BIBL 5240 The New Testament Texts and Their World
Spring Semester 2020, Tuesdays, Thursdays, 9:30am—10:45am Location: TBD

Instructor: Dennis R. Edwards, Associate Professor of New Testament
Contact Details: N-23; dredwards@northpark.edu; 773-244-6238
Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:00pm—4:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores the interpretation, context, and content of the New Testament. Attention is given to the nature of the New Testament as Scripture and to fundamental hermeneutical issues, with a focus on historical criticism as a basis for theological interpretation. The political, social, and religious worlds of Second Temple Judaism and of Greco-Roman society are described as a framework for studying Matthew through Revelation. The content of selected books from each of the genres and historical phases of the New Testament is examined, and important theological themes running across the canon are introduced (e.g. Christology, eschatology). Particular emphasis is placed on engagement with texts in their historical contexts and the development of basic exegetical skills.

COURSE AIM
To introduce students to the study of the New Testament texts, equipping them to begin to interpret these texts in a manner informed by history, theology, and hermeneutics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of the class, students will be able to:
1. demonstrate knowledge of the New Testament texts in such matters as their genres, historical origins, general content and literary relationships to each other;
2. explain the significance of the world of the New Testament (historical, social, cultural, and religious contexts) for the interpretation of its texts;
3. do exegesis of selected passages from New Testament texts in an informed way in the light of critical discussion relating to them;
4. explain and illustrate the hermeneutical challenges involved in interpreting the New Testament texts for Christian discipleship and ministry today.

CONTENT
The class includes:
1. consideration of foundational hermeneutical issues connected to the interpretation of New Testament texts;
2. an introduction to the history and nature of Second Temple Judaism;
3. a survey of the Gospels, including their origins, genre, literary relationships, and fourfold witness to the life and ministry of Jesus;
4. an introduction to the nature of Graeco-Roman culture, especially its political, social, and religious structures;
5. an introduction to the history of early Christian mission, with a focus on the book of Acts and the life and ministry of Paul;
6. a survey of the Catholic Epistles and the book of Revelation, including their origins, genre, and literary relationships;
7. a study in English of selected passages from New Testament texts informed by the learning envisaged in content points 1-6.

REQUIRED TEXTS
1. The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books (revised edition; New York: OUP, 2010) or The Harper Collins Study Bible with Apocrypha. These are study editions of the NRSV. Other contemporary versions are acceptable, but please do not use a paraphrased translation (e.g. New Living Bible) or an idiomatic/colloquial one (e.g. Eugene Peterson’s The Message). As helpful as they are in the right context, a more literal translation of the Greek texts is necessary for this class (the NRSV tends to be preferred by scholars).

ASSESSMENTS
1. Read and review Bruce Longenecker’s novel, The Lost Letters of Pergamum (2nd edition; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016). Your review should concentrate on what you have learned from reading the book about the cultural context of early Christianity, but you may also offer a critique of the book. This is to say, do not rehash the plot, but spend about 80% of your review on details of cultural context and about 20% on your critique of the book. The review should be 1000 words in length and is due by midnight on February 16, 2020.
2. There will be four content quizzes (25 points each) that cover issues covered in class as well as in required reading. These quizzes will be open book and taken on Canvas. N.B. Even though the quizzes are open book, you will not have an unlimited time to take them! (I will likely set the quizzes for 45 minutes on Canvas). It is to your benefit to do the reading according to the class schedule. The questions will be multiple choice, T/F, or short answer. Quizzes are due by midnight on February 9, March 1, April 5, April 20.
3. A paper of 1500 words evaluating the approach of Frances Gench in Back to the Well: Women’s Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels. Gench claims to engage the NT with
“a feminist consciousness” (p. xii). Your evaluation of Gench should address issues such as:

a) Social location of readers (what is it? Is it important?)
b) Is there validity in a feminist reading of Scripture?
c) Do you see problems or pitfalls with Gench’s approach?
d) Focus in on one of the encounters she interprets. What stands out to you from Gench’s analysis? Did you learn anything? Did anything make you uncomfortable? How so? Did anything especially encourage you? How so?

