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NT 670 Non-Canonical Writings for NT Studies

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NEW TESTAMENT DEPARTMENT

NT 670 **Non-Canonical Writings for NT Studies**
Spring, 2008
No Class Limit. Prereq.: NT 520

Joseph R. Dongell, Instructor
Office Location: BC 337
Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 9:30-10:45

●●●●●●●● This Document is yet in draft form ●●●●●●●●

I. General Description: This course will serve as a basic introduction to the wide range of ancient literatures surrounding the NT and illuminating its interpretation. Students will read (in English translation) selected portions of those literatures which meaningfully relate to the NT, and will be exposed to the historical circumstances of each literature while becoming familiar with tools available for further research. Prereq.: NT 520.

The literatures we shall pursue are:

- A. The OT Pseudepigrapha
- B. The OT Apocrypha
- C. The Septuagint
- D. The Dead Sea Scrolls
- E. Josephus
- F. Philo
- G. The Targums
- H. Rabbinic Literature [Mishnah, Talmuds]
- I. NT Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha
- J. Gnostic Writings (Nag Hammadi) and the Corpus Hermetica
- K. Papyri
- L. Greco-Roman Writers [Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Plutarch]

II. Course Objectives:

- A. Reading Exposure: Students will directly experience (in English translation) the various contents, styles, atmospheres, genres, interests, world-views, theological perspective, etc. expressed within the literatures in focus.
- B. Historical Introduction: Students will become familiar with the salient historical factors (so far as they are knowable) involved in the production and preservation of these literatures.
- C. Significance for NT Studies: Students will be able to identify and explain in specific and multiple ways how the knowledge and appropriate use of each of these corpora can enrich and deepen NT interpretation. Students will also observe and understand how selected biblical commentators make use of these literatures.
- D. Pathways for Use and Research: Students will be able to identify for each literature the tools enabling more extensive use and research: original language texts, concordances, English translations, topical indices, introductions, and monographs.

III. Course Texts:

The sheer bulk of the literatures we shall examine in this course makes it impossible to require the purchase of all the tools from which we will read. Most literatures comprise many published volumes, often in expensive scholarly formats. On the other hand, some of our texts are available in electronic form, whether through internet sites or in software bundles and databases. Our approach will be to provide a course packet containing photocopies all of the required readings (of ancient materials). [In every case we will fall below copying 10% of a given source.]

Required Materials [to be available in the bookstore]

- Evans, Craig A. Non-Canonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992. 0-943575-95-8
- Evans, Craig A and Stanley Porter, eds. Dictionary of New Testament Background. Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. 0-8308-1780-8

English Translations of Bodies of Literature [*Students are expected to secure an English translation through one means or another.*] Several factors complicate the listing of textbooks containing English translations. **1) Cost.** If a student were to purchase the most up-to-date text and translation for each category of literature below, the cost of texts could easily exceed \$1000. **2) Freshness.** For many literatures below, a low-cost (somewhat outdated) English translation is available. For most of our purposes (initial exposure and reading), these older translations are acceptable. **3) Electronic Data.** Many resources are available without charge on the internet. Students should know, however, that those freely accessible resources tend to be older, and no longer adequate for rigorous, technical scholarship (though they *are* appropriate for the purposes of this course).

Since students will vary radically from each other in terms of their scholarly interest, state of their personal libraries, and their budgets, it is best to ask students to forge their way ahead individually to gain access to English translations. I have flagged those tools which I judge to be extremely valuable, and well worth purchasing despite their cost.

A. The OT Pseudepigrapha

Charlesworth, James H. ed. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. 2 vols. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1983-85.

B. The OT Apocrypha

Metzger, Bruce, ed. The Apocrypha of the Old Testament. Revised Standard Version. New York: Oxford University Press. 1977.

C. The Septuagint

Brenton, Lancelot C. L. The Septuagint with Apocrypha. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d. [This is a very old translation with a great many drawbacks. However, modern translation projects have not yet been completed.]

D. The Dead Sea Scrolls

Vermes, Geza. The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English. New York: Penguin, 1962.

E. Josephus

Thackeray, Henry St. James, R. Marcus, A. Wikgren, and L. H. Feldman. Josephus. 10 vols. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1926-1965.

Whiston, William, trans. The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged. New Updated Edition. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987.

F. Philo

Colson, F. H. and G. H. Whitaker. Philo. 10 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University. 1927-62.

