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NT 520, NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

Fall 2003

Tuesdays 2:30-5:15 PM

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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

1.1 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.

1.2 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).

1.3 Learning Objectives for Students. Having completed this course, students should be able

- 1.3.1 to give a broad account of the content of the individual New Testament writings and identify resources for further study of these writings;
- 1.3.2 to articulate the social and historical background out of which the New Testament arose;
- 1.3.3 to articulate how one's beliefs about Scripture impinge on how one engages biblical texts in interpretation;
- 1.3.4 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
- 1.3.5 to identify significant, critical resources for New Testament study and deploy those sources critically in New Testament study;
- 1.3.6 to probe the interplay of theology and ethics in the various New Testament writers;
- 1.3.7 to demonstrate awareness of the significance of the original languages for understanding and interpreting the New Testament; and
- 1.3.8 to integrate these concerns and methodologies in a sound hermeneutical method.

2. COURSE MATERIALS AND TEXTS

2.1 Required Course Texts

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

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

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

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

2.2 Biblical Texts

2.2.1 Assumed.

It is assumed that students have access to at least two contemporary translations of the Bible, preferably the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New International Version (NIV), 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.

2.2.2 Recommended

- Meeks, Wayne A. et al., eds. *The HarperCollins Study Bible, New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.

2.3 Recommended Supplemental Texts

2.3.1 Representative and Complementary New Testament Introductions (comparable in scope and function to *WNT* above)

2.3.1.1 Conservative and Evangelical (i.e., uniformly high estimation of historicity and authenticity):

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.

2.3.1.2 Moderate and Critical (varied estimation of historicity and authenticity):

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 *Einführung 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.

2.3.2 Recommended Supplemental Reference Works

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.

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

Note: These four dictionaries are bundled together with other reference works from InterVarsity Press in *The Essential IVP Reference Collection: The Complete Electronic Bible Reference Library*. More importantly, all of the above are available through Asbury's Prolepsis database, available through FirstClass/Orlando Campus/Resources/Prolepsis.

All of the above will be on reserve in the library except for those shelved in the Reference section (which should not leave the library, in any case).

3. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Attendance

Regular attendance and participation is a basic expectation. Students missing more than two weeks of class will be dropped a half a grade for the course with each additional week missed. *Students* are accountable for material missed, class announcements, etc. It is the *student's* responsibility to make advance arrangements with fellow students or the professor to access missed material.

3.2 Required Reading and Quizzes (20%)

The total reading comes to about 1,300 pages of moderate difficulty.. Students will read weekly the assigned portions of the four texts (*WNT, MNT, LLP, NTH*) as well as the NT itself. *Four quizzes* will be given (see Course Schedule) on the NT content and on the content of the assigned reading material. The quizzes are given for two reasons: (1) To hold students accountable for the reading material, so that class time can assume that material rather than merely restate it. (2) The New Testament content portion of the quizzes will help students to prepare for the BCE, which is required for the M.Div. within the first 33 hours. The quizzes are designed to be straightforward and basic (no trick questions), relatively easy if the material has been read carefully but, of course, difficult if it has not been.

3.3 Mid-term and Final Essay Exams (40%)

Students will take a mid-term (20%) and a final exam (30%; see course schedule). Unlike the quizzes, which will be objective in format, these exams will be essay in format, ranging from shorter identification or definition questions to longer integrative questions. Questions will draw upon material both from the reading and from the lectures, sometimes asking for the integration of the two. *All of the questions that will be asked in these exams will be made available to the students at the beginning of the semester in the form of the course study Guide.* There will be no surprises; doing well on these exams is largely a matter of preparation and comprehension. Students are advised to work on this study guide regularly from the beginning of the semester.

3.4 Critical and Interpretive Exercises (40%)

Students will engage in the following three exercises that will require a hands-on engagement with various methodologies. General Instructions: Please keep your papers to no more than three pages single-spaced. Introductions are not necessary, nor is a title page desirable. Conclusions should be brief and merely summarize. For each assignment there will be a separate handout with more specific instructions

- 3.4.1 A Synoptic Exercise: Matt 19:16-30//Mark 10:17-31//Luke 18:18-30. We will be comparing three accounts of the same story in the gospels (10%).
- 3.4.2 A Critical Exercise. Discuss the authorship, provenance, date, original destination, and occasioning circumstances of Ephesians (15%). For helpful supplementary bibliography see 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 above. Please avail yourself of the recommended resources rather than using inferior alternatives.
- 3.4.3 An Exercise in Contexts: 1 Peter 3:1-7. We will be looking at this passage in light of its first-century context and with a critical eye toward our own contexts in the twenty-first century (15%).

