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NT 750 Research Methods in New Testament Interpretation

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Recommended Citation
NT750 RESEARCH METHODS
IN NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

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Description
An advanced seminar in which participants explore through readings, practice, and critical
discussion the range of methods employed in New Testament study today. The entire research
process—from “getting into the conversation” and specifying a “thesis” to the presentation of
one’s research—will be discussed, modeled, and practiced. Prerequisites: NT501/502 or
equivalent and at least one exegetical course.

Illustrative materials for the Seminar will relate to the representation of the death of Jesus in the

Objectives
Having successfully completed this course, participants should be able:
   To describe the major approaches to New Testament study today—including behind-
the-text, in-the-text, and in-front-of-the-text methods;
   To apply the range of critical methods employed in New Testament study today;
   To determine what methods are appropriate to particular problems or questions in
New Testament interpretation;
   To articulate the central concerns, strengths, and weaknesses of the various
methodological approaches comprising New Testament interpretation;
   To construct, follow, and revise a research agenda around a New Testament text or
area of concern to New Testament study;
   To engage in thoughtful and generous criticism of the research agenda and products
of others.
Course Reading—Required


Course Reading—Recommended


Course Requirements

Written materials must be submitted on time.
Late work will receive no written comments and the grade will be penalized.

(1) **Class Preparation, Attendance, and Participation.** See the schedule of reading for each class session. Note that assigned reading should be completed by the day listed. (15%)

As a Seminar, NT750 requires regular attendance.
Students missing more than two sessions for any reason will not be eligible for a passing grade.

(2) **Weekly Assignments on Method.** See the schedule of exercises. Weekly exercises provide opportunities for practicing the methods/approaches presented throughout the Seminar. They are generally to be regarded as programmatic in character, not exhaustive, and are to be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of the class session when each is due. They should be no longer than 700 words, typed, single-spaced. (30%)

(3) **Major Research Paper.** The primary assignment for the Seminar is the preparation and presentation of a major exegesis paper: 5000 words (including notes and bibliography), typed, double-spaced. Participants in the Seminar may choose the text they wish to exegete, though each text should relate generally to the focus of the course on the representation of the death of Jesus in the New Testament. Progress on essays will follow the schedule below:
Deadlines:  
1. “Close Reading” - 8 March  
2. “Bibliography” (in appropriate research languages) - 22 March  
4. “Presentation” - 26 April - 17 May  
   Note, however, that copies of the completed rough drafts of papers are to be made available to members of the Seminar no less than one week prior to their presentation.  
5. “Final Paper” - 19 May  

(45%)  

(4) Critical Response. Each participant will be required to prepare a written response (ca. 700 words, typed, double-spaced) on an essay to be prepared by another member of the Seminar. Responses are to be presented in written form to the author of the paper and to the instructor, and in oral form to the Seminar, at the class session for which the paper is due to be discussed. (10%).  

Course Schedule  

To Read: Booth et al., §§1-2.  
Recommended Reading: Christopher A. Hall, Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1998).  

16 Feb 2. Using the Library. Establishing the Text.  
To Read: Booth et al., §§1-2; Green, ch. 7.  

23 Feb 3. “A Close Reading of the Text.” Behind the Text - I.  
To Read: Green, chs. 1, 10, 12.  
Due: Text-critical Assignment on Luke 23:34.  

1 Mar 4. Behind the Text - II.
To Read: Green, chs. 3-6.
Due: Historical-Critical Assignment on 1 Cor 15:3-(9).

8 Mar
To Read: Booth et al., §3.
Due: Tradition-Critical Assignment on 1 Tim 6:13.
Due: “Close Reading”
Recommended Reading: Nancey C. Murphy, Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity, 1994).

15 Mar
6. From Composition to New Criticism.
To Read: Booth et al., §4; Green, chs. 2, 14.
Due: Critical Engagement Assignment.

22 Mar
To Read: Green, chs. 4, 12; Greenblatt (photocopy).
Due: “Bibliography”
Due: Text-Oriented Assignment on Mark 15:33-39.

29 Mar
To Read: Green, chs. 13-17; José Miguez Bonino, Patrice M. Siyemeto, and Helen R. Graham on Acts 2:1-42.
Due: “Thesis”
Due: Social-Scientific Analysis of 1 Pet 2:21-25.
Recommended Reading: John R. Levison and Priscilla Pope-Levison, eds., Return to Babel: Global Perspectives on the Bible (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1999); Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., Reading from This Place, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

5 Apr
No Class

12 Apr
To Read: Green, chs. 8-9.
Due: Reader Response or Ideological Assignment on Rev 5:1-10.

To Read: Green, ch. 11; Booth et al., pp. 255-58.

26 Apr 11. Presentation and Discussion of Research.
Due: Analysis of the Use of the OT in the NT in Gal 3:10-14.

3 May  12. Presentation and Discussion of Research.
10 May  13. Presentation and Discussion of Research.
17 May  14. Presentation and Discussion of Research.
19 May  Due: Research Papers.

For Bibliography on the Death of Jesus in the New Testament:

