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NT520XL, New Testament Introduction

Summer 2008

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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 this summer.

First a personal introduction: As you can tell from above, I am a professor of New Testament at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Wisconsin. If you have never heard of Nashotah House, you are in good company! We are a seminary of the Episcopal Church—USA, established in 1842 by frontier missionaries. This is a *small* seminary (55 full-time residential students and about the same number in distance learning programs). We have a rich worship life (two chapels a day – required of all students and faculty!) and community life (we eat breakfast and lunch as a community and generally share life together) on a beautiful piece of lake property, named by the Native Americans who originally settled here. Nashotah House is on the conservative and *catholic* end of the spectrum in the Anglican tradition (not unlike how Asbury is situated toward the United Methodist Church). Before I came here, I was on the faculty of Asbury on the Florida campus for five wonderful years. I loved Asbury as much as I like where I am now, and often miss the good people whom I came to love there (and the Florida climate *certain* times of the year!). I am married to Dawn – we celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary this summer – and have three great kids: Thad, a rising junior at Florida State University; Lindsay, a rising sophomore at UW—Eau Claire (her parents' alma mater); and Lauren, a rising high school senior.

I think this will be the fifth or sixth ExL course I have taught at Asbury (though this first in the Moodle platform), and 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 would even say that when both you and I engage this mode of education well, that there are certain advantages over the traditional format (and disadvantages, let's be honest). Nevertheless, 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. 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.

Dr. Anderson

P.S. If you want to know how to address me, I'm flexible. At Asbury I was almost always "Woody"; at Nashotah House, I am always "Dr. Anderson." Either is fine with me.

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.

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;
- 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 and Resources

Required

deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004 [hereafter abbreviated *INT*].

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

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992 [hereafter abbreviated *KJOT*].

Recommended, Optional Resources

Patzia, Arthur G. and Anthony J. Petrotta. *Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004.

Biblical Texts

Assumed. It is assumed that students have access to 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. Meeks, Wayne A. et al., ed. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised and Updated, New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006. 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 offers 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.

Electronic Resources Available to Asbury Students

<u>iPreach.com.</u> iPreach is accessed via Information Commons (<u>http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information</u>, logging in with your 10-digit student ID, and scrolling down to the iPreach link) and includes the following valuable resources which are especially relevant to this class.

Interpreter's Bible Dictionary

New Interpreter's Bible Commentary

W. G. Kümmel, New Testament Introduction (see below)

<u>Prolepsis</u>. The Prolepsis database can be accessed by going to http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information, logging in with your 10-digit student ID, and scrolling down to the Prolepsis link. Note that access may be limited because of a fixed number of user licenses). Nevertheless, this is a valuable reference resource. Especially notable for this class is access to the following:

Anchor Bible Dictionary
All of the IVP NT dictionaries listed below.
New Bible Dictionary

Course Requirements and Expectations

Requirements

- 1. Reading and Group Discussion (30%)
 - a. Following the course schedule, students will read the New Testament, *INT*, *KJOT*, and *LLP* as assigned. Seem "Master Schedule"
 - b. For both *KJOT* and *LLP*, students will post a brief (around 300 words) reflection to their group in the appropriate forum. The professor will supply the prompt for these in the forum.
 - c. For each of the other weeks, students will reply to an essay question posted by the professor to be discussed within their group. The questions will all be essays that will require you to reflect on and synthesize the reading material. These will also be the very essay questions that will be on the final exam! In other words, your engagement in your group discussion will prepare you for the exam. Minimally, students are expected to respond with their own answer to the question and with at least two follow-ups to other students in addition to their original answer to the question asked. So, minimally, there will be three entries per week per student. Students are strongly encouraged to interact more, but this is the minimum requirement. Students are expected to read and track with all of the responses in their group for the week.
 - d. To foster an interactive *discussion* rather than posting a bunch of discrete discourses, posts are never to exceed 300 words (that's about a page double-spaced). Initial replies are not to be less than 100 words; after that, any length under 300 words is acceptable.
- 2. NT Intro Notebook: (40%). Students will produce a set of introductory notes on all of the books of the NT, summarizing the key issues as found in our primary textbook, *INT*.
 - a. **Purpose:** To become familiar with the basic issues of critical introduction to the NT and to compile a handy resource which summarizes those issues for future use and reference. *Note well*: The *best* way to do this assignment is on an as-you-go basis, preparing each as you work through the course.

b. Format:

- The end-product will be one word-processing file (when submitting soft copy, please do not submit separate files for each book).
- Each outline entry should start on a new page that is clearly titled (use hard page break). No entry should be longer than one page and the font must not be smaller than 10 pt. For certain shorter texts (e.g., 2 or 3 John, Jude, Philemon), an entry briefer than a page is acceptable.
- There will be twenty-five entries in the notebook, one each for each book, Matthew-Revelation, but with 1-3 John combined.
- References to outside resources should be a simple parenthetical format
 (Author, p. #); e.g., (deSilva, 327). If a signed article in a reference work, the
 format should be author of article (not editor), abbreviation for reference
 work, page number including volume, if applicable; e.g., (Johnson, ABD, 3:221).
- Full bibliographical information should be given as the final page of the notebook.

