Course Description:
This is an introductory course to the writings of the New Testament. It includes the study of the historical background, social conventions, and the content of each one of the 27 canonical books in their different literary forms. The course will provide the student with a general panorama of the main theological themes by evaluating: a) the intra-textual evidence (The New Testament as the primary source of authority for Christianity); b) the extra-textual evidence (the religious, economic, political, and social milieu in which the New Testament was shaped); and c) the historical development of the New Testament study.

This course fulfills the Master of Divinity requirements and is a pre-requisite for the rest of the New Testament courses in depth. In this way this course fulfills the following articles of the seminary’s mission, vision, and purpose statements in articles #1, #2, and #3.

Course Objectives:
After completing this course the student should be able to:

a) Cognitive Aspects:
- Understand and trace the doctrinal development of the NT (progressive revelation)
- Identify the literary form of the different NT writings and locate them within their proper economic, social, political, and cultural contexts.
- Recognize and associate theological ideas with the NT authors.
b) **Affective Aspects:**

- To awake motivation and passion for reading the NT continually.
- To use the imagination to penetrate the world of the NT by respecting its context and ours today, avoiding so anachronisms in interpretation.
- Enjoy personal reading of the NT and do systematic investigations.

c) **Psychomotor Aspects:**

- To make theological and thematic connections between the different NT writings.
- Be able to visualize the contents of each NT writing in correlation with the rest of the New Testament.
- Apply the practical contents of the NT to Christian education and ministry.

**Required Texts:**


Also a non-paraphrased translation of the Bible is required. Acceptable translations include NIV, TNIV, NASB, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, HCS, and ESV. Translations not allowed are the Living Bible, the Amplified Bible, Good News for Modern Man, the Message, and other paraphrases. I particularly prefer the NIV and I will be lecturing from the NIV.

**Additional Recommended Readings:**


**Note:** At the end of each one of the textbooks, the student will find an extensive bibliography. Refer to it for research and writing purposes.

**Expectations**

It is expected that the student will:

- Attend all class meetings; this is a requirement. In addition, some of the material covered in class is not in the textbook. Attendance, therefore, is imperative.
- Do all the readings, homework and exercises assigned. Please bring to class your Bible and all assignments due for that session.
- Show respect when others have a different point of view. In this case the professor will decide when to bring the matter to a conclusion.

**Teaching Techniques**

The learning process will come to the student as follows:

1) Reading of the assigned (not optional) textbooks in their entirety
2) Lectures by the professor with PowerPoint presentations and handouts
3) Personal research and writing of assigned projects
4) Dynamic and active participation in class
Requirements:

1. **Critical Book Review** 20%

   The student will select either *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* or *Letter Writing in Antiquity* to perform this assignment. This is a five pages book review, double-spaced with 1” margins, in which the student will do each one of the following:

   - Page one: the student should 1) identify the author’s pedigree (credentials), 2) should define the audience to whom the book is intended, and 3) the purpose(s) of the writer.

   - Page two, three, and four: the student should enlist and explain five strengths and five weaknesses found in the book. Remember that there is no perfect book. Mao Tse Tung once said that “every argument bears in itself its own contradiction.”

   - Page five: the student must appropriate the book by pointing out his/her learning. Here I need to hear your critical voice in approaching the book. Please state clearly whether or not you disagree or agree with the author and why. **The due date is February 21, 2015 and be emailed to the instructor.**

2. **A Précis of each document of the New Testament** 20%. A précis is a digest of the most significant points of the reading and how they relate to the previous week’s discussion. It neither slavishly replicates the order of the ideas in the reading nor ignores the development of the topic considered. It is to highlight the significant ideas and provide a commentary on how they relate to one another, plus invoke pertinent aspects of the discussion of the past week. One page. Only one.

