each student shall prepare a 20-25 minute academic lecture on a major figure, movement, or event in the early church, with the specific topic either being approved or assigned by the professors. Copies of the teaching outlines and working bibliography shall be distributed to the members of the seminar at the March 12th meeting, just prior to the Rome trip.

The presentation should then be adjusted to a “church-like” audience and shortened to no more than 5 minutes for presenting to the group during the time in Rome, hopefully near a setting that relates to the topic.

D. Paper. Each student shall write and submit a critical paper on one of the topics listed below. The paper should be written in an acceptable style and reflect serious study, critical thought, independent research, and careful use of source materials. It should include a title page, outline, main text composed of 20-25 double-spaced typewritten pages, footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography. Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (current edition) is the guide for all matters pertaining to form and style. For NT students, the SBL Style Guide should be consulted for references to original sources.

An oral summary of the paper will be presented on the date indicated on the seminar schedule. It will be followed by a period for seminar response. Copies of the paper should be distributed to the seminar members one week prior to the oral presentation.

Suggested Topics

Faith and Culture in Early Christianity	The Daily Life of Early Christians
Major Developments in the Sub-Apostolic Period	The Martyrological Literature
Transformation of Hope in Early Christianity	Constantine and the Church
The Apostolic Fathers	The Council of Nicea
Christianity and the Roman State	The Council of Constantinople (381)
The Early Apologist	The Council of Ephesus
Gnosticism	The Council of Chalcedon
Marcionism	Schism in the Early Church
Montanism	Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church
The Ministry in Early Christianity	The OT Canon and the Early Church
The "Rule of Faith" and the NT Canon	Collection & Canonization of the Pauline Ltrs
Early Christian Missionary Advance	Collection & Canonization of the Gospels
Early Christian Historians	Canonization of the General Epistles & Rev.
Early Christian Theology	Use of Outside OT Books by the Early Church
Early Christian Worship	Use of Outside NT Books by the Early Church
Institutional Development of the Early Church	Emerging Canon in the Second Century
The Monarchian Controversy	Emerging Canon in the 3 rd and Early 4 th c.
The Asia Minor Tradition	The Finalization of the Canon in the East
The North African Fathers	The Finalization of the Canon in the West
The Alexandrian School	Canons of the Syriac and Ethiopian Churches
The Antiochian School	Bart Ehrman's View of the Early Church

Biographies

Clement of Rome
Ignatius of Antioch

Irenaeus
Justin Martyr

Tertullian
Cyprian

Clement of Alexandria
Origen
Athanasius

Arius
Eusebius of Caesarea
Augustine

The Cappadocian Fathers
Chrysostom
Pelagius

V. SEMINAR GRADING

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Lecture & Outline	20%	Research Paper	40%
Book Review	10%	Readings & Seminar Participation	20%
Primary Source Review	10%		

VI. SEMINAR SCHEDULE

- Jan. 22 Introduction (Dr. Holcomb)
- Jan. 29 Introduction (Dr. Holcomb)
Assignment: Read Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition & Renewing Evangelicalism*
- Feb. 5 Introduction (Dr. Warren)
Assignment: Read Lee McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*
- Feb. 12 Introduction (Dr. Warren)
Assignment: Read Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*
- Feb. 19 Introduction (Drs. Holcomb & Warren)
Assignment: Read Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*
- Feb. 26 Book Reviews
- Mar. 5 Book Reviews
- Mar. 12 Book Reviews
- Mar. 13-21 ROME TRIP & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS ON SITE IN ROME
- Mar. 26 Book Reviews
- (The two week break here is for final work to be done on seminar papers & is based on the extra class time while on the trip to Rome)
- Apr. 16 Major Papers
- Apr. 23 Major Papers
- Apr. 30 Major Papers
- May. 7 Major Papers

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY: NT CANON DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Bill Warren

Books

- Aland, Kurt. *The Problem of the New Testament Canon*. London: Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1962.
- Baillie, John, John McNeill, and Henry Van Dusen, Gen. Eds. *The Library of Christian Classics, vol. I: Early Christian Fathers*, Cyril C. Richardson, ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953.
- Barnard, L. W. *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967. See especially chapter 5.
- Barnard L. W. *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their Background*. New York: Schocken Books, 1966.
- Bauer, Walter. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Eds. Robert Kraft and Gerhard Krodel. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.
- Bettenson, Henry, ed. *Documents of the Christian Church*. 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Blackman, E. C. *Marcion and His Influence*. London: SPCK, 1948. This book is a comprehensive study which asks if the scholarly world has put too much emphasis on Marcion in assessing his impact.
- Blunt, A. W. F. *The Apologies of Justin Martyr*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1911.
- Bonner, Campbell, ed. *A Papyrus Codex of the Shepherd of Hermas*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1934.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Books and the Parchments: Some Chapters on the Transmission of the Bible*. Old Tappan, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1950. See chapter 7 and appendix II.
- Bruce, F. F. *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974.

