I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this New Testament Survey course is to begin learning how to read the New Testament with careful attention to its literary, historical, and theological contours. As a result, we will (1) focus on gaining a firm grasp on the **content** of the New Testament, (2) grow in our understanding of the historical **context** in which Jesus and the early Church ministered, and (3) become familiar with some of the major interpretive issues in studying the New Testament.

We should note from the beginning that the rapid nature of this course does not reflect the best hermeneutical practices for cultivating a Scriptural imagination. The study of the New Testament, that is, is a life-long process of careful, reflective engagement with the Scriptural texts, the goal of which is to transform us and our communities into the image of God’s Son for the sake of the world. This course, therefore, should be viewed as a small – but nonetheless important – preparatory step in our service for the kingdom of God.

GCTS Website description: This introduction to the field of New Testament studies highlights central New Testament themes, issues, events, and persons.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. To improve our ability to navigate the contents and interpretation of the New Testament as Christian teachers through the careful and rigorous study of those texts.

1. Know the contents of the NT (main figures, events, themes, etc.)
2. Trace the inextricable connection between the Old and New Testaments (both in their parts and as a unified story of God’s work of redemption)
3. Gain a preliminary grasp of important hermeneutical issues (e.g., interpreting according to genre, recognizing structural features of texts, accounting for authorship and audience, understanding our presuppositions and cultural embeddedness, etc.)
4. Acquire an introductory knowledge of the historical context of the New Testament (the first-century Graeco-Roman world and ancient Jewish life)
5. Understand some of the major interpretive issues in the study of the New Testament (e.g., the “historical Jesus” controversies, various approaches to Paul, how to read The Revelation of John, etc.)

B. To grow in our knowledge of and love for the Triune God as revealed in this portion of the Christian Scriptures.
   1. Knowledge of the New Testament de-coupled from a deepening love for the Triune God is not, according to the Christian Scriptures, true knowledge.

   “Reading Scripture is best understood as an aspect of mortification and vivification: to read Scripture is to be slain and made alive . . . . Reading Scripture is an episode in the history of sin and its overcoming; and overcoming sin is the sole work of Christ and the Spirit.” John Webster, Holy Scripture, 88.

C. To become more faithful disciples and servants of Jesus Christ in whatever capacity to which God calls us in the service of his kingdom.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

An English Bible – NIV (2011), NRSV, or ESV (no “paraphrased” translations); ESV Study Bible is an excellent choice

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth (3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003). Abbreviated HTRB in the reading schedule below


Numerous postings on Sakai under the “Resources” tab (see the reading schedule below)

IV. COURSE FORMAT

Since this course meets only three times during the semester, it will consist of weekly work that you must complete and submit online in between our actual class time together (see the schedule below). Our weekends together will consist of lecture and discussion.
V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Attendance:

- Simply put, do not miss class and do not be late. Absences are excused only for extremely extenuating circumstances that are communicated to me promptly. Since this is a weekend course that only meets three times during the semester, absence from one of those weekends will result in failure of the course.

B. Reading, Notes, and Weekly Quizzes:

- Follow the reading schedule below meticulously carefully.

- Reading the New Testament: each book must be read $2x$ each week (see more below).

- There will be a short (approx. 10 mins.) content quiz each week (posted on Sakai). Those quizzes will cover the material in the NT book(s) read for that week. Part of that quiz will ask whether or not you read the assigned NT book(s) twice that week.

  o **The content quizzes are due by Saturday night at 11:55pm under the “Assignments” tab in Sakai.$^1$**
  
  o I will not quiz you on the secondary literature (HTRB, NTA, Sakai postings), but at the end of the semester you will be required to acknowledge whether you did all of the readings for the course (this will factor into your final grade).

- In addition to reading, **you are to make brief notes on the contents of each biblical chapter as you read, which will be posted to Sakai each week.**

  o **Those notes are to be posted to Sakai by 5pm on Saturdays under the “Assignments” tab**

  o Further Instructions:

    ▪ These notes are for the purposes of (1) helping you solidify what you have just read, (2) serving as a quick reference for you later, and (3) aiding you in preparing for the weekly quiz.