c. Content:

For each entry there should be a brief statement (or discussion where necessary) of the following issues. When there is a significant range of opinion, note the various positions in the outline:

- **Authorship**: Who wrote the document? If this is disputed or unknown, discuss briefly, including a summary of the primary arguments.
- **Date**: When was the document was written? How certain is the dating? If this is disputed, discuss possibilities and the evidence briefly.
- Provenance and destination: From what location was the document written (provenance) and to whom located where (destination)? Are these clear, disputed, or unknown?
- Rhetorical occasion, historical background, or purpose: What circumstances occasioned the document? Be as specific as the text allows (make specific references to evidence in the text).
- Optional: Any "loose end" issues: Certain documents might have issues peculiar to them (e.g., literary integrity, canonicity) that are not accounted for in the categories given.
- **Deadline:** The Notebook will be submitted by the end of the course, August 22, but students are *strongly encouraged* to do this work as you go throughout the course.

d. Research Expectations:

- The minimal expectation is that students will summarize what is presented in deSilva, *INT*. *If done well this will earn a grade in the "B" range*.
- To earn a grade in the "A" range, students will consult at least one other (contrasting, if possible) source for each entry. Since deSilva is characteristically moderate to conservative about critical issues, students ought to consult a less conservative, or more critical, counterpart. See below:

- 1. Moderate and Critical (sometimes or often rejecting traditional authorship, generally higher skepticism regarding historicity of texts)
- Childs, Brevard S. *The New Testament As Canon: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985.
- Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2007.
- Freedman, David N., ed. Anchor Bible Dictionary. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Fuller, Reginald H. A Critical Introduction to the New Testament. London: Duckworth, 1971.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. 2d ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.
- Koester, Helmut, author & trans. *Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature of Early Christianity*. Vol. 2 of *Introduction to the New Testament*. 2d ed. Hermeneia: Foundations and Facets. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000.
- Kümmel, Werner Georg. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Translated by Howard C. Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.
- Sakenfield, Katherine Doob, ed. *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 4 vols (projected). Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.
 - 2. Moderate to Conservative (generally, but not always, holding to traditional authorship and a higher view of historicity)
- Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye. Thompson. *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey, ed. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 4 vols.. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979–88.
- Carson, Donald A., Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005.
- deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation.* Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Green, Joel B., and Scot McKnight, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990.
- Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Marshall, I.H. Stephen Travis and Ian Paul. *Exploring the New Testament, Vol 2: A Guide to the Letters and Revelation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- Wenham, David and Steven Walton. *Exploring the New Testament, Vol. 1: A Guide to the Gospels and Acts.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- 3. Essay Exam Final (30%). On August 22, I will post an essay exam (details forthcoming). The exam will consist of three essay questions, from which students will choose two to answer. These will be selected from the eight essays students are interacting over within groups (see course Master

Schedule). Students will answer those questions within a two-hour time limit and submit their completed exams in the assignment link. 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 <u>their own</u> 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").

Grading (descriptions taken from ATS Catalog)

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= A "Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives"
92-95
         = 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
73-75
         = D+
70-73
         = D "Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives"
 < 70
          = F "Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives"
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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 on the course site. 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 if there are 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 from 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, well, it's just bound to happen in this format.

ExL Contact Information:

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the ExL program, contact Dale Hale:

ExL Office@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: (859) 858-2393

For **technical support**, **library research support**, **library loans**, and **ExL media** contact Information Commons:

Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: (859) 858-2233 Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

Accessing Information Commons Materials

1. General Questions:

a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/hours.shtml

2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml

b. ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:

a. ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

Copyright Policies

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, Unisted States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

ExL Media Copyright Information

No further reproduction and distribution of [media for this course] is permitted by transmission or any other means.

Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

- 1. The **Course Information Center** contains many features to be used throughout the semester:
 - a) Course News and Announcements, where I will post items important for the entire class;
 - b) **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
 - c) **To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
 - d) **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
 - e) **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
 - f) **Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.
- 2. **Modules**, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.
- 3. **Resources**, a section located on the left side, provides links to items you may want to use often in the semester.

