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NT 520 New Testament Introduction

Ruth Anne Reese

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**NT 520 Introduction to the New Testament**

Dr. Ruth Anne Reese
ruthanne_reese@asburyseminary.edu
Office FM 109
Office: (859) 858-2184

Fall 2000
Tues/ Thurs 9:30–10:45
Office Hours: Tu/Th 4pm–5pm
Other hours by appointment

Description: This is an introduction to the New Testament, its content, its context, and its interpretation. In the course of the semester, we will examine the individual books of the New Testament; the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts out of which the New Testament arose; various types of interpretative methods used to study the New Testament; and theological themes in the New Testament. We will work to draw this knowledge together into a means for thinking about the New Testament in our contemporary context.

Objectives: By the end of this course the student should be able to
- give a broad account of the content of the individual New Testament writings and identify resources for further study of these writings;
- articulate the social and historical background out of which the New Testament arose;
- articulate how one’s beliefs about Scripture impinge on how one engages biblical texts in interpretation;
- identify a range of questions (e.g., historical, literary, canonical) that might be addressed to particular New Testament texts and explore those questions in the process of interpreting particular New Testament texts;
- identify significant, critical resources for New Testament study and deploy those sources critically in New Testament study;
- probe the interplay of theology and ethics in the various New Testament writers;
- demonstrate awareness of the significance of the original languages for understanding and interpreting the New Testament; and
- integrate these concerns and methodologies in a sound hermeneutic.

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.). Any late papers must be turned into Tracy Hoffman, the faculty secretary in BC 226. She will note the day and time that they are turned in.
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 who miss more than 6 class sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade. 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. (15%)

2. **Critical Book Reviews:** The student will write two book reviews. For the first review, choose one of the following: Jeffers or Theissen. For the second review, choose one of the following: Green, Camery-Hoggart, or Gonzalez. Reviews should be 500-750 words in length (2-3 pages), typed, and double-spaced. For more information on book review expectations and grading criteria, see the file in the course folder on the T drive. (2 x 10% = 20%)

3. **Interpretive Assignments:** On three of the six interpretive assignment days the student will prepare a close reading of the passage under discussion. This should be between 750-1,000 words (3-4 pages), typed, double spaced. It is due at the beginning of class. Interpretive assignments will not be accepted after class. For more information on interpretive assignments see the file in the course folder on the T drive. (3 x 10% = 30%)

4. **Exegetical Paper or Project:** This will be a 2000-3000 word (8-12 pages) research paper typed, double-spaced, with appropriate notes and bibliography (a minimum of 10 secondary sources), presenting an interpretation of a New Testament passage chosen from among your close readings. This paper should evidence both a close reading of the text and critical engagement with the range of secondary resources appropriate to the study. For more information on expectations and grading criteria for research papers, see the file in the course folder on the T drive. If you would like to do a project that makes use of different media (audio, video, etc.), please make an appointment to discuss your idea with the professor. All projects must have approval from the professor prior to submission. The final paper/project is due on Thursday, December 14th at 11am. (35%)

**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)


Recommended Reading:


Schedule:

**Backgrounds, Foregrounds, and the Text of the New Testament**

**Sept 5**
Introduction
Required: Malina, pp. 1-26
Recommended: Johnson, pp. 1-19

**Sept 7**
The Context of Empires — From the OT to the NT
Required: Malina, pp. 27-116
Recommended: Johnson, pp. 23-41

**Sept 12**
Life in Judea through the lens of Cultural Anthropology
Required: Malina 117-185

Group Project 1: Malina Worksheet

**Sept 14**
The Jewish Context
Required: Begin reading Green
Recommended: Johnson, pp. 43-91

**Sept 19**
Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text
Required: Continue reading Green

**Sept 21**
Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text
Required: Continue reading Green

Group Project 2: Hermeneutics 101

**Sept 26**
Issues of Interpretation: Reading the Text
Required: Finish reading Green

Group Project 3: Hermeneutics 102

**Due:** Book Review 1

**The Gospels and Acts**
Sept 28  Jesus and the Gospels  
Required: Mark; Johnson, ch. 7

Oct 3  Mark’s Gospel  
**Interpretive Assignment 1:** Mark 1:1-15

Oct 5  Matthew’s Gospel  
Required: Matthew; Johnson, ch. 8


Oct 12  Jesus through Luke’s Gospel  
**Group Project 4:** Luke 7:1-8:1

Oct 17  Jesus through John’s Gospel  
Required: John; Johnson, ch. 24

Oct 19  Jesus through John’s Gospel  
**Interpretive Assignment 2:** John 9:1-41

The Growth of the Church

Oct 24  The Ministry of Paul  
Required: 1-2 Thessalonians, Romans, Johnson, chs. 10-11, 14  
**Due:** Book Review 2

Oct 26  The Ministry of Paul  
Required: Philemon; Johnson, ch. 16; Jeffers, ch. 13  
**Interpretive Assignment 3:** Philemon

Oct 31  The Ministry of Paul  
Required: Galatians; Johnson, ch. 14

Nov 2  Paul and the Church at Corinth  
Required: 1-2 Corinthians; Johnson, ch. 12; Jeffers, ch. 5  
**Group Project 5:** 1 Cor. 8

Nov 7  The Corinthian Correspondence  
Required: Jeffers, chs. 11-12  
**Interpretive Assignment 4:** 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Nov 9  Prison Epistles  
Required: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians; Johnson, chs. 15, 17-18

Nov 14  The Pastoral Epistles  
Required: 1-2 Timothy, Titus; Johnson, ch. 19  
**Interpretive Assignment 5:** 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Nov 16  Faith in Practice  
Required: Hebrews, James; Johnson, chs. 20, 23  
**Group Project 6:** Hebrews 9
Nov 20-24 — Reading Week—No Class

Nov 28 General Epistles
   Required: 1-2 Peter, Jude, 1-3 John; Johnson, chs. 21-22, 25

Nov 30 John’s Apocalypse
   Required: Revelation; Johnson, ch. 26

Dec 5 Revelation
Interpretive Assignment 6: Revelation 13

Dec 7 New Testament Narratives and their Implications

Final — Due: Exegetical Paper/Final Project must be in my office by Thursday Dec 14th at 11 am.