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NT 520 Introduction to the New Testament

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First Draft

January 13, 2004

Additions and changes are expected but this will be the basic course structure.

NT520XL1, New Testament Introduction

Spring 2004

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Welcome and Introduction

Dear Students:

Greetings and welcome to NT520 ExL, “New Testament Introduction.” I’m looking forward to this class. If you care to know just a little bit more about me, you can click on the resume attached to my name in FirstClass. I’m starting my third semester as faculty member at Asbury and enjoying every minute of it! This will be the fourth time I’ve taught NT520 at Asbury but only the first in this ExL format. The upsides to that are that I am highly motivated to learn how to do this well, and the good folks who run the ExL program limit the first-time ExL courses to only 12 students. That should be good news for all of us! I have taught a number of distance courses for other seminaries before coming to Asbury and found them to be good teaching/learning experiences—though a lot of work for students and professor both! In fact, I can even say that when both you and I engage this mode of education well, that there are certain advantages over the traditional format. Frankly, this has been a pleasant surprise to me, and I expect to be “surprised” again this semester. It’s all about the difference between passive (the professor delivers the goods) and active learning (students take responsibility for their education). This will be a course requiring active learning. The adage that “you get out what you put in” applies here if anywhere. You should expect to learn from authors whose work you will read, student colleagues, me, and—I say this without flippancy—God. I expect to learn in the same ways. Let’s do our best not only for our own sakes or for the sake of a grade but also on behalf of those learning with and from us.

Woody

P.S. If you want to know how to address me, I’m fine with “Woody” unless your upbringing or intuitive sense of decorum make that uncomfortable for you, in which case “Dr. Anderson” “Prof. Anderson” will be just fine.

Course Description

ATS Catalog Description

An introduction to (1) the literature of the New Testament in its socio-historical, literary and canonical contexts; and (2) critical study of the New Testament.

Professor's Course Description

The course has four areas of focus: (1) the *literature* of the New Testament canon, its content and message; (2) the *social and historical contexts* out of which this literature emerged and to which it is a response; (3) the *critical methods* which have been developed for the study of the NT literature and the emergence of the early Christian movement; (4) the variety of *hermeneutical issues* which concern readers of the New Testament for whom these texts are Scripture. The particular pedagogical goal of this course is to demonstrate the interrelationship of these four concerns and the relevance of the collateral issues, (2)-(4), for the study of the NT text itself, (1).

Course Learning Objectives

Having completed this course, students should be able

1. to give a broad account of the content of the individual New Testament writings and identify resources for further study of these writings;
2. to articulate the social and historical background out of which the New Testament arose;
3. to articulate how one's beliefs about Scripture impinge on how one engages biblical texts in interpretation;
4. to identify a range of questions (e.g., historical, literary, canonical) that might be addressed to particular New Testament texts and explore those questions in the process of interpreting particular New Testament texts
5. to identify significant, critical resources for New Testament study and deploy those sources critically in New Testament study;
6. to probe the interplay of theology and ethics in the various New Testament writers;
7. to demonstrate awareness of the significance of the original languages for understanding and interpreting the New Testament; and
8. to integrate these concerns and methodologies in a sound hermeneutical method.

Course Texts

Required

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. 2d ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999 [WNT].

Longenecker, Bruce W. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2003 [LLP].

Patzia, Arthur G. *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text and Canon*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995 [MNT].

Witherington, Ben, III. *New Testament History: A Narrative Account*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2001 [NTH].

Biblical Texts

Assumed

It is assumed that students have access to at least two contemporary translations of the Bible, preferably from among these: the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New International Version (NIV), the New American Bible (NAB) or New American Standard (NAS). The Living Bible, New Living Translation, *The Message*, the King James, and New King James, whatever their other merits, do not well serve the objectives of this course.