4. GRADING

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 Reading and NT Content Quizzes, 30%
- 4.1.2 Essay Exams, 40%
- 4.1.3 Critical and Interpretive Exercises, 40%

4.2 Scale (descriptions 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”

5. COURSE PROTOCOL AND POLICIES

5.1 FirstClass Bulletin Board and Course Center

- 5.1.1 Participation in FirstClass is expected for this class. Students are responsible for information and class announcements posted on FirstClass. All Asbury students have a FirstClass account. See the Library for instructions regarding installing the software on your computer; students may also access FirstClass from the computers in the library.
- 5.1.2 All Power Point slides and class handouts will be uploaded as files into the Course Center by 5 PM Monday evening before the next day’s class for the students’ review. Many students like to print the powerepoint slides in advance of class for note-taking purposes.
- 5.1.3 Students are strongly encouraged to ask any questions and to raise any concerns they have about the course in the course forum, whether it be about the meaning of something you are reading, the syllabus, a problem with an assignment, a request for resources, etc. Your question, and hopefully my answer ☺, may well benefit others beside yourself. For that reason, unless the nature of your inquiry is expressly private, please post it on the course bulletin board rather than sending me a private email.

5.2 Assignments

- 5.2.1 Assignment are due by the end of class on the due date. Late work is accepted at any time during the course of the semester, although it will receive only 70% of the credit earned.
- 5.2.2 All assignments must be word-processed (not handwritten), single-spaced, with standard fonts not smaller than 10 pt and not larger than 12 pt.
- 5.2.3 Title pages are not necessary, but do put your name and SPO# on the assignment. Bibliographies are not necessary, provided students give full citation in foot/endnotes. (Only the Ephesians assignment requires any research.) *Please* staple pages together.

6. COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPICS AND TEXTS	ASSIGNMENTS, QUIZZES, AND EXAMS	READING
9/2/03	Introductions: Personal, Course Approaching the Study of the New Testament The New Testament Canon	***	***
9/9/03	Second Temple Judaism Quests for the Historical Jesus "From Jesus to Christ" (PBS Frontline Video, Pt. 1)	***	NTH 14-79 WNT 595-613, 1-91 MNT 102-111, 19-34
9/16/03	The Message and Mission of Jesus (through the Eyes of John the Baptist) Luke 7:18-35		NTH 80--159 WNT 93-153, 627-32
9/23/03	Introduction to Biblical Criticisms The Synoptic Problem Exercise: Mark 12:1-11 pars.	Quiz #1	WNT 155-58 MNT 35-67
9/30/03	MARK (1:39-45) Textual Criticism MATTHEW (5:17-48) Intertextuality	Assignment #1	MNT 112-49 WNT 159-211
10/7/03	LUKE (14:1-24) Narrative Criticism, Parables ACTS: Narrativity and Normativity "From Jesus to Christ" (Pt. 2)		NTH 160-227 WNT 213-57
10/14/03	The Historical Paul: Paul according to Paul; What have they been saying about Paul? Letters in the Ancient World and in the NT	Quiz #2	WNT 259-78 MNT 68-89
10/21/03	THESSALONIAN CORRESPONDENCE (1 Thess 1:1-10) GALATIANS (3:1-29)	Mid-Term Essay Exam on Backgrounds, Jesus, Gospels and Acts	NTH 228-273 WNT 281-93, 327-40
10/28/03	CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE (1 Cor 7:1-40) ROMANS (Chaps 14-15)		NTH 274-300 WNT 295-324, 343-66
11/4/03	CAPTIVITY EPISTLES: Philippians (2:1-11), Colossians (1:15-20), Philemon, Ephesians	Assignment #2	NTH 301-32 WNT 369-421
11/11/03	PASTORAL EPISTLES: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus (2:1-15) HEBREWS (2:5-18)	Quiz #3	NTH 333-69 WNT 423-76
11/18/03	JAMES (2:14-26), 1 PETER (3:1-7), 2 PETER, JUDE	Assignment #3	MNT 90-101 WNT 479-518
11/25/03	Reading Week: No Class		
12/2/03	JOHANINE WRITINGS: John (1:1-18), 1-3 John REVELATION (Chaps 17-18) Concluding Hermeneutical Postscript	Quiz #4	NTH 370-409 WNT 521-92 LLP (complete)
12/9/03	Final Essay Exam on Paul, General Epistles, and Revelation		