The paper is due by midnight, March 22.

4. An exegesis paper exploring one of the texts listed below. There will be three stages to this paper, which will culminate in the production of your own analysis of the text. The aim of the exercise is to increase your understanding of, and skill in, the process of interpretation. A separate handout detailing how you are to approach each stage of the task will be posted on Canvas. **Stage 1** is due midnight February 23, **stage 2** is due by midnight on March 29. The complete paper is due by midnight **May 8**.

   b) From Pauline writings: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Ephesians 2:11-22; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Philemon 8-21
   c) From the General Epistles: Hebrews 1:1-4; James 5:1-6; 2 Peter 1:12-21; 1 John 4:1-6

5. The grade for class participation will be based upon (i) attendance, assigned group discussion, and voluntary participation throughout the semester, and (ii) the reading contract. The reading contract is due on the last day of class. A form will be available on Canvas for you to catalogue your reading.

   a) Most reading is from required texts or available online using the ATLA Religion Database, or found in the Reference section of the Brandel Library.
   b) *The Dictionary of New Testament Background* and *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* are both available as e-books through the Brandel Library. On the library website see under “Research Guides” then “Seminary,” then under “Online Resources for Biblical and Theological Studies.”
   c) All other reading is uploaded in Canvas.

**GRADING**

Longenecker Book Review 20%
Quizzes 20%
Gench Analysis 20%
Exegesis Paper 30%
Class Participation 10%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ATTENDANCE
If you experience difficulties, please speak to the instructor about it. Illness and other unforeseen circumstances beyond your control will be regarded sympathetically, but poor planning on your part is not a good excuse. Poor attendance without good reason will affect your class participation grade. The same principles apply to requests for extensions for reports and papers. Late submission without good reason will result in grade reduction.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:
1. Plagiarism - the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog, pp. 25-27.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact their program’s office (773-244-5619) as soon as possible to ensure accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. For further information, see Seminary Catalog, p. 17 and “Disability Resources” provided through North Park’s Office of Student Enrichment Services and Support.

TITLE IX
Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Dean of Students (773-244-5565) or Director of Human Resources (773-244-5599) for information about campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services. As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University’s Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. Please refer to North Park’s Safe Community site for contact information and further details.

CLASS SCHEDULE
There are no classes on:

- January 28 & 30 (ECC MidWinter Conference)
- March 10 & 12 (Reading Week)
- April 23 (Nywall Lecture)
• Please note again:
  o Most reading is from required texts or available online using the ATLA Religion Database, or found in the Reference section of the Brandel Library.
  o *The Dictionary of New Testament Background* and *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* are both available as e-books through the Brandel Library. On the library website see under “Research Guides” then “Seminary,” then under “Online Resources for Biblical and Theological Studies.”
  o All other reading is posted in Canvas.

**Part 1: Hermeneutics**

**Class 1: Tuesday, January 14**

• Syllabus Review; The Nature of the New Testament texts as Scripture


**Class 2: Thursday, January 16**

• Hermeneutics: Issues Behind the Texts (e.g. Quest of the Historical Jesus), Doing Exegesis (What is New Testament exegesis?), Issues in front of the Texts (e.g. social locations of New Testament readers and their strategies for interpretation).

• Reading (in Canvas):

**Part 2: Judaism, Jesus, and the Gospels**

**Class 3: Tuesday, January 21**

• The History of Second Temple Judaism: From Alexander to the Destruction of the Temple (70CE)

• Reading:
  2) deSilva, 9-42.

**Class 4: Thursday, January 23**
- Josephus: Our (Reliable/Unreliable?) Narrator; Jesus and the Covenant in the Second Temple Context

Class 5: Tuesday, February 4

- The Temple at the Center: Its Role in Judaism and Jesus’ Attitude towards the Temple
- Reading:
  2) deSilva 43-51.