Master Schedule

Week/Theme	Reading	Course Activity
Week 1 Historical Backgrounds to the NT June 2-7 ¹ Week 2 Social Backgrounds to the NT June 9-14	INT ² 19-110 KJOT 1-54 INT 111-44 LLP complete	 Post a "hello" to your group Read the syllabus <i>carefully</i> and ask any questions you might have on the course site. Post on LLP and interact with your groupmates: (a) What did you learn about the culture of the NT era from deSilva and LLP? (b) How would this information affect your interpretation of the NT? Give examples.
Week 3 Jesus and the OT June 16-21	KJOT 55-252	 Post on KJOT and interact with your groupmates: (a) What was the most helpful thing you learned from this book? (b) Was there anything that you read that raised questions for your or which you want to pursue further?
Week 4 Intro to Gospels and Mark June 23-28	INT 145-233 Bauckham, "Gospel for All Christians" (a .pdf file on the course site) Mark	 Prepare your notebook entry on Mark.³ Optional: submit your Mark entry to Dr. Anderson for feedback. Post to group on Essay #1: Discuss the alleged literary source relationships between the synoptic gospels, making sure to describe the most common alternatives. What do you think is the best "solution" to the "synoptic problem" and for what reasons? What are the implications of your view for the interpretation of the text?
Week 5 Matthew and Luke June 30-July 5	INT 234-347 Matthew, Luke	 Prepare your notebook entries on Matthew and Luke. Post to group on Essay #2: How are we to understand the meaning of the phrase "kingdom of God/heaven" as Jesus proclaimed, described, and enacted it in the canonical gospels, especially the Synoptic tradition? How should a biblical theology of the kingdom affect our understanding of church, mission, and ethics?
Week 6 Acts, Intro to Paul, Galatians July 7-12	INT 348-90, 475-92, 493- 526 Acts, Galatians	 Prepare your notebook entry on Acts and Galatians. Post to group on Essay #3: As an act of historical imagination, write the kind of letter that the "Judaizers" might have written to Galatia which would have prompted Paul's response in our letter to the Galatians.
Week 7	INT 527-597	 Prepare your notebook entries on 1 & 2 Thessalonians and 1 & 2

1

¹ Saturday of each week is treated as the deadline for whatever is assigned that week. A post topic has a two-week lifespan: by the first week everyone should have at least made their initial post; the second week the conversation continues. This means there are normally two "live" conversations happening. Posts after two weeks are not forbidden, of course, but the normal span will be two weeks.

² You have no doubt noticed that INT is a long book. We will need to average about 80 pages a week to get through it. Here is the rule of thumb: if the material is in a box (shaded or not), you are only expected to skim. If it captures your interest, read carefully. Some boxes I will ask you to read carefully. This approach will reduce the reading load by 20-25%.

³ Technically, the notebook project is not due until the end of the semester, and I will never know when you do the work. From past experience, *I strongly recommend* keeping up on this on a weekly basis. Note that there is a lot to do in later weeks, as we cover several letters each week.

Some "Earlier"	1 & 2	Corinthians (one entry for each book).
Pauline Letters	Thessalonians,	 Post to group on Essay #4: What do we mean when we say that
July 14-18	1 & 2	the NT letters are "occasional" documents? What are the
	Corinthians	implications of their occasional character for the way in which we
		understand and apply the text? Use Galatians, 1 Thessalonians,
		or 1 Corinthians as a case study to illustrate your answer.
Week 8	INT 598-684	Prepare your notebook entries on Romans, Philippians, and
"Later "Pauline	Romans,	Philemon.
Letters	Philippians,	 Post to group on Essay #5: Discuss the Christology of the Pauline
July 21-26	Philemon	letters? Is the evidence for an early Christian view of Jesus'
		divinity early or late? Abundant or sparse? Be sure to cite and
		discuss the key texts.
Week 9	INT 685-775	 Prepare your notebook entries on Colossians, Ephesians, 1
Disputed Pauline	Colossians,	Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.
Letters	Ephesians, 1	 Post to group on Essay #6: Does it matter who wrote the books of
July 28-Aug 2	Timothy, 2	the NT? Which letters of the NT are most often regarded as
	Timothy, Titus.	pseudonymous and on what general grounds? Do you find these
		arguments for pseudonymity persuasive or not? What are the
		implications for the authority of the NT?
Week 10	INT 776-840	Prepare your notebook entries on Hebrews and James.
Hebrews and	Hebrews,	 Post to group on Essay #7: Discuss the soteriology (theology of
James	James.	salvation) of the NT letters, comparing and contrasting a Pauline
Aug 4-9		view to Hebrews and James. Where do you see continuities;
		where do you see differences in approach and emphasis?
Week 11	INT 841-84	Prepare your notebook entries on 1 Peter, 2 Peter and Jude.
Petrine Letters and	1 Peter, 2	 Post to group on Essay #8: In several NT passages, we have seen
Jude	Peter, Jude.	instructions to Christians in various social "stations" (household
Aug 11-16		codes). What was the purpose(s) of these instructions and what
		is their value for contemporary Christians. Use 1 Peter as your
		primary case study
Week 12	INT 391-474,	Prepare your notebook entries on John, 1-3 John (1 entry is
Johannine	885-932	acceptable), and Revelation.
Writings,	Gospel of John,	 Submit NT Notebook project by August 22.
Revelation	1-3 John,	Take Final Essay Exam on August 22
Aug 18-22	Revelation	, 3