    ▪ These do not have to be exhaustive notes; rather, they are more like a detailed outline, i.e., 3-5 short sentences per chapter that help you organize/memorize the contents of a book. Good examples are the detailed outlines contained in the ESV Study Bible. Do not, however, just copy those outlines/summaries (or any other outlines/summaries). Create your own from your reading (I have posted on Sakai an example from the ESV Study Bible).

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$^1$ *No helps of any kind are allowed during your at-home quizzes. Christian integrity is expected of all students. Giving you at-home quizzes is not only about using our class time as efficiently as possible, but also about the formation of your Christian character. Taking at-home quizzes with Christian integrity will further shape you into the image of Jesus Christ, who refused to manipulate his circumstances to his own benefit (cf. Matt 4:1-11). Cheating on at-home quizzes will deform the image of Jesus in you.*
- When reading the secondary literature (HTRB, NTA, Sakai postings) I encourage you to take notes as well, but I will not require you to submit those notes.

- You are always to do all of the reading assigned, but never sacrifice your reading of the biblical texts for secondary literature.

C. Map Quizzes:

- There will be two map quizzes (see course schedule below), one on Palestine around the time of the NT, and one on the larger Mediterranean world around the time of the NT. (maps posted on Sakai)

D. Final Exam:

- The Final Exam will cover the content of the New Testament, course lectures, and material from the other assigned readings. I will provide further details later in the semester.

E. Final Integrative Essay:

- Students will be required to submit a final essay that integrates the way the New Testament articulates its relationship to the Old Testament. The essay should be about 3000 words (+/- 10%; do not exceed this limit). No additional references beyond the NT itself, the course lectures, and the assigned readings are necessary. (If you would like to use additional sources, you may. However, I want this to be a constructive theological-exegetical project of your own. That is, I don’t want to hear what x or y scholar says in a manner that dominates your own voice).

- As you write this essay, you will need to be discerning. You will not be able to cover every OT text in the NT (of course). Rather, you are attempting to articulate broadly the way the NT relates to the OT. Further Guidelines:
  
  o However you do your paper, keep in mind the basic interpretive issues we have discussed (literary, historical, and theological features). Do your best to integrate these into your discussion.

  o Do not offer your “personal reflections” on this topic; this is not a devotional paper. It is your attempt to reason “inside” of Scripture’s logic and articulate clearly an important topic for Christian life and thought as it comes to expression in the New Testament. (Of course, as with any mode of inquiry, you are personally involved with the topic. Nonetheless, the mode of discourse involved in this paper is primarily theological-exegetical, not devotional).

  o Organize your paper clearly and coherently. Articulate clearly a one sentence thesis statement in your introduction and form your argument around that statement (see example outlines below).
- Follow standard formatting procedures.

- Here are two examples of how you could structure your essay. Note, you do not have to do your essay this way. These are only examples. However, if you feel so compelled, feel free to use one of the outlines below.

- **Example 1**: Organized around theological topics
  - **Introduction**: about 100 words with a clear, one sentence thesis statement
  - **Body of the Essay**
    - **Section 1**: Jesus and the OT (Christology) *(label your sections clearly with a heading at the beginning of each one; this will aid in the organization of your paper)*
      - Choose two representative NT passages that connect Jesus with the OT and discuss
    - **Section 2**: The Church and the OT (ecclesiology)
      - Choose two representative NT passages that connect the Church with the OT and discuss
    - **Section 3**: Humanity and the OT (anthropology)
      - Choose two representative NT passages that connect humanity/the human situation with the OT and discuss
  - **Synthesis & Conclusion**: About 200 words clearly synthesizing and summarizing the important points of your discussion.

- **Example 2**: Organized around groups of NT books
  - **Introduction**: about 100 words with a clear, one sentence thesis statement
  - **Body of the Essay**
    - **Section 1**: The Gospels and the OT: choose two representative passages from the Gospels and discuss
    - **Section 2**: Paul and the OT: choose two representative passages from the Pauline corpus and discuss
    - **Section 3**: The Catholic Epistles/Revelation and the OT: choose two representative passages from the Catholic Epistles and/or Revelation and discuss
  - **Synthesis & Conclusion**: About 200 words clearly synthesizing and summarizing the important points of your discussion.

