

NT 1004 – Scripture II

Tuesdays and Thursdays
10:00 – 11:20 a.m.

Course Description:

The New Testament represents different things to different people. For Christians, it serves as a fount of life-giving truth, and a chief source of our knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth. Religious seekers encounter in the New Testament a set of claims encompassing the purposes of God from the foundation of the world to the end of time—claims that demand a response. Historians treasure the New Testament as an incomparable collection of literary artifacts, preserving precious, firsthand information concerning the origins and early spread of one of the most influential religious movements the world has known.

Whatever one's interest or concern with the New Testament, it poses significant interpretive challenges because the world and worldview presumed by its authors and first readers were vastly different from our own. This course will offer students a broad orientation to historical, literary, and theological issues raised by critical interpretation of the New Testament, and nurture skills for using it as a source for understanding early Christianity and for theological reflection. Special attention will be paid to ways that Christians read the New Testament as warrant for positions on controversial issues. The format will be lectures interspersed with discussion and small-group work.

Intended Major Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, each student will be able to:

1. Discuss the distinctive features of the books of the New Testament, and reflect theologically on their content;
2. Recognize the source of important quotations from the New Testament (book only)
3. Engage in research on key cultural or historical matters pertinent to the interpretation of the New Testament, using print and Internet resources.
4. Offer a detailed analysis or "close reading" of New Testament texts;
5. Compare and contrast the hermeneutical assumptions underlying competing biblical interpretations in relation to current theological and social controversies. How is it possible that people who are equally ardent and sincere can read the New Testament texts in such different and incompatible ways?

Requirements and Evaluation:

****KEY DATES:** *September 20: short paper due; October 6: short paper due; November 1: mid-term examination ; November 17: short paper due; December 14 or 15: final examination*

Attendance and Preparation. Regular attendance is expected, and roll will be taken (worth 10% of course grade). More than two absences for any reason will result in a grade penalty unless special arrangements for make-up work have been made ahead of time. Before each class session you are

to do all the assigned readings for that session. Come prepared to engage in discussion and to ask and answer questions pertaining to the reading assignments. Pop quizzes on the readings (including the New Testament readings) may be given at any time.

1. **Exams.** Students will complete an in-class mid-term examination and a final examination, each worth 25% of the total grade:
 - a. Mid-Term Examination, **Tuesday, November 1:** covering introductory material and the Gospels.
 - b. Final Examination, **Wednesday, December 14** or **Thursday, December 15** (to be set by registrar): covering everything in syllabus from October 13 through the end of the semester; i.e., from the introduction to Paul through to the end of the course.
2. **Short papers.** Three short papers on topics as assigned by the professor, each worth 10% of the grade.
3. **Pop quizzes and short summaries of assigned readings.** These will be given on an occasional basis, and in total will be worth 10%. No make-ups will be given.

Note: For description of the assigned paper topics, see Appendix A below; for policy on late papers and exams, see Appendix B below.

Textbooks and Other Required Readings:

1. Harrelson, Walter J., et al., editors. 2003. *New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Nashville: Abingdon. ISBN: 0687278325.
This is an excellent study Bible, with full introductions and substantive notes by authorities in the field. It would be a great Bible to use when leading a church Bible study. The HarperCollins Study Bible or the New Oxford Annotated Bible are also excellent reference works and may be used instead.
2. Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The New Testament: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). ISBN: 0199735700
3. Throckmorton, Burton Hamilton. 1992. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels: with Alternative Readings from the Manuscripts and Noncanonical Parallels*. Nashville: T. Nelson. ISBN: 0840774842.
4. All other required readings are listed in the syllabus and available on CAMS.

Schedule:

Thursday, September 8 : Introduction

- Garrett manuscript, "INTRODUCTION [to the Study of the New Testament]"
- Brian K. Blount et al., editors, "Introduction," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 1–7.
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 1–7, 16–27

Tuesday, September 13: Social historical context and how to learn about it

- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 8–15
- John T. Fitzgerald, "Cultures of the Greco-Roman World," in *The New Interpreter's Bible One Volume Commentary* (edited by Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen; Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 983-87.

