BS 505 Introduction to Biblical Studies: New Testament

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BS505 Introduction to Biblical Studies: New Testament
2 Credit Hours

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J-Term 2008
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Course Description
A concise introduction to the New Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts. During the course students will be introduced to the concept and significance of the canon of Scripture, to the Jewish and Greco-Roman background of the New Testament, and to particular books of the New Testament. Course participation, reading, and projects will be configured in part so as to reflect the character of the degree specialization represented among the course participants.

Objectives
Having successfully completed this course, the student will be able to:
1. trace the development of canonization, discuss the meaning and significance of the canon and of the canonicity of the New Testament, and articulate the major issues involved in the relationship between the testaments;
2. discuss the historical background of the Bible and critical historical issues surrounding the production of the various New Testament books;
3. demonstrate the ability to make appropriate use of this historical information in the interpretation of the biblical text;
4. identify major issues in interpretation;
5. demonstrate the ability to make use of these interpretive insights in the actual reading and appropriation of New Testament texts; and
6. articulate issues involved in the integration of biblical studies and the avenue(s) of ministry for which the student’s degree plan is preparation.

Course Requirements

Turning in assignments on time is a high priority. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per day (i.e., A paper becomes A–, B paper becomes B–, etc.). Late interpretive assignments will not accepted.

1. **Preparation, Attendance, and Participation**: Attendance is expected and will be recorded. It is the students’ responsibility to make sure that they record their attendance in class. The professor will not record attendance at a later time. Students should come to class prepared by completing reading and assignments prior to the beginning of the class period. Each student will
have the opportunity to participate in group discussions and projects during class time.

2. **Interpretive Assignments**: These assignments will consist of close readings of the biblical text and practice using particular interpretive tools. This course requires the student to complete two interpretive assignments. You may complete as many of the assignments as you would like, and I will count the two highest grades. See the handout, “Interpretive Assignments.” (15% x 2 = 30%)

3. **Mid Term**: The midterm exam will consist of short essay questions addressing course material and the reading. It will be a take-home exam. (25%).

4. **Final Exam**: The final exam will consist of two parts: (1) A short, take-home, essay exam. Answers to the questions should demonstrate familiarity with the course materials (textbooks, lectures, discussion, etc.), facility with the text of the New Testament, and awareness of one’s own interpretive location. In addition, course reading will be counted as part of the grade on the final exam. This consists of two questions: 1) how much of the NT have you read for this class, and 2) how much of the course reading have you completed (exam + reading = 30%). (2) A creative group project undertaken with other students from your MA program and presented during the class period in the finals week. This creative project will demonstrate integration between the NT class and your MA program (15%).

**Grading**
Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (Catalog, p. 24):
- **A=** Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives
- **B=** Good work: substantial achievement of course objectives
- **C=** Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives
- **D=** Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
- **F=** Unacceptable work: failure of course work

A plus (+) or minus (−) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C− = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

**Required Reading**
The New Testament (RSV or NRSV or a similar translation).

**Recommended Reading**
Schedule:

Jan 14  Introduction to the Course and Reading the Canon of Scripture  
Required: deSilva, pp. 29-36  
Recommended: Achtemeir, pp. 1-63

Jan 15  The First Century World  
Required:  deSilva, pp. 37-144  
Recommended: Achtemeier, pp. 64-90  
Group Discussion: Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity

Jan 16  Issues of Interpretation: The Four Gospels  
Mark and the Synoptics  
Required:  deSilva, pp. 145-179, 194-233  
Recommended: Achtemeier, pp. 91-159  
In Class Group Work: Synoptic Exercise  
Due: Interpretive Assignment: Mark 1:1-15

In Class Group Work: Parables  
Due: Interpretive Assignment, Luke 19:1-10

Jan 18  John’s Gospel  
Required: John, deSilva, pp. 391-448, 703-713  
Mid-Term Exam will be passed out at the end of class  
Due: Interpretive Assignment, John 9:1-41 (cf., pp. 395-400)

Jan 22  The Ministry of Paul and the Book of Acts  
Epistles: The Corinthian Correspondence  
Required: Acts, deSilva, pp. 475-492, 555-597 (cf., pp 531-534 on letters)  
Due: Mid-Term

Jan 23  Women in the New Testament – Reading in the Whole Canon  
Integration and the MA programs  
Required: 1 Timothy, deSilva, pp. 733-775  
Due: Interpretive Assignment: 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Jan 24  Revelation  
Required: Revelation, deSilva, pp. 885-931, pp. 463-472  
Due: Interpretive Assignment: Revelation 18:1-24

Jan 25  The New Testament and the MA Programs – Articulating Integration  
Due: Group Integrative Exam
Final Exam