- **Criteria for Evaluation**:
  - Clarity of statement of thesis.
  - Clarity and organization of the argument.
  - Attention to specific details in the Scriptural passages.
  - Discerning engagement with lectures and course readings.
  - Clarity and correctness of prose style.
  - Beauty: yes, beauty.

**V. OTHER IMPORTANT TOPICS**
A. Computers: You are welcome to bring computers to class in order to take notes. However, you are absolutely not allowed to do email, surf the net, etc. during class time. Disregarding this requirement will result in, first, a warning, and, second, a 10 point deduction from your final grade.

B. Late Assignments:

- Notes on the reading: late notes will not be accepted.
- Weekly quizzes: make-up quizzes will only be allowed in extenuating circumstances.
- Final Integrative Essay: late papers will be penalized one full letter-grade per day.

C. Further Reading: At the end of the syllabus I have listed a few books that will make you better readers of the New Testament, though they are not necessarily theological/biblical studies books.

D. Office Hours: I will be happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns or simply to get to know you. I am here to see you succeed in this course (which means much more than getting an A). With the weekend format we have to be more creative about meeting times/manner of meeting. I am always available on email. If you would like to meet in person and we cannot find a time to meet during our weekend time together, I am happy to try to meet via video conference (skype, google video chat, etc.). Feel free to email me with any questions, concerns, comments, etc. I will do my best to respond to email within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me in 24 hours, feel free to email me again. Also, I am available by phone: 919.442.8088.

VI. SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Important Notes about Reading Assignments:

1. repetitio est mater studiorum – “repetition is the mother of learning”; you will see below that for your NT readings, you are to read each text two times before you come to class. Further, when you sit down to read the NT, it is imperative that you devote a sufficient block of time to read the text in its entirety in one sitting. On your weekly quizzes, you will be asked to sign your name affirming that you have indeed read the Scriptural texts at least two times in their entirety in preparation for class (that is, not whether you have ever – in your entire life – read them in their entirety two times).

2. You may find it helpful to read the biblical texts in the following manner: read the text once all the way through in a single sitting; next, read the chapters assigned in NTA; finally, read the biblical texts again.

3. See above for further instructions for your written work in relation to reading the New Testament.

Week 1: Jan 20-25

Reading:
- Fee, *HTRB*, chpts 1 & 2
- Donald Hagner, “The Old Testament as Promise and Preparation,”
- *Optional Reading: Richard Bauckham, “Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story,” pp. 38-53 in *The Art of Reading Scripture*. (on sakai)
- Begin studying the map of ancient Palestine posted on Sakai (quiz on this map will be on Tues., Sept. 16)

No quiz this week

**Week 2: Jan 26-Feb 1**

**To be read before coming for our first weekend meeting, Jan 30-31**

- *NTA*, 107-123 (chpt. 5)
- Fee, *HTRB*, chpt. 7
- The Four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. For next week you do not have to read each of the four Gospels 2x each, and you do not have to turn in notes.
- *Optional Reading: John Webster, “Resurrection and Scripture,” pp.138-155 in *Christology and Scripture*. (on Sakai)

**Quiz on the map of ancient Palestine at the beginning of our weekend time together, Fri., Jan. 30 (no quiz on NT contents)**

**Jan. 30-31: First Weekend Together: Lectures and Discussion**

**Week 3: Feb. 2-8**

Reading:

- Fee, *HTRB*, chpt. 8
- The Gospel According to Matthew (2x)
  - *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- The Gospel According to Mark (2x)
  - *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- *NTA*, 165-194 (chpts. 8-9)
- Yes, you read Matthew and Mark last week (along with Luke and John); now you are to read them again 2x each and take notes. This week you will have a quiz on the contents of Matthew and Mark,

Content Notes: Notes on Matthew and Mark due Sat., Feb. 7 by 5pm on Sakai under the “Assignments” tab)