- Amy-Jill Levine, "Culture of Early Judaism," in *ibid.*, 979-82.

Thursday, September 15: Studying the Gospels

- Susan R. Garrett, "Narratives of the New Testament," in *ibid.*, 967-69.
- Garrett manuscript, "INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS"
- Susan R. Garrett, *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 6-12.
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 28-37

Tuesday, September 20: Studying the Gospels, continued

- ****First short paper due on one of the following: the Son of Man, the Pharisees, or Jewish messianic expectations in the first century. See Appendix A.**
- Bring synopsis to class. Be prepared to discuss the synoptic accounts of Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, along with the ensuing passion prediction (Matt 16:13-23 || Mark 8:27-33 || Luke 9:18-22). Make note of significant differences between the three versions of the incident. What literary, theological, or other motives can you propose for these differences?

Thursday, September 22: Gospel of Mark

- Gospel of Mark, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 37-42
- Susan R. Garrett, "Disciples on Trial," in *Christian Century* 115:12 (1998): 396-99.
- Susan R. Garrett, *Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel*, 63-66.
- Susan R. Garrett, "Devil/Satan" (handout)
- Susan R. Garrett, "Jesus Christ, Exorcist." Online:
<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2004/04/Jesus-Christ-Exorcist.aspx?p=1>

Tuesday, September 27: Gospel of Matthew

- Gospel of Matthew 1-7, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 42-48
- Bring synopsis to class
- Dale C. Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount: Inspiring the Moral Imagination* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1999), 1-26. *Prepare a brief summary of this article and bring to class, to hand in. Should not exceed half-a-page, single-spaced, 12-point font.*

Thursday, September 29: Gospel of Matthew, continued

- Gospel of Matthew 8-28
- Bring synopsis to class

Tuesday, October 4: Gospel of Luke

- Gospel of Luke, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 48-59
- Bring synopsis to class. Be prepared to discuss Luke 10:1-24, the sending out and return of the seventy(-two) other disciples (manuscripts differ on the number).
 - Note that this story has no parallel in the other Gospels. How does the story compare and contrast to the three synoptic evangelists' accounts of the sending out of the twelve?

- o Consider Num 11:11-30, the story of the appointment of seventy elders to help Moses (seventy-two if one counts Eldad and Modad). How might Luke have used the account in Numbers to inform his description of Jesus' appointment of the seventy(-two) and his response to their return?
- o What are possible functions of the passage in the larger context of Luke-Acts?

Thursday, October 6: Acts of the Apostles

- ****Second short paper due, giving a comparison of the synoptic accounts of Jesus in the Garden. See Appendix A.**
- Acts of the Apostles, with introduction from your study Bible

Tuesday, October 11: Gospel of John

- Gospel of John, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 95–107

Thursday, October 13: Paul as Founder of Churches: 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

- 1 & 2 Thessalonians, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 60–65.
- David Downs, "Letters," in *The New Interpreter's Bible One Volume Commentary*, 970-72.
- Abraham Smith, "Paul and African American Biblical Interpretation," in *True to Our Native Land*, 31-42. On CAMS
- Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 80-82, 124-29.

Tuesday, October 18: 1 Corinthians

- 1 Corinthians, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 66-72.
- As you read through the letter, keep a running list of the problems that Paul addresses, including problematic social behaviors or failure to get along, and theological errors. How does Paul's self-defense in chapter 9 fit into his overall strategy of responding to these problems? What does he want the Corinthians to take from his own example?

