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# NT 753 Research Methods in New Testament Interpretation

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# NT753 RESEARCH METHODS IN NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

Version 1.2

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Spring 2003  
Thursdays, 2:30 - 5:00 pm  
Resources: “Research Methods—JBG”

## Description

An advanced seminar in which participants explore through readings, practice, and critical discussion the range of methods employed in New Testament study today. The entire research process—from “getting into the conversation” and specifying a “thesis” to the presentation of one’s research—will be discussed, modeled, and practiced.

Prerequisites: NT501/502 or equivalent and at least one exegetical course.

Illustrative materials for the Seminar will relate to the representation of the death of Jesus in the New Testament.

## Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, participants should be able:

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To describe the major approaches to New Testament study today—including behind-the-text, in-the-text, and in-front-of-the-text methods;

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To apply the range of critical methods employed in New Testament study today;

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To determine what methods are appropriate to particular problems or questions in New Testament interpretation;

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To articulate the central concerns, strengths, and weaknesses of the various methodological approaches comprising New Testament interpretation;

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To construct, follow, and revise a research agenda around a New Testament text or area of concern to New Testament study; and

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To engage in thoughtful and generous criticism of the research agenda and products of others.

## Course Reading—Required

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Green, Joel B., ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1995.

Alexander, Patrick H., et al., eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1999.

### **Course Reading on the Death of Jesus—Recommended**

- Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah--From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives*. 2 vols. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Carroll, John T., and Joel B. Green. *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1995.
- Garland, David E. *One Hundred Years of Study on the Passion Narratives*. National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Bibliographic Series 3. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1989.
- Hooker, Morna D. *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1994.

### **Course Requirements**

*Written materials must be submitted on time. Late work will receive no written comments. For assignments that are more than one week tardy, the grade will be penalized.*

**(1) Class Preparation, Attendance, and Participation.** See the schedule of reading for each class session. Note that assigned reading should be completed by the day listed. Attendance at and readiness to participate in all sessions of the Seminar is expected. Persons who attend all sessions of the seminar and symposium will have 2 points added to their final grade. Discussion questions will be posted to a Conference Folder on the Intranet (“Research Methods—JBG”) in advance of most sessions to guide student preparation. Persons who participate frequently and substantively in the Seminar discussion, demonstrating their reflective interaction with course reading and posted questions, will have as many as 3 points added to their final grade.

**(2) Weekly Assignments on Method.** See the schedule of exercises. Weekly exercises provide opportunities for practicing the methods/approaches presented throughout the Seminar. They are generally to be regarded as programmatic in character, not exhaustive, and are to be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of the class session when each is due. They should be no longer than 700 words, typed, single-spaced. (15 %)

**(3) Major Research Paper.** The primary assignment for the Seminar is the preparation and presentation of a major exegesis paper: 5000 words (including notes and bibliography), typed, double-spaced. Participants in the Seminar may choose any New Testament text that relates to the focus of the course on the representation of the death of Jesus in the New Testament. Progress on essays will follow the schedule below:

- Deadlines:
- (1) “Close Reading” - 6 March (5%)
  - (2) “Bibliography” (in appropriate research languages) - 20 March (5%)
  - (3) “Thesis” - 27 March (5%)
  - (4) “Presentation” - (15%)

*Note that copies of penultimate drafts of papers are to be made available to members of the Seminar no less than one week prior to their presentation.*

- (5) “Final Paper” (40%)

For more information on research paper expectations and grading criteria, see the Course Center.

**(4) Critical Response.** Each participant will prepare a written response (*ca.* 700 words, typed, double-spaced) on an essay to be prepared by another member of the Seminar. Responses are to be presented in written form to the author of the paper and to the instructor, and in oral form to the Seminar, at the class session for which the paper is due to be discussed. (15%)

## Course Schedule

### 13 Feb 1. Orientation. Research Languages. Finding a “Thesis.” Research and Writing Tools. Wirkungsgeschichte.

**To Read:** Booth et al., §§1-2; Green, chs. 1-2.

**Recommended Reading:** Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1998).

### 20 Feb 2. Using the Library. Establishing the Text.

**To Read:** Booth et al., §§1-2; Green, ch. 7.

**Recommended Reading:** Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

### 27 Feb 3. “A Close Reading of the Text.” Behind the Text.

**To Read:** Green, chs. 3-6, 10, 13.

**Due:** Text-critical Assignment on Luke 23:34.

**Recommended Reading:** James I. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1992); I. Howard Marshall, ed., *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1977).

### 6 Mar 4. Critical Reasoning and Engagement. The “Essay Genre.”

**To Read:** Booth et al., §3.

**Due:** Historical-Critical Assignment on 1 Cor 15:3-(?).

**Due:** “Close Reading”

**Recommended Reading:** Nancey C. Murphy, *Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity, 1994).

### 13 Mar 5. From Composition to New Criticism. The New Redaction Criticism.

**To Read:** Booth et al., §4; Green, chs. 12, 14.

**Due:** Critical Engagement Assignment.

**Recommended Reading:** Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity, 1994); Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

### 20 Mar 6. Between (at Least) Two Worlds—1: Social-Science Sensibilities.

**To Read:** Green, chs. 4, 9; Greenblatt (photocopy).

**Due:** Text-Oriented Assignment on Mark 15:33-39.

**Due:** “Bibliography”

**Recommended Reading:** John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

**27 Mar 7. Between (at Least) Two Worlds—2: Readerly Perspectives.**

**To Read:** Green, chs. 13-17.

**Due:** Social-Scientific Analysis of 1 Pet 2:21-25.

**Due:** “Thesis”

**Recommended Reading:** Brian K. Blount, *Cultural Interpretation: Reorienting New Testament Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

**3 Apr**

**8. Linguistics: From Etymology to Discourse.**

**To Read:** Green, chs. 8-9.

**Due:** Reader Response or Ideological Assignment on Rev 5:1-10.

**Recommended Reading:** Diane Blakemore, *Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics* (Blackwell Textbooks in Linguistics; Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

**10 Apr No Class**

**17 Apr 9. The “Response Genre.” Intertextuality. Canon and Theology.**

**To Read:** Green, chs. 11, 18-19; Booth et al., pp. 255-58.

**Due:** Use of λύτρον κτλ. in Luke-Acts.

**Recommended Reading:** Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Joel B. Green and Max Turner, eds., *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2000).

**24 Apr 10. Presentation and Discussion of Research.**

**Due:** Analysis of the Use of the OT in Gal 3:10-14.

**1 May**

**11. Presentation and Discussion of Research.**

**8 May**

**12. Presentation and Discussion of Research.**

**15 May 13. Presentation and Discussion of Research.**

**22 May Due: Research Papers (Final Edition).**