- _____. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 5th ed. Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1960.
- Burkitt, Crawford. *The Gospel History and Its Transmission*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906.
- Campanhausen, Hans von. *The Formation of the Christian Bible*. Translated by J. A. Baker. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972.
- Cayre', F. *Manual of Patrology and History of Theology*, v. I. Translated by H. Howitt. Paris: Society of St. John the Evangelist, 1935.
- Cerfaux, L. *An Historical Introduction: The Four Gospels*. Translated by P. Hepburne-Scott. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1960.
- Davidson, Samuel. *The Canon of the Bible: Its Formation, History, and Fluctuations*. Revised. New York: Peter Eckler Publishing Co., 1917.
- Eiselen, Frederick Car. *The Christian View of the Old Testament*. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1912; reprint ed., 1921.
- Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine*. Translated with introduction and notes by Hugh Jackson Lawlor and John E. L. Oulton. Volumes 1-2. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1928.
- The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Cesarea, in Palestine*. Translated with an Introduction by C. F. Cruse. *Twin Brooks Series*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, first printed in 1955.
- Falls, Thomas B. *The Fathers of the Church*, v. 6. *Saint Justin Martyr*. New York: Christian Heritage, Incorporated, 1948.
- Feine, Paul and Behm, Johannes. Reedited by Werner Georg Kümmel. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Trans. by A. J. Mattill, Jr. 14th Rev. Ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966.
- Goodspeed, E. J. *An Introduction to the NT*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1937.
- Goodspeed, E. J. *The Formation of the NT*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926.
- Grant, R. M. *The Formation of the New Testament*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- Grant, Robert M. ed. *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary, volume 1, An Introduction*. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964.
- Grant, Robert, ed. *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary, vol. 2, First and Second Clement* by Robert Grant and Holt Graham. New York: Thomas Nelson, 1965.

- Grant, Robert, ed. *The Apostolic Fathers: A new Translation and Commentary, vol. 3, Barnabas and the Didache*, by Robert A. Kraft. New York: Thomas Nelson, 1965.
- Grant, Robert, ed. *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary, vol. 5. Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias*, by William Schoedel. Camden: Thomas Nelson, 1967.
- Grant, Robert, ed. *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary, vol. 6, The Shepherd of Hermas*, by Graydon Snyder. Camden: Thomas Nelson, 1968.
- Greenlee, J. Harold. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977. See chapter 3.
- Gregory, Caspar René. *Canon and Text of the New Testament*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924. First published 1907.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975.
- Hagner, Donald Alfred. *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome*. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973.
- Harnack, Adolf. *The Origin of the New Testament*. Trans. by J. R. Wilkerson. London: Williams & Norgate, 1925.
- Harrison, Everett. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Rev. Ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.
- Harrison, P. N. *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*. Oxford: University Press, 1921.
- Hennecke, Edgar. *New Testament Apocrypha*. Ed. by Wilhelm Schneemelcher. Trans. by R. Wilson. Vol. 1, "Gospels and Related Writing." Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.
- Hill, J. Hamilyn, ed. *The Earliest Life of Christ Ever Compiled From The Four Gospels Being the Diatessaron of Tatian*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1910.
- Kaye, John. *The First Apology of Justin Martyr*. Edinburgh: John Grant, 1912.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.
- Knox, John. *Philemon Among the Letters of Paul*. Rev. ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959.
- Knox, John. *Marcion and the New Testament Canon*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1942.
- Lake, Kirsopp. *The Earlier Epistles of Paul*. 2nd edition. London: Rivingtons, 1914.
- Lake, Kirsopp. *Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity*. London: Macmillan and Company, 1920.

