



BIBL 5240

NT 1: The New Testament Texts and Their World

Fall Semester 2021

Location: Online

Instructor: Dennis R. Edwards, Associate Professor of New Testament

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Office Hours: By appointment

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.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. A contemporary translation of the Bible. I recommend: *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).

2. Longenecker, Bruce. [*The Lost Letters of Pergamum*](#) (2nd Edition; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016). ISBN: 978-0801097966. This is a novel written by a leading New Testament scholar. Although it is fictional, the setting of the story and the concerns of the characters accurately reflect the cultural context of early Christianity. **Read the entire book. It will be the focus of one of your forum posts.**
3. deSilva, David A. [*An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*](#). InterVarsity Press, 2018. ISBN13: 978-0830852178.
4. Gench, Frances Taylor. [*Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels*](#). Louisville: WJK, 2004. ISBN: 978-0-664-22715-9.
5. NOTE: additional reading (not requiring a purchase):
 - a. *The Dictionary of New Testament Background* (IVP) and *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (IVP) 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.](#)"
 - b. All other reading is uploaded in Canvas.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

Gorman, Michael J. [*Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*](#). 3rd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020.

ASSESSMENTS

1. Forums (5 @ 5% = 25% total), not including Introduction Forum). Forum posts and responses will be evaluated on their quality of critical thinking and respectful interaction with others.
2. A paper of 1000 words evaluating the approach of Frances Gench in *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* (15%). **Start reading the book right away. The paper and forum discussion will come later (week #6).**
3. Quizzes (3 @ 10% = 30% total). Students will take three open-book (but timed) quizzes on media lessons and course readings.
4. An exegesis paper (4000 words) exploring a New Testament text approved by the instructor (30%). **Students will submit two (2) possible options for exegesis by Week #3. Options should be from different genre (e.g., one from a Gospel, one from a letter).** After instructor approves the passage, 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.

GRADING

Forums	25%
Quizzes	30%

Gench Analysis	15%
Exegesis Paper	30%

Grade scale, following the scale printed in the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), p. 21.

A: Superior work (A = 95-100; A- = 93-94)

This grade applies to exceptional work, the quality achieved through excellence of performance, not merely the fulfillment of the course requirements.

B: Above average (B+ = 91-92; B = 88-90; B- = 86-87)

This grade applies to meritorious work, definitely above average, applied to more than the fulfillment of requirements.

C: Average (C+ = 84-85; C = 80-83; C - = 78-79)

This grade applies to average work that still fulfills the course requirements.

D: Unsatisfactory (D+ = 76-77; D = 72-75; D - = 70-71)

This grade, while indicating the student has completed a course, is to be understood as reflecting below average work. Course work receiving this grade will not be counted toward a degree.

F: Failure (69 and below)

To receive credit in the subject, the course must be repeated.

I: Incomplete

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see page 15 of the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#).

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

North Park is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this class related to a disability, contact the Center for Student Engagement by email ada@northpark.edu or phone at 773-244-5737 to schedule an appointment with the Learning Specialist. You can also stop by The Center for Student Engagement, located on the first floor of the Johnson Center.

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.

SCHEDULE: TBA