

INTRODUCTION TO NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS—NT 1023

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Spring 2020
Professor: Dr. Marion L. Soards

Statement of Method and Purpose

The goal of this course is for students to develop a working knowledge of (1) the methods for exegesis of the NT writings and (2) the use of these methods in reading and interpreting the books of the NT. We will examine the methods of exegesis and illustrate the application of these methods to various kinds of New Testament writings. It is important here, before any exegetical work is done, to recognize (a) that every interpretive method is not relevant to every text to be interpreted and (b) that forcing a methodological fit never serves interpreting a passage well.

The goal of the course is for students to be able *to use Greek* in the exegesis of NT writings and *to apply the relevant methods* of biblical interpretation to passages of the NT for the exposition and understanding of the texts.

SLO1: Students will be able to interpret Scripture critically and imaginatively.

Requirements and Grading

1. Students are expected to attend all classes. Attendance alone is **20%** of the total grade.
2. Students should prepare all assignments in advance of the class sessions in which the assignments will be treated. (The Homework given at February 6 is to be prepared for classwork on February 11.) In-class discussions may occur, usually focused on a selected Greek text, and concerned with vocabulary, inflection, and sentence structure. Students should be prepared to participate in these conversations. Preparation and participation will count **30%** of the total grade.
3. Students will write an exegesis paper of *no more than 3,000 words in length*. The NT text for the paper may be chosen from among the following passages:

Matt 13:24-30	John 11:45-53[54]	Col 2:6-10 (11-15)
Matt 23:29-36	John 18:33-38	Titus 3:3-7
Mark 1:40-45	Acts 10:34-43	Heb 11:1-6
Mark 2:23-28	Rom 5:6-11	James 3:13-18
Luke 9:28-36	1 Cor 1:26-31	1 Pet 1:3-9
Luke 23:6-12,15	Gal 3:23-29	Rev 14:1-5

This paper is to employ appropriate methods in the study of the particular text, as these methods are applicable and pertinent to the verses of the passage. This paper will count **50%** of the total grade. **Papers are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 7.**

N.B. Please plan ahead. 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.*

Textbooks

Required Books:

- A critical edition of the *Greek New Testament*—probably most useful is this one:
The Crossway edition of *The Greek-English New Testament*. Nestle-Aland 28th/ESV.
- Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. (Cited as *NT Exegesis* with page numbers.)

Highly Recommended:

- Freedman, David Noel. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. An outstanding one-volume Bible dictionary among an endless supply of such books.
- Newman, Barclay M.. *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. Rev. ed.—There are several editions of this handy dictionary. Buy the cheapest one available.
- Soulen, Richard N. and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 4th rev. and expanded ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011. (Cited as *Handbook* with the title of the pertinent article.) A very helpful reference tool for understanding aspects of biblical interpretation. It is worth considering the purchase of this *Handbook*. Some of the assigned readings are from this handbook.

For Further Study: These two volumes are excellent reference tools and would enhance anyone's library for biblical studies—

- Blass, F. and A. Debrunner. Trans. and rev. by Robert W. Funk. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (normally cited in scholarly remarks as BDF with section numbers rather than pages—e.g., BDF §102); and
- Brown, Raymond E., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (cited as *NJBC*).

Furthermore: Copies of the required books for the course are on reserve in the library along with most of the other items mentioned in the syllabus or that may be referred to in class are in the library.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

(This schedule was *not* delivered by angels on Sinai and may be altered if necessary.)