Recommended

- Although facility with the Greek text is neither expected nor required, students are encouraged to do as much they can with the original language of the NT, that is to dabble a bit. Recommendations: A Greek-English interlinear NT such as Robert K. Brown, Philip Comfort, and J.D. Douglas, eds., *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1993) or, for more advanced or ambitious readers of Greek, The United Bible Society's *The Greek New Testament*, 3rd or 4th ed. or the Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th or 27th ed. Students may also wish to consider *Greek-English New Testament* in which the full NA₂₇ Greek text including apparatus is interfaced with the RSV translation.
- Meeks, Wayne A. et al., ed. *The HarperCollins Study Bible, New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. Although this academically oriented study Bible is not especially helpful for a confessional or theological interpretation of the New Testament, it is still recommended for three reasons: (1) it is based on a good translation (NRSV); (2) it has generally reliable and helpful annotations and auxiliary articles; (3) it includes the apocryphal or deuterocanonical books not usually included in Protestant Bibles. Whatever one makes of their canonical status, these important writings should be a part of Bible student's library if only for their historical and comparative value.

Recommended Supplemental "Texts"

Although it is not expected or required for the course, it would be useful to have access to a few of the following major introductions to the NT (generally comparable in scope and function to WNT above):

Conservative and Evangelical (i.e., a uniformly high estimation of historicity of narratives and traditional authorship of the writings):

Carson, Donald A., Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992.

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. 4th ed. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Moderate and Critical (varied estimation of historicity and authorship):

Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Message*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001.

Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Childs, Brevard. *New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984.

Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 2d ed. New York: Oxford, 2000.

Koester, Helmut. *Introduction to the New Testament, Volume 2: History and Literature of Early Christianity*. 2d ed. New York: de Gruyter, 2000.

Kümmel, Werner Georg. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Rev. Eng. ed. of 17th ed. of *Elinleitung in das Neue Testament*. Translated by Howard C. Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.

Moule, C. F. D. *The Birth of the New Testament*. 3d ed. London: Black, 1981.

Recommended Supplemental Reference Works

Freedman, David N., ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Evans, Craig A., and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000.

Green, Joel B., and Scot McKnight, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992.

Martin, Ralph P., Gerald Hawthorne, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.

Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997.

Note: The four IVP dictionaries are bundled together with many other reference works from InterVarsity Press in *The Essential IVP Reference Collection: The Complete Electronic Bible Reference Library*. This is an excellent purchase for ExL students who have limited library resources available to them. All of the above are available through Asbury's Prolepsis database, available through FirstClass/ExL Campus/Resources/Prolepsis (although access may be limited because of a fixed number of user licenses).

Course Requirements and Expectations

Requirements

1. Reading and Discussion Participation (30%)
 - a. Following the course schedule, students will read the New Testament, *WNT*, *NTH*, *MNT*, and *LLP* in their entirety.
 - b. Each week students will reply to one of two posted questions:
 - one from the professor's forum or
 - one from the rotating student moderated forum.Each student will serve on a rotating basis as the discussion starter and moderator for one week during the semester. Minimally students are expected to respond with at least two follow-ups to other students within the forum they choose for the week in addition to their original answers to the question asked. So there will be minimally three entries per week. Students are encouraged to interact more, but it is not strictly required.
 - c. In order to balance the participation, once six initial responses have been registered for one of the forums, the remainder of the initial responses must be in the other forum. After that, anything is fair game.
 - d. Students are expected to read and track with all of the responses in their chosen forum for the week, but they are welcome to engage both forums if they so wish.
 - e. To foster an interactive *discussion* rather than posting a bunch of discrete discourses, posts are never to exceed 200 words (that's almost a page double-spaced). Initial answers are not to be less than 100 words; after that any length under 200 words is acceptable.

2. Interpretive Exercises (30%). Students will be assigned a possible six interpretive exercises throughout the semester and will choose at least three of them to do. The three highest grades will count toward the course grade. Students who complete all six of the assignments on time with grades not lower than 85% on any of them will automatically receive a full 30% credit. These assignments are not to exceed three pages single-spaced. Each assignment will invite the student to consider an assigned text with respect to a very specific methodological vantage point:
 - a. Synopsis exercise
 - b. Narrative exercise
 - c. Intertextual exercise
 - d. Historical Criticism exercise
 - e. Textual Criticism exercise
 - f. Social Backgrounds exercise

No interpretive exercises will be accepted after their respective due dates.