   The student must write a *precise* about each document in the following way:

   a) It should be 1 page long. Half of the page will be the *precise* and b) the other half of the page will answer the question: what is gained in your understanding of the New Testament?

   b) Since there are 27 documents in the New Testament, there will be 27 précises. **The due date is February 21 and be emailed to the instructor.**

3. **Reading Log.** 20% (see a sample at the end of this syllabus)

   a) The reading of the New Testament 10%

   b) The assigned readings according to the outline 10%

4. **Final comprehensive exam** 40%

   A final comprehensive exam will be taken the last day of classes.
Grading System

The grades for all work have the following numerical guidelines:

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Note: All incompletes (I) and Withdrawals (W) must meet the deadlines and guidelines of the Registrar’s office.

Plagiarism

The Seminary considers all breaches of personal and academic integrity to be serious offenses. As such, the seminary has a zero tolerance for such behaviors. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination. Duplication of course requirements involves the submission of the same (or substantially the same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. The plagiarism policy applies to course, including the online interactivity requirements such as discussion forums or email-based conversations. Any outside information must be quoted and referenced when used in interactive assignments, just as it would be in longer assignments.

Use of technology during class meeting is not allowed.

The student must refrain from using cell phones, or to navigate on the www. Attention and participation in the class is expected.
CLASS OUTLINE:

SESSION 1, January 3

General Introduction

- Political and religious changes that preceded the New Testament
- The nature of the New Testament: witnesses, canonization, and structure
- Relationship between the Older Testament and the New Testament

Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels and John

- The genre of the gospels: Biography or History?
- The synoptic problem
- Mark, the Gospel of the Servant
- Mathew, the Gospel of the Messiah
- John, the Gospel of the Son of God: social conventions in John

Readings:

From the Scriptures: Mark, Mathew, and John

From the textbooks:

Harris, Ch #1 An Overview of the New Testament
    Ch #2 How the New Testament Was Handed Down
    Ch #3 The World into Which Jesus Was Born
    Ch #4 The World of Hellenistic Thought and Culture
    Ch #5 The World of the First-Century Judaism

Carson and Moo, Ch. #1-6 Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts (pp 20-266)
SESSION 2, January 10

Introduction to Paul:

- His thought and sources
- The Gospel of Grace:
  - Romans, The letter of justification
  - Galatians, the letter of the Christian freedom

Introduction to the Letters from Prison:

- Ephesians, the letter of the Church
- Colossians, the letter of the Head of the Church
- Philippians, the letter of joy
- Philemon, the letter of reconciliation

Required Readings:

From the Scriptures: Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.

From the Textbooks:

Harris, Ch. 13 Paul: Apostle to the Nations
  Ch. 15: Freedom from Law and Justification by Faith: (Galatians & Romans)
  Ch. 16: Letters from Prison

Carson & Moo, Ch. 9-17 Romans through Philemon (pp 290-520)
SESSION 3, January 17

More Missionary Correspondence:
- 1 Corinthians, the letter of order for the NT Church in
- 2 Corinthians, the letter of apostolic qualifications
- 1 Thessalonians, the letter of Jesus’ second coming to comfort
- 2 Thessalonians, the letter of Jesus’ second coming to judge

The Pastoral Letters:
- 1 & 2 Timothy, the letters of the minister, qualities and doctrine
- Titus, the letter of the ministry, dedication to God

Required Readings:

Scriptures: 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus

Textbooks:
Harris, Ch. 14: *Unity, Freedom, and Christ’s Return (Thessalonica and Corinth)*
Ch. 17 *Continuing the Pauline Tradition*

Carson and Moo, Ch. 16 *The Pastoral Epistles*

SESSION 4, January 31

The General Epistles:
- Hebrews, the letter of Christ’s Priesthood
- James, the letter of faith and works
- 1 Peter, the letter of suffering and glory
- 2 Peter, the letter of knowledge
- Jude, the letter against apostasy
- 1, 2, & 3 John, the letters of love and truth
- Revelation, the letter of the transition from temporality into eternity.

Conclusions, wrap up, and final exam.

Required Readings:

Scriptures: Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude, 1 & 2 & 3 John, and Revelation.

Textbooks:
Carson and Moo, Ch. 18-25 *Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude, 1, 2, & 3 John, Revelation* (pp. 521-646)
Harris, Read entirely Part V: *General Epistles and a Vision of End Time* (pp 259-293)
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