Course Description

This course is all about learning to interpret the New Testament. It is an introduction to issues, methods and tools for interpreting the New Testament in preparation for further courses in New Testament studies and for ministry of the Word of God. Familiarity with and facility in methods of interpretation form a major part of this course, and time will be spent in class demonstrating how to use these methods in interpreting the New Testament. The course assignments are designed to train students in some of the more basic and essential methods of New Testament exegesis.

The course also functions to prepare students for Biblically focused research in both primary and secondary literature. Thus students will need to spend considerable time in a theological library for this course. (Electronic and online resources will also be very helpful.) Students will especially explore the following exegetical methods: intertextuality, the historical-cultural context (primary sources), textual criticism, grammatical and lexical research, word studies, discourse analysis, evaluation of commentaries, and other good practices in Biblical research. Through such studies, students learn to write an exegesis paper that prepares them for ministry of the Word of God.

Course Objectives

Students will become comfortable with the issues, methods, and tools needed for New Testament interpretation (particularly exegesis and New Testament theology). They will demonstrate their ability to apply some of these to their study of the New Testament, and these exercises will prepare students for further courses in exegesis as well as for ministries of preaching and teaching.
Students will gain facility in primary source research. They will be introduced to tools and methods for New Testament research. This will enable them to understand the more academic commentaries on the market and prepare them to engage in basic research. The course trains students to this level of academics primarily for the purpose of ministry, whether preparation for preaching, counselling, teaching, or serving on a Church committee exploring a difficult issue facing the Church.

Students will learn what is available online, what computer programmes offer, and what a traditional library still offers to students for Biblical studies.

**Required reading**


Recommended reading


In-class meetings

In-class meetings will be held on July 24-25 and Aug 14-15. Although new material will be presented during these meetings, they will function essentially as workshops for the tools and methods of the course. The first weekend will revolve primarily around the research of Old testament and Jewish backgrounds. The second will focus on the use of Discourse Analysis. Both weekends are intended to provide a strong basis for students’ completion of related assignments that are due in the weeks that follow.

Virtual meetings

A series of virtual meetings will be held to introduce new material and address questions and concerns of students. The meetings will be recorded and made available to students who are
unable to attend or who wish to review material covered. I will communicate with the class concerning the format of these meetings when the time comes.

**Topics covered**

The focus of this course is on the development of skills as interpreters of the New Testament. The bulk of the course is therefore given over to exegetical methodology. In addition to introducing the various aspect of exegetical method, however, I will also cover a variety of background topics with relevance to New Testament study. These topics will include the Synoptic problem, form and redaction criticisms of the Gospels, the life and ministry of Paul, and Apocalyptic literature (i.e. Revelation).

**Course schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week and topics</th>
<th>Virtual meetings</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>June 1-12</strong></td>
<td>Intro to NA28 &amp; Text criticism</td>
<td>Study Campbell, chs 1-3</td>
<td>Assignment #1 due</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Syntax analysis and word studies part I</td>
<td>Read Wegner chs 1-2, 8</td>
<td>Sat, June 13 (Text criticism)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cultural bkgds &amp; 1\textsuperscript{st} sources part I</td>
<td>Read Ferguson, pp 1-47, 396-431</td>
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<td>10 a.m. Wed., June 3</td>
<td>Begin readings for Assignment #2</td>
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<td>10 a.m. Wed., June 10</td>
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<td><strong>June 15-27</strong></td>
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<td>Read Campbell, chs 4-7</td>
<td>Assignment #2 due</td>
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<td>Read Ferguson, pp 431-583</td>
<td>Sat, June 27 (Subject index)</td>
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<td><strong>June 29-July 11</strong></td>
<td>10 a.m. Tues., June 30</td>
<td>Read Campbell, chs 8-11</td>
<td>Test on Verbal Aspect and Jewish</td>
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<tr>
<td>OT in NT part I</td>
<td>10 a.m. Tues., July 7</td>
<td>Backgrounds, Fri, July 10</td>
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<td><strong>July 13-Aug 1</strong></td>
<td>Syntax analysis &amp; word studies</td>
<td>Assignment #3 due Thur, July 24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>OT in NT</td>
<td>(Word study, syntax analysis)</td>
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<td>Researching cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>Assignment #4 due Sat, Aug 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10 a.m. Wed., July 15</td>
<td>(OT &amp; Jewish bkgds)</td>
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<td>Assignment #5 due Sat, Aug 22</td>
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<td>Cultural bkgds &amp; 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; sources part II</td>
<td>(Discourse analysis)</td>
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<td>OT in NT part II</td>
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<td><strong>Aug 3-22</strong></td>
<td>Read Beale, Intro</td>
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<td>Syntax analysis &amp; word studies</td>
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<td>DA in Paul</td>
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<td>10 a.m. Wed., Aug 5</td>
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<td>Translate Eph 1:1-15; 2:1-10</td>
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<td>DA in Paul</td>
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**Test, 25% of final grade: Verbal Aspect and Jewish Backgrounds**