Thursday, October 20: Special topic: Paul and Sexuality

- Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 51-64. *Prepare a brief summary of this article and bring to class, to hand in. Should not exceed half-a-page, single-spaced, 12-point font.*
- Susan R. Garrett, "Homosexuality and the Bible," parts 1 & 2, from TheThoughtfulChristian.com

Tuesday, October 25: Research & Study

Thursday, October 27: Research & Study

Tuesday, November 1: **Mid-Term Examination, covering introductory material and the Gospels****

Thursday, November 3: 2 Corinthians

- 2 Corinthians, with introduction from your study Bible

- Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 141 (bottom)-143
- Be prepared to discuss 2 Cor 2:1-17.
 - What circumstances seem to have prompted the (lost) letter mentioned in 2:4, and how did the Corinthians react to it? Why is Paul on the defensive about it now? Why does the change that Paul made in his travel plans seem to be such a big issue?
 - In vv. 14-17, why does Paul portray himself as a captive led in a triumphal procession? Who has triumphed here, and over what?
 - Compare the use of “those who are being saved” vs. the “those who are perishing” in v. 15 with the uses of those expressions in 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 4:3; 2 Thess 2:10. Do these additional passages shed light on the division Paul makes in 2:16 between those who smell on Paul the aroma of life and those who smell the stench of death?

Tuesday, November 8: Philippians

- Philippians, with introduction from your study Bible
- Stanley K. Stowers, “Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians,” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 1 (edited by Jouette M. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 105-21. *Prepare a brief summary of this article and bring to class, to hand in. Should not exceed half-a-page, single-spaced, 12-point font.*

Thursday, November 10: Galatians

- Galatians, with introduction from your study Bible
- Be prepared to discuss the “teachers” (J. Louis Martyn’s term) against whom Paul was arguing throughout this letter.
 - What can we infer about their identity, and what appears to have been the gist of their argument?
 - How does Paul’s appeal to the Galatians’ own experience in 3:1-5 begin to answer these arguments?

Tuesday, November 15: Romans

- Romans, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 73–83
- Susan R. Garrett, “Romans,” parts 1 & 2, from TheThoughtfulChristian.com

Thursday, November 17: Disputed Letters of Paul: Ephesians, Colossians

- Ephesians, Colossians, with introductions from your study Bible
- *****Third short paper due, on a selected topic from Paul (see Appendix A)***

Tuesday, November 22: No Class

Thursday, November 24: No class. Happy Thanksgiving!

Tuesday, November 29: Disputed Letters of Paul: the Pastoral Epistles

- 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, with introductions from your study Bible
- Jouette M. Bassler, “1, 2 Timothy and Titus,” in *HarperCollins Bible Commentary* (revised edition; edited by James L. Mays; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco., 2000), 1137-45.

Thursday, December 1: Hebrews

- Hebrews, with introduction from your study Bible
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 84–89
- Be prepared to discuss Heb 11:13-16.
 - Who are the “these” referred to in v. 13? What is the context of the promise that they had “seen and greeted from afar?” Why does the author call these people “strangers and exiles?”
 - How does the author’s preceding description of these persons advance the overall theological argument in chapter 11? In the letter as a whole?
 - What is the meaning of v. 16? I.e., why is God “not ashamed to be called their God?”
 - What is the practical lesson that the author wants the readers to learn from the various biblical personages described in the passages leading up to this pericope? In other words, how do the personal examples contribute to the author’s goal of pastoral edification of the audience (as opposed to the author’s parallel goal of theological instruction)?

Tuesday, December 6: James

- James, with introduction from your study Bible
- Susan R. Garrett, “James,” from TheThoughtfulChristian.com
- Johnson, *Very Short Introduction*, 89–94

Thursday, December 8: Revelation

- Revelation, with introduction from your study Bible
- Susan R. Garrett, “Revelation,” parts 1 & 2, from TheThoughtfulChristian.com
- To prepare for discussion: What evidence do you find within the book of Revelation to support or to counter the traditional view that the work was written to encourage Christians being persecuted by Domitian? In your analysis, be sure to consider whether each potentially relevant passage describes something that *already* happened or anticipates something that *may yet* happen. What significance does this debate have for how one reads the book as a whole?