- Lawson, John. *A Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961.
- Lightfoot, J. B. *The Apostolic Fathers*. New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973.
- Loisy, A. *Histoire du Canon du Nouveau Testament*. Paris, 1891. Reprinted in 1971 by Minerva G.M.B.H., Frankfurt.
- McGarvey, J. W. *Evidence of Christianity*. Cincinnati: Guide Printing & Publishing Co., 1896.
- Meeks, Wayne A. *The Writings of St. Paul*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1972.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968 (4th ed. with Bart Ehrman).
- Mitton, C.L. *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters*. London: Epworth Press, 1955.
- The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*. Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology. Oxford: University Press, 1905.
- Nicol, Thomas. *The Four Gospels in the Earliest Church History*. London: Wm. Blackwood and Sons, 1908.
- Nigg, Walter G. *The Heretics*. Edited and Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962
- Overbeck, Franz. *Christentum und Kultur*. Basil: University Press, 1919. Overbeck is the originator of the saying that no one ever understood Paul, and the only one (Marcion) who thought he did understand him misunderstood him.
- Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Random House, 1979.
- Quispel, B. *Tatian and the Gospel of Thomas: Studies in the History of the Western Diatessaron*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975.
- Roberts, Alexander, and James Donaldson, eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995.
- Schmithals, Walter. *Paul and Gnostics*. Trans. by John Seely. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972.
- Shotwell, Willis. *The Biblical Exegesis of Justin Martyr*. London: Wm. Clowes and Sons, 1965.
- Souter, Alexander. *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*. Revised by C. S. C. Williams. London: Gerald Duckworth, 1954.
- Sparks, Jack N. ed. *The Apostolic Fathers*. New York: Thomas Nelson, Incorporated, 1978.

- Taylor, B. *The Witness of Hermas to the Four Gospels*. London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1892.
- Taylor, Vincent. *The Gospels: A Short Introduction*. London: The Epworth Press, 1930.
- Vedder, Henry C. *Our New Testament: How Did We Get It?* Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1908.
- von Harnack, Adolf. *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremder Gott*. Leipzig: Hinricks, 1924.
- Westcott, Brooke Foss. *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament*. 6th ed. New York: Macmillan and Co. 1889.
- Zahn, T. *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*. Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1888.
- Zuntz, G. *The Text of the Epistles. A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum. The Schweich Lectures, 1946*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.

PERIODICALS, DISSERTATIONS AND ARTICLES

- Appel, Nicolaas. "The New Testament Canon: Historical Process and Spirit's Witness." *Theological Studies* 32 (4,'71):627-646.
- Beare, F. W. "Canon of the New Testament" *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1953.
- Bruce, F. F. "New Light on the Origins of the New Testament Canon." In *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, pp. 3-18. Edited by Richard N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.
- Carroll, Kenneth L. "Toward a Commonly Received New Testament." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 44 (2, '62):327-349.
- Carroll, Kenneth L. "Tatian's Influence on the Developing New Testament." In *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament*, pp. 59-70. Vol. 29 of *Studies and Documents*. Ed. by Boyd Daniels and M. Jack Suggs. Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1967.
- Cowen, Gerald. "Gnostic Concepts of a New Testament Canon." Th. D. dissertation. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, October, 1971.
- Finegan, Jack. "The Original Form of the Pauline Collection." *Harvard Theological Review* 49(1956): 85-103.
- Foster, Lewis. "The Earliest Collection of Paul's Epistles." *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 10(1967): 44-53.

- Gamble, Harry. "The Redaction of the Pauline Letters and the Formation of the Pauline Corpus." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94(1975): 403-418.
- The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. S.v. "Canon of the New Testament," by F. W. Beare.
- Kistemaker, Simon J. "The Canon of the New Testament." *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 20 (1, '77):3-14.
- Koester, Helmut. "Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels." *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1-2, '80):105-130.
- Manson, T. W. "A Review of *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters*, C.L. Mitton." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 7(1956): 286-9.
- Morton, A. Q. "The Authorship of the Pauline Corpus." *The New Testament in Historical and Contemporary Perspective: Essays in Memory of G.H.C. MacGregor*. Edited by Hugh Anderson and William Barclay. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965.
- Mowry, Lucetta. "The Early Circulation of Paul's Letters." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63(1944): 73-86.
- Perumalil, A. C. "Are Not Papias and Irenaeus Competent to report on the Gospels?" *The Expository Times* 91 (11, '80):332-337.
- Sundberg, A. C. "The Bible Canon and the Christian Doctrine of Inspiration." *Interpretation* 29 (4, '75):352-371.
- Sundberg, Albert C. "Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List." *Harvard Theological Review* 66(1973): 1-41.
- Tenney, M. C. "The Canon of the Gospels." *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 10 (1, '67):36-43.
- Voobus, A. "Regarding the Background of the Liturgical Traditions in the Didache: The Question of Literary Relation Between Didache IX, 4 and the Fourth Gospel." *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969), 81-87.
- Walls, Andrew F. "The Canon of the New Testament." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Volume I*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979.