

North Park Theological Seminary  
Stateville Correctional Center  
Spring 2023  
Mondays, 6:30 to 9:15am  
Instructor: Will Andrews

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** (AKA “What does this course cover?”): 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). Emphasis is placed on engagement with texts in their historical contexts and the development of basic exegetical skills.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES** (AKA “What will you get out of this course?”): “Interpret Scripture with historical and theological integrity in relation to one’s ministry.”

**COURSE OBJECTIVES** (AKA “What are we here for?”): By the end of this course students will be able to

- Demonstrate knowledge of the content and literary character of the books of New Testament.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts in which the New Testament writings emerged.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the New Testament writers’ use of the Old Testament and the unity of the testaments.
- Apply historical, literary, contextual, and canonical approaches to the interpretation of New Testament texts.
- Integrate course materials with issues of ministry and contemporary application.

**COURSE METHODS** (AKA “What will we do in this class?”): Most weeks the class meeting will be divided between three activities: (1) lecture and discussion; (2) discussion of secondary readings; and (3) close reading of biblical texts together as a class. There will also be three quizzes and several writing assignments designed to engage with specific issues and passages.

**REQUIRED READING** (AKA “What are the books for this class?”)

1. *New Oxford Annotated Bible NRSV (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)*
2. DeSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.
3. Freedman, David (ed.). *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000.
4. Longenecker, Bruce W. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum: A Story from the New Testament World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2016.
5. Tiffany, Frederick C., and Sharon H. Ringe. *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
6. *Additional articles and chapters provided in class or on Canvas.*

**Each student must choose ONE of the following as the basis of a short paper due on April 10:**

7. Gench, Frances Taylor. *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts: Reflections on Paul, Women, and the Authority of Scripture*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.
8. McCauly, Esau. *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. InterVarsity Press: 2020.

## COURSE ASSESSMENTS IN BRIEF (AKA “What are the assignments and expectations?”)

1. Participation	10 %
2. Lost Letters Essay	5 %
3. Book Response Essay	5 %
4. Quizzes (3 x 10% each)	30 %
5. NT Book Introduction and Presentation	10 %
6. Exegesis Paper:	40 %

## COURSE ASSESSMENTS IN DETAIL:

- Participation (10%):** You must attend class, engage in class discussions, and submit all assignments on time.
- Lost Letters Essay (5%):** You will read *The Lost Letters of Pergamum* and write an essay of about 1000 words that will provide the basis for one of our first discussions. This paper is **due on Monday, January 30**, and should address the following issues:
  - Briefly summarize the book. Did you enjoy it?
  - What did you learn from this book about the early church?
  - How did these churches use and understand scripture?
  - What did you learn about first-century Judaism?
  - What did you learn about Greco-Roman culture?
  - How would these things help us understand the New Testament?
- Book Response Essay (5%):** You will choose and read one of these two books: *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts* by Frances Taylor Gench or *Reading While Black* by Esau McCauley. **On Monday, April 10**, you will submit an essay of about 1000 words that addresses these issues:
  - What is the overall argument of the book?
  - How does the author develop this theme or thesis?
  - Describe the author’s hermeneutical stance and approach to scripture.
  - How is social location important to this author’s interpretations?
  - Are there questions you have after reading this?
  - Do you discern any weaknesses in the arguments?
  - What are the strengths of this book?
  - How could this book inform your practice of ministry?
- Quizzes (3 x 10% each = 30%):** There will be three quizzes during the semester—March 6, April 17, and May 7—based on the key terms and reading questions from previous weeks. Each quiz will cover one of the three units of the semester.
- New Testament Book Introduction (10%):** Choose your favorite book of the New Testament and imagine that you have been invited as a scholar to introduce that book in less than ten minutes (so no more than 1000 words) for the first session of a Bible study in your church. You are not leading the Bible study but rather providing a useful overview for people who will be studying it over several weeks. **This paper is due by Monday, May 8.** It might address some of the following elements:
  - Important issues:
    - Date, authorship, original recipients, historical context, etc.
    - Place in the Canon
    - Literature (sources, genres, etc.)
    - Interpretation
    - Theological Themes
  - Conclude with discussion of the importance of this book (why should you read it?)

Be sure to cite all sources that you use (textbooks, study Bible, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, etc.) In a sense, this an opportunity to apply insights you have gained over the semester to a single book of the New Testament. It is not a play-by-play recap of the entire book or a detailed commentary. Rather, it is a presentation of the basic facts that you think are necessary or helpful for someone reading this book of the New Testament for themselves.