Wednesday December 14 or Thursday, December 15: *Final Examination will cover everything in the syllabus from October 13 through the end of the semester; i.e., from the introduction to Paul through to the end of the course.***

Appendix A: Short Papers

Topics

First short paper, due Tuesday, September 20, in class— *Maximum length 800 words, not counting footnotes and bibliography*

- **Option 1: *The Son of Man*.** In the Gospels, Jesus often refers to “the Son of Man.” Sometimes (but not always) it seems obvious that he is talking about himself. Other people do not refer to him or address him in this way; the phrase seems to have been exclusively a self-designation. What is the background of the phrase in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Judaism of Jesus’ own day? Where and how in the Gospels does Jesus use the phrase? What issues or puzzles have scholars discerned in reference to this term? How would you explain its significance to a church Bible study?
- **Option 2: *The Pharisees*.** Who were the Pharisees in Jesus’ day? What problems have scholars noted in reconstructing their history and identity? In using the Gospel evidence concerning them? What would you want a church Bible study to know about the Pharisees?
- **Option 3: *Messianic Beliefs in the first century*.** It is a widely held opinion that the Jews of Jesus’ day were “waiting for the messiah.” But such an assertion oversimplifies the historical data. There appear to have been an array of beliefs concerning “eschatological redeemer figures” that were current in Jesus’ day. What were some of these beliefs, and how do we know about them? What would you want to be sure members of a church Bible study on the Gospels knew about Jewish messianic expectations in the first century?

Second short paper, due Thursday, October 6, in class – *Maximum length 800 words, not counting footnotes and bibliography*

- Compare and contrast the accounts of Jesus in the Garden on the night before his crucifixion (Mark 14:32-42; Matt 26:36-46; Luke 22:39-46). What similarities and differences do you find? Does it appear that Matthew and Luke have drawn exclusively from Mark, or is Q also in play? What distinctive emphases emerge in each of the accounts?

Third short paper, due Thursday, November 17, in class – *Maximum length 800 words, not counting footnotes and bibliography*

- **Option 1: *Paul’s teachings about the end-times*.** Discuss Paul’s remarks about end-time events 1 Thessalonians. Why does he bring up this topic and what are the major emphases of his presentation in 4:13–5:11? Compare and contrast this treatment with the discussion of end-time events in 2 Thessalonians. Do you think that the presentation in 2 Thessalonians violates Paul’s implication in 1 Thess 5:1-2 that we cannot know “times and dates?”
- **Option 2: *the Christ-hymn*.** Consider the so-called “hymn” of Phil 2:5-11. What theological, ethical or behavioral point(s) does Paul encourage the Philippians to draw from this depiction of Christ? How does Paul reinforce these points elsewhere in the epistle? In your analysis, you may want to address Paul’s use of ancient friendship-motifs. Do not get caught up in discussion of the source or origin of the hymn.
- **Option 3: *God’s impartiality*.** In Romans, Paul is struggling with the tension between his convictions that God is an impartial judge (2:11: “For God shows no partiality”) and that God will remain faithful in the promises made to the Jewish people (11:29: “for the gifts and the

Guidelines

Each of your three papers should not exceed the specified length (though notes and bibliography can be extra). Once you begin delving into these topics, this length limit will seem insufficient. You should write a draft of the paper without worrying about the word limit, and then cut it down to the appropriate length. Do not go over the limit. (Professional writers face this sort of challenge all the time.)

You should use at least three secondary resources. Include these in a bibliography, arranged in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style* (or Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*, which is based on the *Chicago Manual*). For help in formatting, go to <http://www.worldcat.org/>, type in the ISBN number of your resource, click on the title, then click on cite/export (top right-hand corner). You can copy and paste into your bibliography. (The WorldCat format may feature small variations of capitalization and other details from standards as set forth in the actual *Chicago Manual of Style* and Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*; you don't need to worry about these variations unless you want to.) Citations in your bibliography of encyclopedia or dictionary articles should begin with the author's name (last name first), followed by a period, as follows:

Meyer, Paul W. "Romans." Pp. 1038-73 in *The HarperCollins Bible commentary*. Edited by James L. Mays. Rev. ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000.

