

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

An examination of New Testament biblical introduction that interacts with key issues about the Bible in the public square and university contexts. This course will engage in discussion of contemporary issues about the origin of the Jesus tradition, the apostolic teaching, the New Testament as a canon, and the origins of Christian orthodoxy as seen in the New Testament and important collateral writings of the period. It will also acquaint the student with major first century cultural features, both Jewish and Greco-Roman, that give a context for the original Christian message as a context for appreciating the New Testament message. Finally, the course will treat how such issues impact one's understanding of Scripture as inspired by God.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

A. Objectives

- To apply how the historical and cultural setting of the Bible relates to the inspiration of Scripture, the origin of key units of the Bible, and the process of canonization.
- To assess various central views about inspiration and history, introduction, and canonization in significant public square discussion and in academic undergraduate biblical or religious studies contexts.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

Bock, Darrell L. *The Missing Gospels*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006.
{MG}

Bock, Darrell L. *Studying the Historical Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
{HJ}

deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*, 2nd edition. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

Ehrman, Bart D. *Introduction to the New Testament: A Historical Introduction to Early Christian Writings*, 6th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Longenecker, Bruce W. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum: A Story from the New Testament World*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016.

Thompson, Michael B. *The New Perspective on Paul*. Cambridge: Grove Books, 2015.

Vines, Matthew. *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*. Np: Convergent Books, 2014.

B. Suggested

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.

Burge, Gary, Lynn Cohick, and Gene Green. *The New Testament in Antiquity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2009.

Evans, Craig. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005.

Klauck, Hans-Josef. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Greco-Roman Religions*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

Whiston, William. *The Works of Josephus*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005. (We recommend this version because it has the accepted versification)

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

The student is expected to complete the reading in preparation for class and interaction in class. So reading should be done on time. Reading, done late, is credited at half the value. The Longenecker book can be read anytime during the semester. Vines should be completed by the 19th class session.

B. Written Assignments

A fifteen page single spaced 12 point font essay in DTS style is required for this course. The essay is to be prepared by and discussed in class 28. The following topics are available to be treated:

*Jewish Views of the Messiah

*Analyzing the claim that Jewish Christianity and Hellenistic Christianity were severely at odds with each other as the book of Galatians shows (the F. C. Baur Thesis)

*Analyzing the theory of Alternative Christianities and the Influence of the Non-Canonical Gospels

*Discussing the Claim of Pseudonymous Authorship in either Colossians or the Pastorals and the attitude of the Church to that category

*Treating the issue of oral tradition and the role of the apostles in the passing on of the Jesus tradition

*The authorship of any one of the Synoptic gospels

* Analysis of a key DVD study of Christianity: either Peter Jennings, *The Search for the Historical Jesus* or the PBS special, *From Jesus to Christ*

* A selection from our “open topics” discussion later in the semester (N.B. Since these are covered later, talk with the professor about options early.)

C. Final Exam

An open book, take home final exam closes out the course. A key part of this exam is answering a few questions in short essays that reflect statements made either in broadcast, textbook, or web contexts.

V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

Reading 20%
Paper 40%
Exam 40%

B. Class Participation

Students should refrain from using cell phones, laptop computers, or other devices in a manner that distracts others in the class. Playing games, browsing the Internet, using email, instant messaging, or text messaging, etc., are considered unacceptable when class is in session. Unless permitted by the professor, students should turn off all electronic devices during tests and quizzes.

C. Late Assignments

We accept late assignments with a penalty (5 pts a day, up to a week late, no more). If there is a reason the material is late beyond poor planning (ie, forgot I had a ministry that weekend) or leaving assignments to the end, then discuss it with me.

D. Absences

The normal DTS policy applies.

E. Plagiarism

The website, Turnitin.com, defines plagiarism as ‘the use of another’s original words or ideas as though they were your own. Any time you borrow [copy] from an original source and do not give proper credit, you have committed plagiarism...’ (http://turnitin.com/research_site/e_faqs_text). Plagiarism is academically dishonest and contrary to biblical standards of integrity. Any course work involving dishonest academic practices will be graded as zero

without any resubmission permitted. In each case, the Office of the Dean of Students will be notified.

F. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

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

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

A. Students with Disabilities or Medical Incidents:

Dallas Theological Seminary works to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with psychological, medical, physical, and learning disabilities. A student desiring or needing accommodations on the basis of such disabilities or of medical incidents such as hospitalization or severe injury is to contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://students.dts.edu/studentlife/disability-services/>). If the student is aware of a condition that may impact his/her studies, the student should contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities at prior to the beginning of the semester or at the onset of a crisis.

B. Emergency Communication Service

DTS wants you to be aware of our emergency communication service. We strongly urge you to go to <https://www.dts.edu/account/alerts/> and sign up to receive emergency texts related to weather or disaster school closing.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

The class usually is structured into two parts for each class. There is a lecture portion that is standard introduction material. There is a spotlight section that looks at specific issues in the public square. Reading should be done not to take an exam, but to gain familiarity with the topic and come prepared to discuss the issues and interact with the key ideas. So there are two reading plans.

No.	Date	Lecture Topics	Reading Assignments for Lectures	Due Dates
1	Tuesday, Aug. 25	Introduction to the Course		

		Historical-Cultural Section		
2	Thursday, Aug. 27	Political: Hellenistic		
3	Tuesday, Sept. 1	Political: Hellenistic		
4	Thursday, Sept. 3	Political: Roman		
5	Tuesday, Sept. 8	Political: Roman		
6	Thursday, Sept. 10	Social and Religious		
7	Tuesday, Sept. 15	Social and Religious		
8	Thursday, Sept. 17	Canon		
9	Tuesday, Sept. 22	Canon		
		Criticism Section		
10	Thursday, Sept. 24	Historical Criticism		
11	Tuesday, Sept 29	Seven Areas of NT Discussion		
12	Thursday, Oct. 1	Synoptic Problem		
13	Tuesday, Oct. 6	Source Criticism		
14	Thursday, Oct. 8	Form Criticism		
15	Tuesday, Oct. 13	Redaction Criticism		
16	Thursday, Oct. 15	Apostolic Roots of the Gospel Traditions		

17	Tuesday, Oct. 20	Pseudonymity		
18	Thursday, Oct. 22	New Perspective on Paul		
	Nov. 16-20	Reading Week / No Class		
	Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving Break / No Class		
		Special Issues Section		
19- 24	Oct. 27 – Dec. 9	Open topics on Contemporary Cultural Issues		
25	Thursday, Dec. 10	Wrap up and paper discussion 15 page essay is due		

Take Home Final Exam (passed out the final day of class; turned in a week later)

Revised 2/24/20 - CD