

## NT113OL NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION SYLLABUS

### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the historical background and canon of the NT, an evaluation of NT criticism, and an examination of special introductory problems of selected NT books. The student will become acquainted with first-century works and issues as well as interact with the contemporary issues that directly relate to the origins of Christianity.

### II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of this course of study, the student should be able to do the following:

- A. Place the NT writings in their historical, sociological, religious, and literary context for interpretive and illustrative purposes.
- B. Understand the major issues affecting the canon of the NT.
- C. State and critique the major critical approaches to the study of the NT.
- D. Summarize the major critical problems confronting selected books of the NT and give constructive solutions to these problems.

### III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

#### A. Required

1. Bock, Darrell. *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.  
  
An introduction to various methods of gospel criticism assessing their strengths and weaknesses.
2. Carson, D. A., and Douglas Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.  
  
A well written work on “special introduction” of the NT books. It is concise and up-to-date. Besides the individual books, it has brief sections on the Synoptic Gospels, Paul, and the NT canon.
3. Longenecker, Bruce W. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum: A Story from the New Testament World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016.  
  
Fictional correspondence vividly reflecting social and religious situation for Christians in the first-century Mediterranean world.
4. Thompson, Michael B. *The New Perspective on Paul*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Cambridge: Grove Books, 2015.<sup>1</sup>  
  
Well-informed, balanced evaluation of the “New Perspective” by an evangelical Anglican.

#### B. Suggested

1. Barnett, Paul. *Jesus & the Rise of Early Christianity: A History of New Testament Times*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at the DTS Book Center or online from Grove Books ([www.grovebooks.co.uk](http://www.grovebooks.co.uk)).

- An excellent survey of history in the time of Jesus and the apostolic age. The work interacts with critical issues in NT studies.
2. Barrett, C. K., ed. *The New Testament Background: Writings from Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire That Illuminate Christian Origins*. Rev. ed. London: SPCK, 1987; San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989.  
A useful selection of extra-biblical background material on history, philosophy, religion, and literature from original sources.
  3. Black, David Alan, and David S. Dockery, eds. *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*. Rev ed. of *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001.  
Contains important essays by evangelical scholars on methods and issues regarding NT interpretation.
  4. Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 6th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.  
One of the most widely used introductions to the NT from a liberal perspective by a scholar who has effectively communicated this approach also in the popular media.
  5. Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.  
A well organized analytical and systematic introduction to the political, social, literary, and religious backgrounds to the NT for the beginning student.
  6. Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1990.  
Very detailed and somewhat dated, this is still the best evangelical introduction available. Guthrie presents various views fairly and gives excellent bibliographies up to 1990.
  7. Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.  
A useful handbook that defines and/or describes technical terms related to biblical criticism. It is an expanded glossary.
  8. Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, rev. Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press editorial staff, 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.  
A style manual for term papers. Please consult also the DTS supplement to Turabian.

### C. Supplementary Bibliography

The bibliographies in Barnett's *Jesus & the Rise of Early Christianity*, Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the NT*, and Guthrie's *NT Introduction* are excellent. Additional bibliography will be given during the course.

### D. Online Courses and Access to Books

A constant challenge of online education is access to important class materials for research, study, and completion of class assignments. I encourage you to learn well the DTS Library website, as many resources can now be accessed online. Many important resources are not available freely online, however, so if necessary you will need to access them by direct access through a local library or purchase. **It is your responsibility to access the appropriate texts for this class, especially for the research paper; lack of online access does not remove that responsibility.**

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

##### A. Reading Assignments

1. The student is required to read the textbooks for the course as listed on the assignment schedule. The goal of the reading is to gain general awareness of issues and solutions, not detailed knowledge.
2. The student will be asked to report the completion of the assigned reading through the online system. No partial credit will be allowed.

##### B. Video Assignments

The student is required to view the video lectures for a given module or portion of a module prior to beginning the Learning Activity and class discussion. Many of the lectures have direct bearing on the written assignments and resulting interaction.

