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


An introduction to various methods of Gospel criticism, assessing their strengths and weaknesses.


A well written work on special introduction of the NT books. It is concise and up-to-date. In addition to discussion on individual books, it has brief sections on important groups of NT books (Synoptic Gospels, Paul) and the NT canon.


Fictional correspondence vividly reflecting social and religious situation for Christians in the first-century Mediterranean world.

*One of the following two books on the New Perspective on Paul.*


Well-informed, balanced evaluation of the “New Perspective” by an evangelical Anglican.


A well-written introduction to the New Perspective.

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1 The student is free to choose whichever text is cheaper or easier to procure.
B. Suggested


An excellent survey of history in the time of Jesus and the apostolic age. The work interacts with critical issues in NT studies.


A useful selection of extra-biblical background material on history, philosophy, religion, and literature from original sources.


Contains important essays by evangelical scholars on methods and issues regarding NT interpretation.


One of the most widely used introductions to the NT from a liberal prospective by a scholar who has effectively communicated this approach also in the popular media.


A well-organized, analytical and systematic introduction to the political, social, literary, and religious backgrounds to the NT for the beginning student.


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.


A useful handbook that defines and/or describes technical terms related to biblical criticism. It is an expanded glossary.


A style manual for term papers. Please consult also the DTS supplement to Turabian available at [http://library.dts.edu/Pages/RM/Write/turabian_sup.pdf](http://library.dts.edu/Pages/RM/Write/turabian_sup.pdf).


A helpful guide for writing research papers from process to product.

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 as needed.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

1. The student is required to read the textbooks for the course as listed on the course 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 online by the due date.

B. 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.
   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’s 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’s approach to these issues (e.g., identify the issues from the Jewish perspective, compare and contrast Jesus’s view with that of the Pharisees and scribes, how unprecedented was the significance of Jesus’s view?).
   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 and to increase research skills which will prove helpful in ministry.

3. 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, 8th ed. (2013). You should also consult the DTS supplement to Turabian.

4. 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.

5. The paper is due on the date indicated on the assignment schedule. Any late paper will have a 5% grade reduction per calendar day (including weekends and holidays) of lateness until a maximum grade reduction of 50% for lateness is reached. The student is responsible to get the rough draft of his/her work to the typist in plenty of time to avoid being late. Also, allow time for any computer glitches.

6. If the student has limited experience writing research papers, they should consult Vyhmeister and Robertson carefully for help.
C. Exam

There will be an exam over the class notes and lectures. The exam will be given online. It includes short-answer questions and essay questions dealing with the contemporary relevance of the course content. A study guide will be distributed to help in preparation.

V. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

A. 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 prior to the beginning of the semester or at the onset of a crisis.

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

VI. COURSE POLICIES

A. Weighing of Course Requirements for Grading

1. Daily readings  20%
2. Research paper  40%
3. Exam  40%

B. Class Participation

Because of the nature and scope of the material as well as class size, the format of the class will be primarily lecture. The lectures will attempt to highlight and summarize the major issues of NT history and introduction.

C. Late Assignments

See page 3 for information about late penalty on research paper. No extensions will be granted for this course except in unusual circumstances beyond the student’s control as approved by the professor.

D. Absences

Due to the condensed nature of this course, absences will normally not be permitted. In the case of illness or other extenuating circumstances, the student is responsible to arrange with the professor to make up missed material and lectures satisfactorily.

E. 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).

F. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-98</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>94-95</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>91-93</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>88-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>86-87</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>83-85</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>75-77</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>72-74</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>70-71</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-69</td>
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## VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Political: Hellenistic</td>
<td>Longenecker, 9-97</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Political: Roman</td>
<td>Bock, 13-41</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Political: Roman</td>
<td>Bock, 79-136</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Social and Religious</td>
<td>Bock, 65-78</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Canon</td>
<td>Carson &amp; Moo, 726-43</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>Canon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>Historical Criticism</td>
<td>Carson &amp; Moo, 23-76 (Intro.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Seven Areas of NT Discussion</td>
<td>Bock, 141-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Synoptic Problem</td>
<td>Carson &amp; Moo, 77-168 (Synoptics, Matt); Bock 163-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>Pseudonymity</td>
<td>Carson &amp; Moo, 331-53, 554-87, 654-68 (NT letters, Pastorals, 2 Pet)</td>
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**I. Background to the NT**

**II. Canon of the NT**

**III. Criticism of the Gospels**

**IV. Special Introduction to the NT**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. Oct 23</td>
<td>New Perspective on Paul</td>
<td>Carson &amp; Moo, 354-90; Thompson, 1-28, or the entirety of Yinger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 19. Oct 28 | Conclusion | *Research paper due*  
*Reading report due* |

Exam  
*Exam is due one week after class ends*