NT 502: Interpreting the New Testament
Fall 2009
Professor: Sean McDonough
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Tu,Th 10:45-12:15

TEXT BOOKS
Required:
- Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*
- Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*
- Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed.
- “The Beale Packet”

Recommended:
- Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text?*
- Richard Bauckham, ed., *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*

GOAL
- To become competent in the skills of exegesis in the Greek New Testament (Mission Statement 1)

ASSESSMENT (DUE DATES SUBJECT TO REVISION)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1 (text criticism)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sept 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2 (word study)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Oct 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3 (semantic s. analysis)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Oct 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 4 (Paul/Epictetus)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Nov 10</td>
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<td>Assignment 5 (literary context)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exegesis Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Dec 22</td>
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CLASS 1
- Foundations of Interpretation
  - Respect…even Love?
  - Humility
  - Diligence
  - Faith

CLASS 2
- Some Models of Interpretation
  - Staring at the Fish
  - The Exegetical Pyramid
  - The Iceberg Principle (How to Sink *Titanic* Errors)
Pack Your Own? Pick Your Own! Of Apples and Exegesis

Reading: Wright, pp.1-144; Fee, pp.34-64
Assignment: begin choosing your text for your exegesis paper (no, it’s not too early!)

CLASSES 3-4
• Introduction to the Twelve Step Method
• Text
  Why textual criticism?
  How it is done
  Variant readings
  Manuscript families
  External criteria
  Internal criteria
  Lectio brevior, lectio difficilior, and other little Latin phrases
  Working with the apparatus of the Greek NT

Assignment: A textual –theological problem: Rev. 4:11 (graded)
Reading: Metzger, all; Fee, pp.81-91
• Translation
  A brief guide to translation theory
  Assessing modern translations
  Making your own translation: benefits and dangers

Assignment: "Believe" or "rely on" in 1 John 4:16

CLASSES 5-7
• Lexical Data
  Overview of (very simple) linguistic theory
  Doing a word study

Assignment: word study (graded)

CLASSES 8-9
• Genre and Form
  What is this?
• Structure
  How is it set up?
  Tricks of the trade
    Parallelism
    Chiasm
    Repetition
  How to follow an argument: the use of semantic structure analysis
**Assignments:** Find that chiasm! Soluble mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls; semantic structure analysis of Romans 3 (graded)

**Text:** Colossians 1:15-20

**Reading:** Fee, pp.65-80

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**CLASSES 10-11**

- **Historical Context**
  - The importance of history
  - History and Faith
  - The Jewish background: sources and problems
  - The Greco-Roman background: sources and problems

**Assignment:** Paul meets Epictetus (graded)

**Reading:** Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*; Wright, pp.146-end (both to be completed by end of term); Fee, pp.114-123

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**CLASSES 12-3**

- **Literary Context**
  - Context is King
  - Making connections

**Assignment:** John 9 meets John 8 and John 10 (graded)

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**CLASS 14**

- **Grammatical Data**
  - Sentence flows and diagrams

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**CLASSES 15-16**

- **Biblical Context**
  - The Old in the New

**Assignment:** Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30 in Romans 10: 6-10

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**CLASSES 17-18**

- **Theology**
  - Keeping the focus

- **Secondary Literature**
Things you should own
The use and abuse of commentaries

- Application
  - Keeping the focus
  - Keeping the edge

**CLASSES 19-20**

- The Synoptic Problem
- The Johannine Problem
- Revelation

**CONCERNING THE ASSIGNMENTS**

NT 502 is the foundation for the remainder of your education in the New Testament at GCTS. As such, it is meant to equip you with the full panoply of skills required for interpreting the NT. There is no disguising the fact that this is an intensive course. It may be one of the most challenging in the curriculum -- but it can also be one of the most valuable. The assignments are an essential part of the NT 502 experience.

The five graded assignments are designed to give you practical training in a variety of exegetical problems. You will be marked on the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of your answers, not necessarily on the aesthetic appeal of your presentation. In other words, I am primarily interested in your ideas. You need not and should not present formal essays, but may rather present notes, summaries, charts, etc. which show that you have earnestly wrestled with the task at hand. Detailed instructions will be given during class. I will be giving additional ungraded assignments throughout the term (e.g. looking at a given passage in preparation for the following class). Some of these are already noted on the syllabus. Diligent work on these assignments will greatly enhance the quality of class discussion. **Please note: If you wish to have your papers returned to you, you must include your name and box number on them. Otherwise the papers will be kept in my office until you collect them.**

The exegesis paper affords you the opportunity to bring these various skills to bear on a single passage of the NT. At times, brief notes or charts may be appropriate (e.g. summarizing material on authorship, diagramming the structure of the passage), but more polished writing will also be necessary, especially in the sections on Theology and Application. For further details, you may consult the sheet on the exegesis paper. But note this well: **You must begin choosing your topic and working on your paper NOW!!** The paper should be done throughout the course of the semester as you learn the exegetical skills one by one.