##### C. Learning Activities

The first module requires you to submit an autobiography to your group's forum and to interact with others in your group. This learning activity will not be graded, yet it is required. The next three Learning Activities are geared to help you begin writing your research paper. Detailed instructions for the assignments are provided in each module. These Learning Activities will be graded, and factored into your final class grade.

##### D. Interaction in a Discussion Forum

1. Questions, comments and reasoned dialogue between participants are all essential parts of any learning experience. Since the students in this course only "meet" online, this interaction will take place in discussion forums. Active participation in class discussion is essential. The quality of your participation will reveal as much about your learning as the assignments you submit.
2. Credit for these assignments will be awarded for completion with a reasonable amount of effort. The first module contains detailed guidelines for interaction and discussion. For each module each student should submit at least two interactions along with their original post (a total of at least three posts). The total of your posts should demonstrate at least 2 hours of interaction with the class material (show some technical detail) and should be at least 500 words (do not exceed 800 words). They will also be evaluated by the quality of your interactions.
3. The interactions are due by the end of each module; however, to have a meaningful experience of interaction, you should make your original posts early in the module so that other students will have time to interact with your original post. In this respect be courteous to others in your group by allowing them to complete their assignments in a timely manner. Here, a spirit of teamwork in each group is important.
4. You may experience difficulty in uploading your posts to the online.dts.edu website. Because of this, we recommend that you copy your posts to either a Word document or Notepad document, so you will have a copy in the case of some computer difficulty.

##### E. Research Paper

1. The student is required to write a short research paper on *ONE* of the following topics:
  - a. The rise and nature of the Jewish parties (viz. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Zealots, Essenes). You need to discuss either one party or compare and contrast two of them and show how the background impacts a given NT passage of your choice. **Note: If you choose this topic, you must also choose a particular NT passage for your focus.**
  - b. The origin of the synagogue and the role it played in NT times (e.g., nature of the synagogue services, Jesus' involvement in the synagogue, the apostles' involvement in the synagogue).
  - c. Compare and contrast messianic portraits in the Psalms of Solomon and 1 Enoch. How are these portraits the same and/or different from that in the NT (popular perceptions, disciples' understanding, Jesus' teaching)?

- d. The effect of the Maccabean war on first century Judaism (e.g., the Abomination of Desolation, Jewish view of kingship in Israel, Jewish view(s) of Gentiles).
  - e. A study of purity and defilement of Judaism in connection with Jesus' approach to these issues (e.g., identify the issues from the Jewish perspective, compare and contrast Jesus' view with that of the Pharisees and scribes, how unprecedented was the significance of Jesus' view?). Show how the background impacts a given NT passage of your choice. **Note: If you choose this topic, you must also choose a particular NT passage for your focus.**
  - f. The Authenticity of Second Peter  
The following items should be considered in the paper:
    - 1) What are some of the problems with the canonicity of 2 Peter?
    - 2) What are the arguments for and against Petrine authorship?
    - 3) How does one account for its differences in style from that of 1 Peter?
    - 4) What is its relationship to the Epistle of Jude?
    - 5) How were pseudonymous writings viewed in ancient times and in the early church? How does pseudonymity relate to 2 Peter?
  - g. The Date of One of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark or Luke)  
The following items should be considered in the paper:
    - 1) What are the major options scholars offer and why do they argue for that date?
    - 2) How is the issue of A.D. 70 handled in the alternatives?
    - 3) How are the remarks of the Fathers treated by the positions?
    - 4) What relationship does the date you choose have to the dates for the other Gospels (this point needs to be addressed, but not necessarily defended in detail)?
2. The purpose of the paper is to give the student experience in dealing with a NT introductory problem by evaluating the various viewpoints and concluding with a reasonable solution.
  3. This paper will require research using various primary and secondary resources beyond the texts required for the course, so the student should plan on using a library extensively for work on this paper. Obviously the DTS library is well suited for this research, but many local libraries—and even some church libraries—have some materials that will be helpful; the local public library can usually access resources through interlibrary loan. **It is the student's responsibility to plan ahead such that materials can be accessed in a timely manner.**
  4. The length of the paper must not be over 15 double-spaced typewritten pages (including footnotes but *not* counting the bibliography). It is to be written according to the style requirements given in Turabian, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (2013). You should also consult the DTS supplement to Turabian.
  5. The paper will be graded on the basis of clear, accurate, well-supported answers to the questions given above. You should give evidence of good research procedures in the text and footnotes. A good place to begin your work is with the books listed under Supplementary Bibliography above.