3. NT Intro Notebook (20%). For each book of the NT students will prepare an introductory outline (we will combine Luke-Acts, so there will be 26 entries). The format will include brief discussions of the following:
 - a. authorship
 - b. date
 - c. provenance
 - d. destination
 - e. rhetorical occasion or historical background
 - f. an original content outline
 - g. predominant themes and a paragraph or two reflection on the specific value and relevance of each text for Christians and their communities in the 21st century
 - h. any important special issues not covered above

Minimally the course textbooks will be adequate for this ongoing and cumulative assignment, but ideally students will also make use of some of the recommended resources to the extent that time, interest and motivation allow. No single outline should exceed three pages, and many of the shorter texts will be adequately served by a single page. I expect that around two pages per NT book will be the average. Note well: this is to be *your work* informed primarily by your own reading of the NT text and supplemented by secondary sources. Any evidence of direct borrowing from secondary sources—that is, plagiarism—will result in a 0% grade for the entire assignment (thus a course grade not to exceed a “C”). For example a wholesale cutting and pasting or copying of another scholar’s outline of, say, Romans would be grounds for 0% on the entire notebook assignment.

The “notebook” should be formatted and submitted as follows:

- a single word processing file
- each outline starting a new page that is clearly titled (use hard page break [Ctrl + Enter]),
- single-spaced with 10-12 point standard font,
- 1 inch margins all around, and
- paginated from beginning to end.
- Attach file to an email sent to the Course Office.
- The due date is May 14. A 10% grade reduction will be made for each day late.

Note well: this is not an assignment to do at the last minute, but rather, to be engaged with on a routine basis throughout the semester as a way of recording and confirming what is being learned from the primary text (the NT) and the secondary texts (esp. *WNT*, *NTH*, and *MNT*).

4. Essay Exam Final (20%). At 10:00 AM EST on May 20 I will post a six-question essay exam selected from the twenty questions found in the course study guide. Students will choose to answer four of those questions within a two-hour time limit. Students

may use any resources they wish in order to answer the questions—Bibles, textbooks, notes, and electronic resources. In fact, students may even cut and paste *their own pre-written answers* and submit them. If you spend the semester preparing for this exam—and I recommend that you do exactly that—you are more than welcome to finish it in ten minutes! The only thing that is strictly forbidden is any form of plagiarism. Any detected instances of plagiarism will result in 0% for the entire exam (thus a course grade not to exceed a “C”). I am sad to say that through practice I have become rather adept at detecting student plagiarism. Students who are not available to take exam at the scheduled time may make arrangements to take it earlier in the week.

Grading (descriptions taken from *ATS Catalogue*, 28)

| | |
|--------|---|
| 94-100 | = A “Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives” |
| 92-94 | = A- |
| 90-92 | = B+ |
| 86-90 | = B “Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives” |
| 84-86 | = B- |
| 82-84 | = C+ |
| 77-82 | = C “Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives” |
| 75-77 | = C- |
| 73-75 | = D+ |
| 70-73 | = D “Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives” |
| <70 | = F “Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives” |

Expectations

Of students: What I expect of you

1. To be curious, open-minded, and authentically engaged in the course.
2. To stay up-to-date with the course reading, assignments, and discussions in FirstClass. This means minimally logging in to our course *not less than three times a week*.
3. To be quick to ask questions related to course procedures and content and to be responsible for the professor’s class wide communiqués.
4. To treat student colleagues kindly and with respect even when there are strong disagreements (as there are bound to be). This calls for special care in the disembodied medium of online communication.
5. To maintain the highest possible level of academic integrity, especially to avoid plagiarism in any of its forms.

Of the professor: What you can expect me

1. To be prompt to reply to your questions and communications and to be regularly and visibly involved in what is happening in the course.
2. To be prompt and fair in evaluating your work, to differentiate the quality of work from the views that are asserted, to be faithful to my stated policies regarding late work, etc.

3. To have opinions, but to be open to the possibility that I'm wrong. To learn along with the class.
4. To run into a glitch or two (or three) along the way since this is the first time teaching this course in this format.

Course Schedule

TBD. This is still being worked out.