Yonge, C. D. The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged. Peabody, Mass; Hendrickson. (1854 original publication of Yonge) 1993.

G. The Targums

Grossfeld, B. The Targum Onqelos. ArBib 6-9. Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1988.

Chilton, B. D. The Isaiah Targum. ArBib 11. Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1987.

H. Rabbinic Literature: Mishnah

Danby, Herbert. The Mishnah. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1933.

Neusner, Jacob. The Mishnah: A New Translation. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. 1988.

I. NT Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha

James, M. R. The Apocryphal New Testament. Oxford: Clarendon, 1924.

J. Gnostic Writings (Nag Hammadi) and Corpus Hermetica

Robinson, J. M. et al., eds. Coptic Gnostic Library: Text Translation, and Commentary. 14 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1972-1979.

Scott, W. Hermetica. 4 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1924-36.

Barnstone, Willis and Marvin Meyer, eds. The Gnostic Bible. Boston: Shambhala. 2003.

K. Selected Papyri

[New Documents Series]

Barrett, C. K., ed. The New Testament Background: Selected Documents. New York: Harper and Row, 1961

L. Selected Greco-Roman Writers

Barrett, C. K., ed. The New Testament Background: Selected Documents. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.

IV. Graded Student Work: The final grade will be calculated by averaging together (in equal weight) each of the five grades listed below:

A. **Three (3) Tests:** (one test will be administered at the close of each third of the semester)

B. **One (1) Paper:** (due the last regular week of the semester, between 15 and 20 pages [doublespaced] in length, on a topic approved and guided by the professor in consultation with the student)

C. **One (1) Class Participation Grade** (submitted by the student according to the rubric to be supplied by the professor, measuring attendance, class participation, and notebook compilation)

V. The Calendar of Readings

Week A Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

- Evans, pp. 20-47
- Anchor Bible V:537-540

- I Enoch
- Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (sons 1-4)
- Jubilees

Week B Old Testament Apocrypha

- Evans, pp. 9-19
- Anchor Bible I:292-294

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- IV Maccabees
- Wisdom of Solomon

- Week C The Septuagint**
- Evans, pp. 70-79
 - Anchor Bible V:1093-1104
 -
 - Genesis 1-4
 - Exodus 19 and 24
 - Isaiah 7 and 61
 - Psalms 2, 8, 40, 110
- Week D The Dead Sea Scrolls**
- Evans, pp. 48-69
 - Anchor Bible II:85-101
 -
 - The Community Rule
 - The War Scroll
 - Commentary on Habakkuk
- Week E Josephus**
- Evans, pp. 86-96
 - Anchor Bible III:981-998
 -
 - The Antiquities of the Jews (Books 1, 2, 3)
 - The Wars of the Jews (Books 5, 6)
- Week F Philo**
- Evans, pp. 80-86
 - Anchor Bible V:333-342
 -
 - Questions and Answers on Genesis (Part I)
 - On the Decalogue
 - The Special Laws (Part IV)
 - On the Confusion of Tongues
 - On Drunkenness
 - Allegorical Interpretation (Part I)
- Week G The Targums**
- Evans, pp. 97-113
 - Anchor Bible VI:320-331
 -
 - The Targum Onqelos [selections from]
 - The Targum on Isaiah [selections from]
- Week H Rabbinic Literature [Mishnah, Talmuds, Tosephta, Midrashim]**
- Evans, pp. 114-148
 - Anchor Bible III:154-155; IV: 871-873; V:602-604; VI:310-315
 -
 - [passages for reading yet to be determined]
- Week I NT Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha**
- Evans, pp. 149-154
 - Anchor Bible I:294-297
 -
 - Gospel of Peter
 - Acts of Paul

- Protoevangelium of James
- Gospel of the Hebrews

- Week J Gnostic Writings (Nag Hammadi) and Corpus Hermetica**
- Evans, pp. 162-168
 - Anchor Bible III:156-157; IV: 982-993; VI: 535-540;
 -
 - The Gospel of Thomas
 - [other passages for reading yet to be determined]
- Week K Selected Papyri**
- Anchor Bible V:143-146
 -
 - Selection of papyri in Barrett, pp. 22-47
(magical, religious, secular)
 - Selections from “New Documents” volumes.
- Week L Selected Greco-Roman Writers**
- Evans, pp. 169-177
 - Anchor Bible V:382-384
 -
 - [passages from Plutarch, Pliny the Younger, Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, Suetonius yet to be determined]

