

Scripture II
NT 100-3
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Fall 2009
Tuesday and Thursday, 4:30 pm to 5:50 pm
Schlegel Hall 123

Instructor: Jon L. Berquist
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Course website: www.jonberquist.com (click on Scripture II at LPTS, Fall 2009)

Goals:

Scripture II is primarily a survey course designed (a) to initiate students in the basic matters of NT and early Christian studies and (b) to lay a foundation for all advanced work in the area. The course covers the Greco-Roman background to the New Testament world, the development of the early Christian churches, the formation of the canon, and the books of the NT. With regard to each book of the New Testament, the class deals with the literary shape, the social context, and the theological concerns of the documents.

Objectives:

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- Summarize the content of all New Testament books.
- Describe the context of early Christianity.
- Explain the formation of the New Testament canon.
- Identify theological concepts of the New Testament

Textbooks:

REQUIRED:

The Bible in a New Revised Standard Version translation (or similar).

Charles B. Cousar, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Witnesses to God's New Work*

Michael Joseph Brown, *What They Don't Tell You: A Survivor's Guide to Biblical Studies*

Brian K. Blount et al., eds., *True to Our Native Land: An African-American New Testament Commentary*

Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, eds., *Women's Bible Commentary*, revised edition

Gail R. O'Day and David L. Petersen, eds., *Theological Bible Commentary*

NOTE: Textbooks are available at the LPTS bookstore. Also, textbooks will be available in electronic format through www.vitalsource.com. See class website for further details. Students may choose print or electronic versions of the textbooks.

Assignments:

General Comments: Standard policies of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary are binding for this course. The schedule is tentative and the instructor reserves the right to change the schedule. The instructor reserves the right to not accept late papers without prior approval.

- 1. Reading and Course Participation:** 20% of final grade. Each participant must complete all of the general reading assignments, including the reading of the biblical texts for each class session. The biblical readings should be accompanied by reading the relevant portions of the commentaries (*True to Our Native Land*, *Women's Bible Commentary*, and *Theological Bible Commentary*). Students must demonstrate their preparation through participation in class discussions and/or the course blog.
- 2. Content of the New Testament:** 20% of final grade. A requirement of this class is to understand the content of the New Testament. Students may meet this requirement in **one** of three ways. **(A)** A written final exam during the week of December 14-18. **(B)** Two written take-home exams. The first would be distributed October 15 and would be due October 20 before class. The second would be distributed December 10 and would be due at the scheduled time for the class final. **(C)** Weekly reflection papers, one or two pages in length. Papers should discuss the content of the New Testament passages assigned for the preceding week, with an emphasis on the major points of the New Testament passages. These papers would be due before the start of class on Thursdays: September 17 and 24; October 1, 8, 15, and 22; November 12 and 19; and December 3 and 10.
- 3. Contexts of New Testament Interpretation:** 20% of final grade. Interpreting the New Testament requires attention to the contexts in which the New Testament developed and in which we interpret the text today. Students must reflect intentionally on these contexts. The requirement can be met in **one** of three ways. **(A)** A ten-page research paper describing the social context of the church in the New Testament period, with attention to ways in which this context is similar to and differs from contemporary contexts. The paper would be due at the start of class on December 8. **(B)** A journal of spiritual reflections on the meaning of New Testament passages. Students should write in the journal at least 3 times per week, reflecting on the texts discussed in class as well as other New Testament texts heard in worship or discussed in other classes. At the end of the semester, the student would write a five-page summary of the journal and give this summary to the professor on December 8 before the start of class. **(C)** A weekly one-hour study group with other class members. Discussion should include prayer, spiritual reflection, and dialogue about the meaning of the weekly New Testament readings in relation to their own social and religious contexts. Students will grade each other on attendance and participation in the sessions and must submit their evaluations to the professor at the start of class on December 8.

4. Gospels Assignment: 20% of final grade. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are foundational documents for the New Testament and the church, and students must understand each gospel and their relationship to each other. Students may meet this requirement in **one** of five ways. Any of these assignments would be due at the start of class on October 13. **(A)** A ten-page paper comparing the four canonical gospels to each other. **(B)** A ten-page paper presenting a detailed outline of one of the four canonical gospels. **(C)** A ten-page paper developing an exegesis of a significant gospel passage. The passage must be approved by the professor in advance. **(D)** A ten-page paper showing a four-session Christian education series on the gospels. **(E)** Ten entries on aspects of the gospels for the class wiki, with prior approval of the topics by the professor.

5. Paul Assignment: 20% of final grade. The letters of Paul are foundational documents for the New Testament and the church, and students must understand these letters and their relationship to each other. Students may meet this requirement in **one** of five ways. Any of these assignments would be due at the start of class on December 1. **(A)** A ten-page paper summarizing the major points of Paul's theology. **(B)** A ten-page paper presenting a detailed outline of Romans or 1 Corinthians. **(C)** A ten-page paper developing an exegesis of a significant Pauline passage. The passage must be approved by the professor in advance. **(D)** A ten-page paper showing a four-session Christian education series on the letters of Paul. **(E)** Ten entries on aspects of the Paul and his letters for the class wiki, with prior approval of the topics by the professor.

Class Schedule:

The class meets Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, 4:30-5:50 pm. If weather requires the cancellation of class, we will follow LPTS policies, and there may also be updates via FaceBook or Twitter.

Thursday, September 10

Introductions

Tuesday, September 15

Overview. Read: Blount, pp. 1-81. Brown, pp. 1-39. Cousar, pp. 183-186.

Thursday, September 17

Jesus. Read: Brown, pp. 41-69. Cousar, pp. 103-104, 133-140.

Tuesday, September 22

Matthew. Read: Cousar, pp. 115-123.

Thursday, September 24

Mark. Read: Brown, pp. 69-108. Cousar, pp. 105-114.

Tuesday, September 29

Luke. Read: Brown, pp. 109-151. Cousar, pp. 125-131.

Thursday, October 1

John. Read: Cousar, pp. 147-155.

Tuesday, October 6

Acts. Read: Cousar, pp. 141-146.

Thursday, October 8

Romans. Read: Cousar, pp. 3-29.

Tuesday, October 13

1 & 2 Corinthians. Read: Cousar, pp. 31-46.

Thursday, October 15

Galatians and Ephesians. Read: Cousar, pp. 47-56, 79-87.

Tuesday, October 20

Philippians and Colossians. Read: Cousar, pp. 57-66, 89-92.

Thursday, October 22

1 & 2 Thessalonians. Read: Cousar, pp. 71-76, 93-94.

Tuesday, October 27

No class.

Thursday, October 29

No class.

Tuesday, November 3

1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon. Read: Cousar, pp. 67-69, 95-99.

Thursday, November 5

No class

Tuesday, November 10

No class

Thursday, November 12

Hebrews. Read: Cousar, pp. 159-164.

Tuesday, November 17

James; 1 & 2 Peter; Jude. Read: Cousar, pp. 165-176.

Thursday, November 19

No class

Tuesday, November 24

No class

Thursday, November 26

No class (Thanksgiving)

Tuesday, December 1

1, 2, & 3 John.

Thursday, December 3

No class

Tuesday, December 8

Revelation. Read: Cousar, pp. 179-182.

Thursday, December 10

Conclusion.

Week of December 14-18

Finals