Course Logistics

Office Hours and Availability:

My availability to this course will be as follows:

1. I will be checking in and responding as needed almost every weekday, usually a couple of times a day. I try to answer questions directed toward me within 24 hours of their being asked. I will sometimes check in on Saturdays, but I notice that I am teaching five Saturdays and traveling to various conferences on several other weekends. As a general rule, I try to lay off email and FirstClass Saturday evening through Sunday evening. If I expect to be "away" for longer than 48 hours other than the weekends, I will let you know in advance.
2. I will be keeping office hours at the above phone number on Tuesdays from 2:00-4:30 PM and on Thursdays from 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM. This would be a good time to call if need be or to invite a live chat via FirstClass. I will be logged into the system and attending specifically to this class unless involved with Orlando campus students. If another time is needed for a phone conversation, we can make an appointment to connect.
3. I find for various reasons that I am not always as quick to reply to phone messages as to emails; I say this more by way of observation than prescription. By all means, call if that seems best for your situation.
4. I prioritize posts made to the course discussion center over private correspondence (since my reply in the former case might help more than the person asking). Private correspondence related in any way to the course should be sent to the Course Office rather than to my personal email address. I will gently remind you of that early in the course if need be; it just helps me to keep hundreds upon hundreds of emails organized.

Getting around an ExL Course (what we call things):

The Course Icon is a manila file folder labeled NT520 XL1. Everything that is needed for and happens in this course is "inside" this folder.

The Discussion Center will be used for all public, class communication. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else that would be of interest to your classmates and the professor, you should post to the Discussion

Center. Note that the Discussion Center is not called the “Discussion Center” but is merely labeled “NT520 XL1” and is marked by an icon of people sitting around a table.

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules. No interaction takes place here. This is where the professor posts course materials only.

The NT520 XL1 Office is for private correspondence between you and the professor. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates, including assignments, papers, projects, and personal correspondence. This should *not* be used to ask general course-related questions.

The Archives Center will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. *Remember:* None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, chapel services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer, and a Real Audio Player.

How To Submit Work

Interpretive assignments, the NT Intro Notebook, and the final exam should all be sent as word processing email attachments addressed to the NT520XL1 Office (not to my personal email). MS Word file format is preferred, but RTF or WordPerfect formats are also acceptable. Your graded work will be returned electronically with my comments and grade embedded into the document by means of the comment feature of MS Word (or WordPerfect).

Since things can go wrong in cyberspace, it is strongly recommended that you protect your efforts by doing the following:

1. Save and backup often (set up a timed backup or auto recovery in very short intervals). Backup your work on a secondary medium besides your computer hard drive.
2. Send your emails with attachments by registered email and save the sent emails and receipts.
3. Do not open and modify files on your computer *after* they have been sent (or if you do, “save as” with a new filename). The “last modified” date is your irrefutable evidence for when an assignment was completed even if lost in transit or by the addressee. When push comes to shove, I will treat the “last modified” date on a file as the completion date.

ExL Resources

Support Team:

Many ExL questions—especially if they are technical or logistical in nature—are better handled by the very capable and attentive folks who run the ExL program at Asbury. If I defer or redirect a question of this sort, it is not because I don't care, but because surely there is someone who can help you more efficiently than I can.

- For technical support contact *Jared* at ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu
- For questions related to the ExL program contact *Kevin Osborn*,
ExL_Director@asburyseminary.edu
- For library reference support contact *Hannah Kirsch*,
Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu
- For book related questions contact exlbooks@asburyseminary.edu

Library Information: Obtaining Library Materials and Reference Assistance

Email: ATS_Reference@asburyseminary.edu

Toll-Free Reference Help Line: 1-866-454-2733

ExL students are encouraged to make use of local libraries, if possible. However, library services are always available to students through Asbury's B. L. Fisher Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be e-mailed to the Reference Desk (ATS_Reference@asburyseminary.edu). The Reference workers (Hannah, Robbie, and Nina) will also assist ExL students with reference requests, using various online databases, or doing research on a specific topic.

To request material from the B.L. Fisher Library, begin by searching the library catalog (for books available in the library) or one of the restricted journal databases available on the library's website (www.asburyseminary.edu/library - choose "library catalog" or "restricted databases"). Then send an email to the reference desk citing the sources that you would like to request. If you need help searching the databases, do not hesitate to call (1-866-454-2733) or email the reference desk. Students who live within a 50-mile radius of either the Florida or the Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page); however, shipping via media rate is free. (Media rate normally takes 5 business days for shipping, but it can take two weeks to addresses in the West). Express mail services (prices vary according to weight) and scanning (10 cents per page in pdf format) are also available. Requests generally require 1-2 business days to be processed. Plan ahead and make your requests early enough to allow for shipping and processing!