- February 6 **Introduction to the Course—Reading the Syllabus and Looking Over the Grammatical Review Material**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 1-4; Textbook, Lessons 3-9
- February 11 **Articles, Adjectives (+Participles), Nouns, Pronouns, and Prepositions**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 4.9-9.5; Textbook, Lessons 10-14
- February 13 **Verbs: Five Things about Them—Emphasizing the Indicative**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 9.5-14.75; Textbook, Lessons 15-21
- February 18 **Verbs: Five Things about Them—Emphasizing the Indicative**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 14.75-16.8; Textbook, Lessons 22-24
- February 20 **Verbs: Subjunctive Mood**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 14.75-16.8; Textbook, Lessons 22-24 + 25
- February 25 **Verbs: Subjunctive Mood and Imperative Mood**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 16.8-17; Textbook, Lessons 26-27
- February 27 **Verbs: The Versatile Greek Infinitive**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 18-30; Textbook, Lessons 28-31
- March 3 **Verbs: Participles**
Homework: Basic Review, pp. 30-31; Textbook, Lessons 32-33
- March 5 **-MI Verbs**
Homework: Translate 1 Cor 1:30-31
 Read *NT Exegesis*, pp. 41-58
- March 10 **Keywords: Translation(s), Lexicons, Concordances, and Grammars**
Homework: Translate: Mark 1:1; Luke 23:34; and Phil 2:12-13
 Read *NT Exegesis*, pp. 59-95

- March 12 **Textual Criticism**
 Homework: Reading the Bible (using any *translation*):
 (1) Read the following five passages carefully: Mark 14:26-28; Matt 2:15; Acts 2:15-21; 1 Cor 3:18-23; and James 2:22-24.
 (2) Read all the following bits of information sprinkled throughout the Gospel according to Luke: Luke 3:1 [unparalleled]; 8:3 [unparalleled]; 9:7-9 [compare Mark 6:14-16; Matt 14:1-2]; 13:31 [unparalleled]; and 23:6-12,15 [especially vv. 7,8,11,12,15].
 (3) Read the following five passages carefully: Matt 1:1-17; Matt 22:1-14; Mark 15:33-35; 1 Cor 7:1, and 1 Pet 1:23-25
- March 24 **Source Criticism**
 Homework: *Compare*: (1) Mark 1:12-13; Matt 4:1-11; and Luke 4:1-13 [Gospel(s) Stories of Jesus' Temptations]; *and, in turn, compare* (2) Mark 14:43-52; Matt 26:47-56; Luke 22:47-53; and John 18:2-12 [Jesus Arrested].
 Are the stories in each set of stories the same? Are they different? If so, how? Can you think of a reason that there may be distinctions? And, can you explain why you think those differences exist—and, can you show in some way that your explanation of the difference(s) is not only possible, but also probable (or, even demonstrably correct)?
 (3) Analyze Luke 23:32-38: Identify possible sources and ask about the history of a/the tradition (if any). Look for literary parallels. Take note of your observations and ideas.
- March 26 **Tradition History**
 Homework: Read *NT Exegesis*, pp. 96-111; and at least consult the following articles, which are on reserve in the library: Brown and North, "Biblical Geography," *NJBC* 1175-95; and North and King, "Biblical Archaeology," *NJBC* 1196-1218. Translate: 1 Cor 4:16; and read in English (but as possible, translate the following NT texts): 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; Acts 17:22-23; Titus 1:10-14, esp. vv. 12-13a.
- April 7 **Ancient History and Archaeology**
 Homework: Read *NT Exegesis*, pp. 39-58, 112-31.
- April 14 **Literary Genre and Context**
 Homework: *Form Criticism*—Read: *NT Exegesis*, pp. 39-58, 112-31; *Handbook*: "Form Criticism" and "Gattung" (handout).

April 16

Form Criticism

Homework: Read: *Handbook*: “Redaction Criticism” (handout)); and Stephen S. Smalley, “Redaction Criticism” in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 181-95 (on reserve).
Compare: (A) Mark 3:19b-21 + 31-35; Matt 12:46-50; and Luke 8:19-21 [Jesus’ Comments about Family]; and (B) compare: Mark 2:1-12; Matt 9:1-8; and Luke 5:17-26 [Healing a Paralytic in Capernaum].

April 21

Redaction Criticism

Homework: Read: (A) *Handbook*: “Rhetorical Criticism” (handout); (B) P. Tribble, “Feminist Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies,” *Christian Century* February 3-10, 1982—p. 116—also online and easily located; and (C) G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press) pp. 3-38 (on reserve).

