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NT 520 Introduction to the New Testament

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“Reaching Forward to What Lies Ahead”

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 and understand how a Wesleyan perspective on Scripture influences interpretation of biblical texts;
• 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.

“Study to Show Yourself Approved”

Course Requirements:


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 3 class sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade. Students who have a perfect attendance record will receive one extra point towards their final 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.

2. **Critical Book Reviews:** The student will write two book reviews. Reviews should be 1,000-1,250 words in length (4-5 pages), typed, and double-spaced. For more information on book review expectations and grading criteria, see the file in the course icon. Book Review 1 will be on one of the following books: DeSilva, Longenecker, Theissen, or Veyne. Book Review 2 will be on one of the following books: Achtemeier, Blount, Ekblad, Gonzalez, or Wright (2 x 15% = 30%).

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 the beginning of class. For more information on interpretive assignments see the file in the course icon (3 x 10% = 30%).

4. **Final Exam or Project:** There will be a final essay exam covering the contents of the semester. Students may opt for a project in place of the exam. All projects must be discussed with and approved by the professor (40%).

**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+ = 98-100  A = 95  A- = 92
B+ = 88  B = 85  B- = 82
C+ = 78  C = 75  C- = 72
D+ = 68  D = 65  D- = 62
F = TBD

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

“The Time Has Come” (Course Schedule)

Prior to class you are expected to have read all the assigned chapters in Johnson (these are chapters 7-12, 14, 17-26), deSilva’s *Honor, Kinship, Patronage, and Purity*, and the assigned pages in Green’s *Hearing the New Testament* (these are pp. 1-60; 90-126; 175-255; 278-427). In addition, the first book review will be due on June 16 (you may review either deSilva, Longenecker, Theissen, or Veyne). Instructions on Book Reviews and Interpretive Assignments will be available in the virtual classroom at the beginning of the summer term.

“Remember the Former Days”

June 16 Introduction: The New Testament and a short history of the known universe; The NT, the Greco-Roman Context, and Palestine.
Due: Book Review #1

“Through a Glass Darkly”

June 17 The NT and Interpretation

“That You Might Believe”

June 18 Matthew’s Gospel

June 19 Mark’s Gospel
Due: Interpretive Assignment #1: Mark 1:1-15

June 20 Luke’s Gospel
Due: Interpretive Assignment #2: Luke 19:1-10

June 23 John’s Gospel
Due: Interpretive Assignment #3: John 9
Due: Book Review #2
“Apostle to the Gentiles”

June 24  Acts, and the Early Church; Paul’s World and Ministry
Due: Interpretive Assignment #4: Philemon

June 25  The Corinthian Correspondence
Due: Interpretive Assignment #5: 1 Cor. 11:17-34

“Recall the Words Spoken Through Your Apostles”

June 26  Reading Canonically: Women in the New Testament

June 27  Revelation
Due: Interpretive Assignment #6: Revelation 13

Take Home Final: Due date TBD