#### F. Exam

There will be a two and a half hour, open-book, open-note exam over the class notes and lectures. Consult the online system for the date of the exam, how it will be structured, and what it will cover.

### V. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- A. DTS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.
- B. The professor assumes that the student has regular access to up-to-date computer hardware and software with high-speed internet access, that the student is proficient in its use, and that the student is able to troubleshoot basic computer problems. If the student needs any help in this area, they are encouraged to get help from the media center in the DTS Library.

**VI. COURSE POLICIES**

**A. Weighing of Course Requirements for Grading**

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|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Textbook readings      | 10% |
| 2. Learning Activities    | 10% |
| 3. Research paper         | 20% |
| 4. Interactions in Forums | 30% |
| 3. Written Exam           | 30% |

**B. Late Assignments**

Assignments are due at 11:59 pm CDT of the day indicated on the course website, which is not necessarily your local time. **Any work submitted late is subject to a 5% penalty per day late.** The only reason to contact the professor to discuss a late submission is if there were difficult and unusual circumstances which could justify no late penalty at all (e.g., a sudden, severe illness). Anything foreseen or on the calendar (e.g., a church ministry trip) is not grounds for removing the late penalty.

**C. Plagiarism**

“Plagiarism is academically dishonest and contrary to biblical standards of integrity. Any course work involving dishonest academic practices will be graded zero without any resubmission permitted. In each case the Office of the Dean of Students will be notified” (DTS Student Handbook, § 1.16.3).

**D. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale**

<b>A+</b>	<b>99-100</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>91-93</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>83-85</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>75-77</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>0-69</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>96-98</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>88-90</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>80-82</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>72-74</b>		
<b>A-</b>	<b>94-95</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>86-87</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>78-79</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>70-71</b>		

**VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

See the online course page for a detailed schedule.

<b>Module</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
1	Introduction to the Course	
<b>I. Background to the NT</b>		
2	Political: Hellenistic	Longenecker, 9-97
		Longenecker, 99-182
3	Political: Roman	Bock, 13-41
		Bock, 79-136
4	Social and Religious	Bock, 45-63
		Bock, 65-78
<b>II. Canon of the NT</b>		
5	Canon	Carson & Moo, 726-43
<b>III. Criticism of the Gospels</b>		

<b>Module</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
6	Historical Criticism	Carson & Moo, 23-76 (Intro.)
	Seven Areas of NT Discussion	Bock, 141-62
7	Synoptic Problem	Carson & Moo, 77-168 (Synoptics, Matt); Bock 163-79
	Source Criticism	Carson & Moo, 169-224 (Mark, Luke)
	Form Criticism	Bock, 181-87; Carson & Moo, 479-97, 516-31, 596-618 (Eph, Col, Heb)
	Redaction Criticism	Bock, 189-216; Carson & Moo, 285-330, 697-725 (Acts, Rev)
<b>IV. Special Introduction to the NT</b>		
8	Apostolic Roots of the Gospel Traditions	Carson & Moo, 225-84 (John) <i>Research paper due</i>
9	Pseudonymity	Carson & Moo, 331-53, 554-87, 654-68 (NT letters, Pastorals, 2 Pet)
10	New Perspective on Paul	Carson & Moo, 354-90; Thompson, 1-28
11	Conclusion	
	<i>Exam</i>	