The test will cover the concepts presented in Campbell and will include translation and analysis of select Greek passages. The test will also include essay questions pertaining to Jewish backgrounds to New Testament study treated in Ferguson and in class lectures. I will have more to say about this exam when the course begins.

**Assignment #1, 10% of final grade: Analyzing a textual problem**

Using NA<sup>28</sup> critical editions and relevant sections of Fee and Wegner, write a 2 page paper explaining the textual problem in Mark 1:1 (‘Son of God’).∗ Two pages double-spaced, maximum (except for table).
1. Introduce the textual problem (1 short paragraph).

2. Place the information from the apparati of the NA^{28} into a table. Columns should be: Greek manuscripts, Church fathers, versions, other external evidence. Rows should be: textual variants. Note the abbreviation for the reference and the relevant century (if possible) within the table (e.g., p^{52-2nd c.}; Origen-3rd c.; etc.).

3. Discuss the strengths of the external evidence in three separate sections in terms of (a) manuscripts, (b) geographical spread, and (c) text types (3 short paragraphs).

4. Discuss the internal evidence in two separate sections in terms of (a) author’s characteristics and (b) scribal habits (2 short paragraphs).

5. Explain which reading you believe is original and how other readings arose (1 paragraph).

Assignment #2, 10% of final grade: Compiling a subject index

Using the form provided by the professor, read the following Jewish works and note all passages that seem relevant to the study of the NT: 1 Enoch, 1 Maccabees, Psalms of Solomon, 1QS, & 2 Baruch.

Assignment #3, 20% of final grade: Word study and syntax analysis

Using the resources and methodology described in lectures and in G. Fee, ‘The Analysis of Words,’ perform a syntax analysis and a word study in Mark 5:1-20 (the word study may be on a word of your choice). Use a ‘running commentary’ style as used in the Black’s Commentary series. Limit: 4 pages, double-spaced. (N.B. This should be a very dense piece of work!)

Assignment #4, 25% of final grade: Investigating the Old Testament and Jewish background of a passage

Using the course materials to guide you (lecture and readings), discuss the bearing of the Old Testament and the Jewish backgrounds upon our understanding of John 5:17-30. Limit: 10 pages, double-spaced.

Assignment #5, 10% of final grade: Analyzing the logical flow of a passage in Paul

Using Beale and the methodology described in class, produce a discourse analysis on Ephesians 2:1-22.
Course Assignments, Due Dates, and Marking

Online Materials
Sakai will be used for this course. Be sure that you have access. The resources placed on it will be helpful for doing the assignments.

Style and Format for Assignments
Style: Proper footnoting and referencing according to the SBL Handbook (see a student version of this online at http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SBLHSrevised2_09.pdf.)
PDF Files: In order for the instructor to read the student’s fonts and formatting, all course work should be submitted in a PDF file format.

Turning in Assignments
Always keep a copy of your work when handing it in for marking. Assignments must be e-mailed to me at gerry.wheaton@gmail.com (no hard copies). When turning in an assignment, do not raise questions in the e-mail as the e-mail will simply be filed for later marking. In the ‘Subject’ line for the e-mail, write, ‘NT502’ and then the assignment number, e.g., ‘NT502 Assignment 2.’

Late assignments may be marked down up to one full grade at the discretion of the instructor.
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.

**Virtual Writing Center**

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.