Class 6: Thursday, February 6

- Groups in Second Temple Judaism: The Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Jesus Movement
- Reading:
  2) deSilva, 52-61.
- Quiz #1 (covering classes 1-6) due midnight, February 9th.

Class 7: Tuesday, February 11

- Eschatology in Second Temple Judaism: The Essenes and the Zealots and the Expectations of Jesus

Class 8: Thursday, February 13

- What are the Gospels (genre)? For whom were they written (audience)? Why are there four canonical Gospels? The Relationships between Matthew, Mark, and Luke
- Reading: deSilva,117-73.
- Essay on The Lost Letters of Pergamum due midnight, February 16th.

Class 9: Tuesday, February 18
• The Synoptic Gospels
• Reading: deSilva, 174-303

Class 10: Thursday, February 20

• The Synoptic Gospels (continued)
• Reading: deSilva, 173-303
• Stage #1 of exegesis paper due midnight, February 23

Class 11: Tuesday, February 25

• Introducing John’s Gospel
• Reading: deSilva, 341-87

Part 3: Greco-Roman Society and the Early Christians
Class 12: Thursday, February 27

• The Nature of Greco-Roman Society (1)
• Reading:
  3) deSilva, 82-107.
• Quiz #2 (covering classes 7-12) due midnight, March 1

Class 13: Tuesday, March 3

• The Nature of Graeco-Roman Society (2)
• Reading:
  2) deSilva, 62-81; 108-116.

Class 14: Thursday, March 5

• Early Christians in Graeco-Roman Society: The Corinthian and Thessalonian Churches as Case Studies
• Reading: John M.G. Barclay, “Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity,” in Journal for the Study of the New Testament 47 (1992), 49-74. The full text is available online through the ATLA Religion Database (see under “Online Resources” and then “Humanities” on the Brandel Library Website).

Class 15: Tuesday, March 17

• Early Christians in Graeco-Roman Society: The Message of the Cross in 1 Corinthians
• Reading:
  1) EITHER David E. Garland, 1 Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, 59-89) OR

  Both these commentaries are available in the Reference section of the Brandel Library.

Class 16: Thursday, March 19

• Introducing the Book of Acts
• Exegetical Writing
• Reading: deSilva 304-340.
• Analysis of Gench book, Back to the Well: Women’s Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels, due midnight, March 22nd.

Part 4: Apostle Paul and His Letters
Class 17: Tuesday, March 24

• Introducing Paul’s Life
• Galatians
• Reading: deSilva, 409-60.

Class 18: Thursday, March 26

• Thessalonian Correspondence
• Pseudepigrapha
• Reading: deSilva, 461-85; 605-609.
• Stage #2 of exegesis paper due midnight, March 29th.

Class 19: Tuesday, March 31

• Corinthian Correspondence
• Reading: deSilva, 486-564

Class 20: Thursday, April 2

• Romans
• Reading: deSilva, 526-64.
• Quiz #3 (covering classes 13-20) due April 5th.

Class 21: Tuesday, April 7

• Philippians
• Another look at exegetical writing
• Reading:
  1) deSilva, 565-89

Class 22: Thursday, April 9

• Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians
• Reading: deSilva, 590-604; 610-48

Class 23: Tuesday, April 14

• Pastoral Epistles
• Reading: deSilva, 649-685

Part 5: The Catholic Epistles and Revelation

Class 24: Thursday, April 16

• Hebrews and James
• Reading: deSilva, 686-743
• Quiz #4 (covering classes 21-) due midnight April 20th.

Class 25: Tuesday, April 21

• Petrine Letters and Jude
• Reading: deSilva, 744-86
No Classes April 23 (Nyvall Lecture)

Class 26: Tuesday, April 28

- Johannine Letters
- Reading: deSilva, 388-408

Class 27: Thursday, April 30

- Introducing the Book of Revelation
- Reading: deSilva, 786-830
- Quiz #4 (covering classes 21-27) due May 3rd.

Class 28: Tuesday, May 5

- Interpreting the Book of Revelation

- No Class May 7

- Paper due midnight, May 8th