If you quote or paraphrase a source closely, you will need to cite it either in a footnote or using an in-text citation. For footnotes, follow *Chicago Manual* or Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. For in-text citations, use the author's name in parentheses, followed by the page number; then make sure this source is in your bibliography. For example, your paper might include the following reference to the work given above:

Paul is emphatic that the Mosaic law is not to be confused with sin but remains "God's good and holy law" (Meyer, 1056).

Papers will be graded on clarity and insight, accuracy of information, utilization of appropriate resources, and correct length, spelling, and bibliography.

Suggested Resources
(On reserve at circulation desk unless otherwise noted)

Bible Dictionaries

- Browning, W. R. F. 2009. *A Dictionary of the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Achtemeier, Paul J., and Roger S. Boraas. 1996. *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Freedman, David Noel. 1992. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday. 6 vols. **IN REFERENCE ROOM. Ref. BS 440 .A54 1992**
- Freedman, David Noel, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck. 2000. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans. **IN REFERENCE ROOM. Ref. BS 440 .E44 2000**
- Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall. 1992. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press. **IN REFERENCE ROOM. Ref. BS 2555.2 .D53 1992**
- Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. 2006. *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 5 vols. **IN REFERENCE ROOM. Ref. BS 440 .N445 2006**

One-Volume Commentaries

- Dunn, James D. G., and J. W. Rogerson. 2003. *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans. **IN REFERENCE ROOM. Ref. BS 491.3 .E37 2003**
- Mays, James Luther, and Joseph Blenkinsopp. 2000. *The HarperCollins Bible commentary*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Introductory Textbooks

- Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson. 2001. *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub.
- Brown, Raymond Edward. 1997. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. 2010. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. (This is the 3rd edition; the 1st and 2nd editions are acceptable.)

Collections of Primary Sources

- Barrett, C. K. 1989. *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Appendix B: Course Policies

Inclusive Language:

In speech and in written assignments, please avoid divisive terms that reinforce stereotypes or are pejorative. Do not use language that leaves out part of the population, perpetuates stereotyping, or diminishes importance. Do not use male pronouns (such as “men”) to refer to a group that includes females as well. Consult the Academic Support Center for additional guidance if necessary.

Plagiarism:

Prohibition of plagiarism will be strictly enforced. Ideas and words (even short phrases, if distinctive) drawn from print, Internet, or other sources should be fully documented. Any student work in which plagiarism is discovered will receive an automatic F with no possibility of redoing the assignment, and the infraction will be reported to the academic dean. Use great care!!!

Attendance and Make-up for Missed sessions:

Perfect or near-perfect attendance is expected, and roll will be taken. More than 2 absences (for any reason) will adversely affect the student’s attendance and participation grade. Those few students who know that they will have more than 2 unavoidable conflicts with the class may make prearrangement with the professor to turn in a page of typed notes on the readings as make-up for missed class #s 3+.

Late Papers and Exams, and Incompletes

Take-home exams and paper topics will be distributed well in advance of the due date, allowing adequate time to work on the assignments. Out of fairness to other students, papers turned in after the time and date specified in the syllabus will receive a grade penalty. Schedule of penalties: 1 minute to 24 hours late = 1 letter-grade deduction; 24 to 48 hours late = 2 letter-grade deduction. Papers more than 48 hours late will not be accepted. Grades of incomplete for the course will be permitted only in extreme circumstances, and must be arranged by the date specified by the registrar’s office.

Use of Electronic Devices in Class

Do not send or read text messages during class. All cell phones should be turned off during class unless waiting for an important call, in which case you should let the professor know ahead of time. It is preferred that you not use laptops in class. If you choose to do so, do not access the Internet unless specifically for purposes relevant to the course. Checking of email or social networking sites will be grounds for dismissal from the session and will result in a zero for the class attendance and participation component of one’s grade for the semester.