NT 520 New Testament Introduction.

Joseph S. Wang
Course Objectives:
1. To acquire a knowledge of the historical development of critical studies of the New Testament since the Enlightenment to the present and its significance for pastoral leadership.

2. To appropriate a basic knowledge of the various genres of the literature of the New Testament, questions of Canon and Text of the New Testament, Synoptic problem, historical and critical introduction to the books of the New Testament. This will help students better understand the biblical and Wesleyan conception of the Gospel. Since the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, is the foundation of all theological enterprises, this lays a good foundation for all theological pursuits.

3. To become acquainted with history of New Testament times, and how the cultural contextualization of the New Testament relates to the global, multi-ethnic, cross-cultural nature of the church and its ministry.

4. To understand the various criticisms used in New Testament studies and to evaluate them. This ability to evaluate theories is very important in studying other courses in theological curriculum and humanities in general.

Having successfully completed this course, students should be able:
- to articulate how one's beliefs about Scripture impinge on how one engages biblical texts in interpretation;
- to 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;
- to identify significant, critical resources for New Testament study and deploy those sources critically in New Testament study;
- to probe the interplay of theology and ethics in the various New Testament writers;
- to demonstrate awareness of the significance of the original languages for understanding and interpreting the New Testament; and
- to integrate these concerns and methodologies in a sound hermeneutical method.

Text Books:
Green, Joel B. ed., *Hearing the New Testament, Strategies for Interpretation*

Helpful References:
The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, ed. by J. B. Green et. al.
Articles: Form criticism; Gospels (genre); Gospels (historical reliability); Historical Jesus, Quest; Jesus in non-Christian sources; Literary criticism; Myth; Narrative exegesis; Redaction criticism; Rhetorical criticism; Sociological approaches to the Gospels; Synoptic problem; Synoptics and John; Textual criticism.
The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. by G. F. Hawthorne et. al.
Articles: Apocalypticism; Authority; Chronology of Paul; Hermeneutics; Letter Forms; Old Testament in Paul; Paul and his Interpreters; Paul in Acts and Letters; Paul in early Church tradition; Rhetorical criticism; Social scientific approaches to Paul; Textual criticism.

Reading Schedule:
5th to end of the semester: Read *New Testament Introduction*; *The Writings of the New Testament*; the recommended articles in *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* and *The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Follow the pace of the class.

Class participation:
It is expected that the student will consistently attend and be adequately prepared to participate in class sessions by reading the pertinent sections of the text books. In order to maintain integrity with those who are faithful to the learning covenant, unexcused absences of 10-20 % class sessions will result in 1 grade-level reduction of the final course grade (A/A-). Unexcused absence of 20-30% class sessions will result in 2 grade-level reduction of the final course grade, etc.

Paper:
A brief interpretive/exegetical paper on Mark 4 (Jesus’ use of parables) will be required. The detailed instruction on this assignment will be given in the class.

A concise paper not to exceed 5 pages (*typed, double spaced*) will be required. The paper should be developed within the following parameters:
1. Select a clearly defined topic or area of critical New Testament studies.
2. Research the topic or area, reading at least 200 pages.
3. The paper should:
   a. Define the topic or area (about half a page).
   b. Identify the position of the sources (about half a page).
c. Critique the position of the sources, by indicating their presuppositions, strengths/weaknesses (about a page and a half).
d. Present and defend your position (about a page).
e. Indicate the impact of the issue and your study on your own spiritual life and your ministry (about half a page).
f. Provide proper foot notes or end notes.

4. Due Date: Tuesday, April 17, 2001

Grade Contract:
If a student fulfill all the requirements mentioned above, the highest course grade he/she can achieve will be B+. Students are encouraged to submit additional works to improve their course grade. Some possibilities are (but not limited to) research papers, additional readings (with appropriate note taking, report and evaluation), lesson plans (with objectives, outlines, exact sources including specific page numbers so that an intelligent lay person can use your material, without further research, to teach) charts, etc. This is an opportunity for the student to design his/her own learning experience, which will be most helpful to his/her life and ministry.

Additional project Due Date: Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Course Outlines:
I. Historical Development of Critical New Testament Studies
   David F. Strauss
   Ferdinand C. Baur
   William Wrede
   History of Religions School
   Mystery Religions
   Gnosticism
   Wilhelm Bousset
   Rudolf Bultmann—Demythologizing
   New Quest of Historical Jesus
   New Hermeneutic

II. Canon and Text of the New Testament

III. Gospels
    Nature of Gospel
    Synoptic Problem
    Form Criticism
    Redaction Criticism
    Tradition Criticism
    Literary Criticism
    Synoptic and Johannine Gospels
    Critical Introduction to the Individual Gospel

IV. Acts

V. Epistles
    Nature, Functions of Epistles
Critical Introduction to the Individual Epistles

VI. Apocalyptic Literature
   Nature of Apocalyptic Literature
   Critical Introduction to the Book of Revelation
   Interpretations of the Book of Revelation

VII. New Testament History
    Life of Jesus
    History of the Early Church