April 23

Rhetorical Criticism

Homework: Read: (A) R. A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (paperback ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983/1987) pp. ix-xii, 3-11; and (B) *Handbook*: “Narrative Criticism” (handout).

April 28

Narrative Criticism

Homework: Which of the following tasks may be related to your exegesis of the biblical text that you selected? Prepare to discuss this question.

1. Picking the passage
2. Textual criticism?
3. Translation:
 - a. Words—concordances and lexicons
 - b. Greek syntax and grammars
4. Are there sources?
5. Does a tradition have a history?
6. Ancient historical reality:
 - a. Archaeology
 - b. Preserved writings
 - c. Envisioning ancient reality
7. Genre
8. Context
9. Form Criticism
10. Redaction Criticism
11. Rhetorical Criticism

12. Narrative Criticism
13. Interpretation and Application
14. Hermeneutical Endeavor

(Can one realistically speak of *Wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*, which today is variously described as either brilliant, naïve, or ignorant?)

April 30

A Quick Run-through of the Steps for Exegesis (Papers)

Prominent ones of the many methods:

1. Picking the passage
2. Textual criticism?
3. Translation:
 - a. Words—concordances and lexicons
 - b. Greek syntax and grammars
4. Are there sources?
5. Does a tradition have a history?
6. Ancient historical reality:
 - a. Archaeology
 - b. Preserved writings
 - c. Envisioning ancient reality
7. Genre
8. Context
9. Form Criticism
10. Redaction Criticism
11. Rhetorical Criticism
12. Narrative Criticism
13. Interpretation and Application
14. Hermeneutical Endeavor

(Can one realistically speak of *Wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*, which today is variously described as either brilliant, naïve, or ignorant?)

May 5

The So-Called Hermeneutical Task—or—Why So Many Methods?

What's the Point?

- Class:
- The plain sense of the text (the Reformation ideal)
 - The question of *The Sensus Plenior* (Inspiration and Multiple Meanings?)
 - The text and the reader (Post-modern → Deconstruction)
 - Walter Bauer's maxim (“*On the way toward ascertaining the intention of an early Christian author, the interpreter is to ask how the author's document was understood by those who first read it or heard it*”—as quoted by J. Louis Martyn)
 - And, then, once you think you know what it says, *so what?*

Homework: Work on your exegesis papers.

May 7 Exegesis papers are due *no later than* 5:00 p.m. Even earlier is good.

POLICY STATEMENTS

USE OF INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In accordance with seminary policy, 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. See the following:

<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 papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.
- 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.

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 illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Five or more absences (1/4 of the course sessions) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

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

Serious work requires serious attention. Serious study is serious work. Jesus once said,

καὶ ἐὰν οἰκία ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν μερισθῆ, οὐ δύνησεται ἡ οἰκία ἐκείνη σταθῆναι

(*If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand* [Mark 3:25]).

And so, 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. (And, yes, I do have several electronic versions of the Bible—in Hebrew and Greek and several English translations—but, as useful as these programs can be, they may easily become playful distractions in class.)

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, long before the proliferation of electronic gadgets, George Arthur 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, around 1986, Bishop Edsel A. Ammons of the West Ohio Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church said, "*We are the first generation in history in danger of amusing ourselves to death.*"

The terms of this policy statement will be enforced; so please don't test its limits.

LATE PAPERS

Please plan ahead. Papers are expected at the time indicated on the syllabus. *There will be no extensions given.* Starting early is the best guarantee against finishing late. Late papers will be marked down one full grade level for each day that they are 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.

—which loosely translated says:

The impatient, who are concerned only with results and possible practical use, should keep their hands off exegesis. They are no good for it; rightly done it is no good for them.

Ernst Käsemann, *An die Römer*—
also author of *Paulinische Perspektiven*, which has the remarkable title in English of *Perspectives on Paul*