

SCRIPTURE II

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Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
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Scripture II is a survey course designed (a) to introduce students to the basic matters of New Testament studies and (b) to lay a foundation for all advanced work in the area. With regard to each book of the New Testament, we will, as possible, think about the *literary shape*, *social context*, and *theological concerns* of the writing. In addition, we will cover selected religious and political developments prior to the time of Jesus and the early church, the historical environments to which the New Testament makes references and in which these documents were written, the interrelationship of the canonical Gospels, the life and work of Jesus, the ministry of Paul, and other pertinent issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Preparation of assignments. *The reading of the Bible is presupposed.* Above all, always read the relevant portions of the New Testament as we work our way through the books of the canon. If you have read a book of the New Testament previously, read it again. Furthermore, *prior to* each class session you are assigned materials to read in the textbook for the course, *An Introduction to the New Testament: The Abridged Edition*. In other words, assigned readings are to be done *for* class, *not after* class. Please note that the syllabus specifies readings to be done in the *Introduction*, but it does not delineate the reading of books of the New Testament. That is assumed.

Attendance of and participation in class sessions. Lectures that incorporate informal, spontaneous discussions are the framework for this course of study. You should plan to attend all sessions. The seminary's standards for attendance are stated in the "Course Policy Statements" at the end of this syllabus.

Evaluation. After each topic is covered in class, each student should prepare a 500-600 word (*absolute maximum!*) single- or double-spaced typewritten *hardcopy* summary of the materials covered in the assigned readings and the lecture. *Longer does not mean better.* Concise, precise summarizing is the aim of these papers. These summaries are to be turned in at the following class period. *I will not accept late papers.* These summaries will be checked for quality, recorded for grading purposes, and returned to you as quickly as possible. Students will need to collect all summaries in the form of a notebook to be turned in at the end of the course. This notebook will count for 80% of the final grade (see "Grading" below). These papers do *not* amount to a reading response or devotional journal; they should provide a critical summary showing clear comprehension of the broad issues of NT interpretation. It should never be necessary to use the verb *to feel* in writing these papers, nor to employ first person personal pronouns. If one does the work for the notebook in a conscientious manner, later, the notebook may provide a useful resource for further study, reflection, and doing various tasks in ministry.

Due: May 8 by 12:00 p.m. Early submissions will be appreciated. No extentions.

Explication: All persons should write all the summary papers for the course. Each summary paper will be scored on a scale of three points. Poor summaries or failure to turn in summaries will adversely affect the final grade in the course. A good summary will be credited at 3 points; an adequate summary will be credited at 2 points; and a poor summary will be credited at 1 point (or in some cases, no points of credit at all).

Here's how the system should work: On February 8, each student should bring to class an integrated summary of the reading and the lecture on "An Introduction to the New Testament and Its Study" from February 6. Every effort will be made to return the paper on February 10 and, then, it goes in the notebook. In turn, on February 10 each student should bring to class a summary of the reading and the lecture on "The Gospels and Their Interrelatedness" from February 8. Again, the paper will be returned after it has been checked and recorded. This process continues throughout the course until its end.

Grading. In addition to the *papers* that account for 80% of the grade, 20% of the grade will reflect *attendance and participation*. Participation is not merely talking willy-nilly, but saying something germane that reveals careful preparation and engagement with the texts and assignments. Attendance was mentioned above.

Grades will be reckoned on a scale of 100 points (100 percent). And so, there will be 24 summary papers for the course. At 3 points each, that accounts for 72 points (72 percent) of the final grade. Attendance and participation are 20 percent (20 points) of the grade, so that together the papers, attendance, and participation are 92 percent or 92 points of the grade. What about the other 8 points (or, percent) of the final grade? *Everyone* starts out with 8 points, that is, with 8 percent of the final grade already secured.

TEXTBOOKS

A Bible—either the Greek NT (UBS4 or Nestle-Aland 28th) or a scholarly translation (e.g., NAB, NASB, NIV, TNIV, NKJV, NJB, RSV). "Study Bibles" can be useful, but most tend to be extremely conservative to the point of almost completely ignoring modern critical biblical scholarship. A few good study Bibles do exist, but their reliable notes are often in conjunction with translations that are not familiar to most readers and students of the biblical writings. Some good current study Bibles employ the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament: The Abridged Edition*. Edited and abridged by Marion L. Soards. Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. (This book is on reserve and available for purchase from our virtual bookstore and online vendors.)

• **SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND LECTURES** •

- February 3 **Meeting, Greeting, and Getting a Syllabus**
- February 6 **An Introduction to the New Testament and Its Study**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. xv-xxiii + 1-17.
- February 8 **The Gospels and Their Interrelatedness**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 33-43.
- February 10 and 13 **The Gospel according to Mark**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 44-57.
- February 15 and 17 **The Gospel according to Matthew**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 58-74.
- February 20 and 22 **The Gospel according to Luke**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 75-97.
- February 27 and
March 1 **The Gospel according to John**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 116-32.
- March 3 and 6 **The Environment of the New Testament Times**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 18-32.
- March 8 and 10 **Jesus--His Life and Teaching**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 299-304.
- March 20 **The Acts of the Apostles**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 98-115.
- March 22 **The Mission and Message of Paul**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 148-62.
- March 27 **1 & 2 Thessalonians**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 144-47; 163-67; 210-16.
- March 29 **Galatians**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 168-73.
- March 31 **1 Corinthians**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 185-93.
- April 10 **2 Corinthians**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 194-200.
- April 12 **Philippians & Philemon**
Read: Brown/Soards, *Introduction*, pp. 174-80; 181-84.