Quiz 1: Content of Matthew & Mark (Due Sat., Feb. 7 by 11:55pm on Sakai under the “Assignments” Tab)

Week 4: Feb. 9-15

Reading:
  o *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- The Gospel According to John (2x)
  o *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- NTA, 195-228 (chpts 10-11)
- Begin studying the map of the Graeco-Roman world (posted on Sakai): to be quizzed at the end of next week

Upload Content Notes

Quiz 2: Luke & John

Week 5: Feb. 16-22

Reading:
- Jonathan Pennington, “The Joy and Angst of Having Four Gospels,” Pages 50-73 (chpt. 4) in Reading the Gospels Wisely (posted on Sakai)
- The Acts of the Apostles (2x)
  o *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- NTA, 229-248 (chpt. 12) (review NTA, 79-108 [chpt. 4]); *more below
Upload Content Notes

Quiz 3: The Acts of the Apostles

Map Quiz 2: Graeco-Roman World

Week 6: Feb 23-March 1

**To be read before coming for our second weekend meeting, Feb 27-28:

- Fee, HTRB, chpts 3-4
- NTA, 249-266 (chpt. 13)
- The Epistle to the Romans (2x)
  - *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- 1 Corinthians (2x)
  - *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- NTA, 321-336 (chpt. 18), 293-310 (chpt. 16)

Upload Content Notes

Quiz 4: Romans and 1 Corinthians (in class during second weekend)

**Feb. 27-28: Second Weekend Together: Lectures and Discussion

Week 7: March 2-8

Reading:

- 2 Corinthians, Galatians, & Ephesians (2x)
  - *Don’t forget to take notes at the end of each chapter
- NTA, 312-19 (chpt. 17), 267-278 (chpt. 14), 343-348 (part of chpt. 19)
- P. T. O’Brien, “Authorship [of Ephesians],” pp. 4-47 in his The Letter to the Ephesians

Upload Content Notes

Quiz 5: 2 Corinthians, Galatians, & Ephesians

Week 8: March 9-15

Reading:

- Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians (2x)
- NTA, chpt. 20, 337-343 (part of chpt. 19), 279-292 (chpt. 15)
- N. T. Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul” (posted on Sakai)

Upload Content Notes

Quiz 6: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Week 9: March 16-22

Reading:
- The Pastoral Epistles (2x)
- The Epistle to the Hebrews (2x)
- The Epistle of James (2x)
- NTA, chpts. 22-23

Upload Content Notes

Quiz 7: The Pastoral Epistles, The Epistle to Hebrews, The Epistle of James

Week 10: March 23-29

NO NEW READING: CATCH UP/REVIEW

**March 27-28: Third Weekend Together: Lectures and Discussion

Week 11: March 30-Apr. 5

Reading:
- 1 & 2 Peter (2x)
- Johannine Epistles, Jude (2x)
- NTA, chpts. 24-25
- *Optional: TBD

Upload Content Notes

Quiz 8: 1 & 2 Peter; Johannine Epistles; Jude

Week 12: April 6-12

Reading:

- Richard Bauckham, “Reading the Book of Revelation,” chpt. 1 in The Theology of the Book of Revelation (posted on Sakai)
- The Revelation of John (2x)
- NTA, chpts. 26-27

Upload Content Notes

Quiz 9: The Revelation of John

Final Paper and Exam: Due dates TBD

Books to Read (not in any particular order):

St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation
St. Basil the Great, On the Holy Spirit
St. Augustine, Confessions
St. Cyril of Alexandria, On the Unity of Christ
John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (2 vols.)
John Webster, The Domain of the Word
George Eliot (aka Mary Ann Evans), Silas Marner
Wendell Berry, What Are People For?
C. Kavin Rowe, World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age
N. T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God
Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina
Charles Taylor, A Secular Age
Markus Bockmuehl, Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study
Flannery O'Connor, Everything that Rises Must Converge
Richard Bauckham, Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony
Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue
John Steinbeck, East of Eden
Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy
Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially 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. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the end date for the semester as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required in this case. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.
However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized end date for the semester must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the stated date. Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Grades**

Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

**Returned Work**

Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.