April 17	Romans Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 201-9.
April 19	Colossians Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 217-23.
April 21	Ephesians Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 224-30.
April 24	The Pastoral Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 231-51.
April 26	Hebrews Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 252-59.
April 28	James Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 267-73.
May 1	1 & 2 Peter and Jude Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 260-66; 274-78; 279-83.
May 3	The Johannine Epistles: 1, 2, & 3 John Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 133-43.
May 5	The Book of Revelation Read: Brown/Soards, <i>Introduction</i> , pp. 284-98.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WORKS OF NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

FURTHERMORE: There are an unbelievable number of books available that aim to provide information that introduces students and other interested readers to the New Testament (NT) and the study of its writings. These books often also present information about *both* the historical backgrounds of the world of the NT *and* summary topics such as Jesus, Paul, and extracanonical writings pertinent to the study of the NT. These works are remarkably diverse in methods, forms, contents, and conclusions.

On one end of the spectrum some introductions place the writings of the canonical NT in the context of the first-century Greco-Roman world, along with all other known early Christian writings, thus dissolving early Christian experience and the emerging Christian canon into the context of Hellenistic history and the full range of early Christian literature. Here one might point to the two-volume introduction by:

Koester, Helmut. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Vol. 1, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*. 2nd ed. New York: de Gruyter, 1995, \$37; and

_____. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Vol. 2. *History and Literature of Early Christianity*. 2nd ed. New York: de Gruyter, 2000, \$37. [That is, the two volumes together are \$74.]

One might view this introduction as a somewhat "liberal" or "progressive" work. It sets a standard, however, for introductions that work in the manner that it does.

Perhaps, on the other end of the spectrum one might point to another kind of NT introduction. A well-known and highly respected work by Donald Guthrie offers chapters on the various writings of the canonical NT. The NT writings are considered in terms of all standard questions of NT introduction. In addition there are topical chapters on key subjects, for example, the Synoptic Problem and Form Criticism; there are also appendices, for example, on Paul and pseudepigraphy. In terms of methods, forms, contents, and conclusions, this introduction is very "conservative," even somewhat "apologetic," but it is thorough and judicious in its conservatism:

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1990, \$31.

Both of these introductions are comprehensive in what they achieve. Moreover, in size alone Koester's two volumes come to 784 pages, while Guthrie's single volume is 1164 pages. What Koester and Guthrie set out to do, they seem to have accomplished: One introduction is iconoclastic and the other is especially traditional. One would be hard pressed to find two more different works that, at least by virtue of their titles, purport to be doing essentially the same thing.

On the other hand, our textbook for this course aims at being "centrist" both in its approach to the NT writings and in the interpretive conclusions that it draws concerning the texts (see pp. ix-xi for remarks about the intention to work from a centrist perspective in this textbook). The textbook that we are using is an abridgment (some say *abbreviation*) of a much longer (900+ pages) and more detailed volume by Raymond E. Brown, S.S. (*An Introduction to the New Testament*. Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). Brown's scholarship, his original *Introduction* (note the word *An* in its title), and this *Abridged Edition* represent what a majority of scholars recognize as mainstream scholarship.

If issues arise in reading the abridged version of this introduction to the NT, then, consulting the larger original volume may be helpful.

POLICY STATEMENTS

USE OF INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Seminary policy states that students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. For more information, see: <http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

CITATION POLICY

Citations in your papers should follow seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

- Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

According to the seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of conflicts of schedule, illness, or emergency, students are asked to inform the instructor of their absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session, whichever is appropriate. Eight or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS (AN EVER-BURGEONING ISSUE)

Serious work requires serious attention. Serious study is serious work. Jesus once said, καὶ ἐὰν οἰκία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν μερισθῆι, οὐ δύνησεται ἡ οἰκία ἐκείνη σταθῆναι ("If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand" (Mark 3:25). Let us do everything that we can to maintain our unity as we work together in class. Along these lines: Best of all, in this class avoid electronic devices of all kinds completely. But if not that, then, avoid them as much as is reasonably possible. If you need a Bible, bring one with you in hardcopy. (Yes, I have two or three electronic versions of the Bible—in Hebrew and Greek and several English translations—but, as useful as these programs can be, they can easily become playful distractions in language courses.) Moreover, there is no valid reason for anyone to send or to read text messages during class. In fact, no one may even access the Internet during class time under any circumstances. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible while we are meeting (which is very likely a rare occurrence), you may ask for an exception to this rule prior to breaking it. Please, however, limit such requests to situations that are genuinely nonnegotiable.

Even so, laptops and other such tools should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your activity to taking notes. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking email or social networking sites, will occasion dismissal from the class session and negatively affect the course grade. Long ago, G. A. Buttrick observed, "It's a large question as to whether any civilization can endure under technological terms unless the machine is kept within its limits." Furthermore, as a point of information, it is quite easy from the front of a classroom to discern who is doing what with various electronic devices. Staring at the screen of a PED does not indicate sufficient engagement with classroom activities. *The terms of this policy will be enforced; please don't test its limits.*

LATE PAPERS

Please plan ahead. Papers are expected at the times indicated by the syllabus. There will be no extensions given. Starting early is the best guarantee against finishing late. A late paper will be marked down one full grade level for each day that it is overdue. There will be no exceptions. Please don't ask.

EINE DENKWÜRDIGE BEMERKUNG

Der Ungeduldige, dem es bloß um Ergebnis und mögliche praktische Verwendung geht, soll die Finger von der Exegese lassen. Er taugt nicht für sie, rechtschaffen betrieben sie nicht für ihn.

Ernst Käsemann, *An die Römer*