- 6. Exegesis Paper (40%):** You will research and write an exegesis paper of at least 3,000 words that engages a Gospel text assigned to you. You will integrate the historical, literary, and canonical approaches to Scripture you have learned to interpret this passage for application in your own contemporary context. This paper will be written in four parts across the semester with opportunities to receive feedback on your drafts from your peers and the instructor. You will receive instructions for each part in advance. **The final paper is due Monday, May 8.**

**GRADING SCALE:** (by percentage)

93-100	A	77-79	C-	60-62	D-
90-92	A-	73-76	C	50-59	F
87-89	B+	70-72	C-		
83-86	B	67-69	D+		
80-82	B-	63-66	D		

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:** NPTS encourages all students to follow the Statement of Inclusive Language from the Board of Publication Policy of the Evangelical Covenant Church which states, “We are committed to being inclusive in language and imagery in an effort to eliminate prejudice, whether gender, racial, ethnic, national, religious, denominational, cultural, or physical. This way of proceeding in no manner seeks to deny personal identity; rather, it guards against any use of word or phrase that tends to exclude people.” Consider how you can best incorporate inclusive language into all your communication (written and oral) during the course particularly in your references to God and to humanity.

**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. For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog, pp. 25–27. 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.

**INCOMPLETE POLICY:** If, *due to extenuating circumstances* (specifically, illness, personal and family issues, or military assignment), a student anticipates she will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student must submit the request form for a grade of incomplete to the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, 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.”

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Director or Assistant Director of the School of Restorative

Arts. Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

**CLASS DECORUM:** Politeness and tolerance towards the views of others is a critical component to any class setting. Students should listen attentively to the instructor and always listen carefully to their fellow classmates. Students are always expected to be respectful of the views of others.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**Abbreviations:** INT = *An Introduction to the New Testament*; BIAR = *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap*; + = a reading provided by the instructor

### UNIT ONE

#### Week 1 Introduction and Hermeneutics Pt 1 (Overview) Jan 23

**Read:** INT: Chapter 1  
+ Amy-Jill Levine, "Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made about Early Judaism"  
+ Jeannine Brown, "Contextualization"  
+ (review) "Self-Inventory for Bible Readers"  
BIAR: Chapters 1-2

**Key Terms:** New Testament, gospel, Acts, epistle, apostle, apocalypse, canon, hermeneutics, exegesis

**Reading Questions:**

1. What is the New Testament?
2. How is the New Testament related to the Old Testament?
3. How is the New Testament structured?
4. What kind of literature does the New Testament contain?
5. How should we read the New Testament?
6. What are some different strategies or methodologies that scholars use to interpret the New Testament?

#### Week 2 Greco-Romans and Jewish Contexts/ What is a Gospel? Jan 30

**Read:** *Lost Letters of Pergamum* (entire book)  
INT: chapters 2 & 3 (start reading, finish by Week 6)  
**Due:** *Lost Letters* book review

**Key Terms:** Pax Romana, Caesar Augustus, Tiberius, Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate, prefect/procurator, Herod Agrippa, Herod the Great, Nero, Bar Kokhba, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Cynicism, mystery religion, emperor worship, animism, augury, supernaturalism, Gnosticism, "wealth and poverty," "patronage and loyalty," "honor and shame," Hasmonean, Pharisee, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Herodians, Samaritans, Gentiles, Hellenism, Diaspora, Septuagint, "Apocrypha," Wisdom Theology, Dualism, Apocalypticism, gospel, historical Jesus

**Reading Questions:**

1. Why is it important to know about Roman rule when reading the New Testament?
2. What was the political situation under Roman rule in Palestine?
3. How did Rome relate to Judaism and Christianity?
4. What were the major philosophical and religious ideas during the Roman rule?
5. What were some significant cultural and social values in the Roman Empire?
6. Why is it important to understand the Jewish background of the New Testament?
7. How does the New Testament "fit" into Jewish history?
8. What were the major Jewish groups or movements during the life of Jesus?
9. What were the effects of Hellenism?

10. What is a gospel?
11. How are the gospels like ancient biographies? How are they different?
12. What type of material is found in the gospels?
13. What do scholars mean by distinguishing between the “earthly Jesus” and the “exalted Jesus”?

### Week 3 Mark and Hermeneutics Pt 2 (World within the Text)

Feb 6

**Read:** Gospel of Mark

INT: Chapters 4 & 5

BIAR: Chapter 3

INT: “Word Studies and Lexical Analysis,” pp. 624-630; “Textual Criticism,” pp. 263-267

“Interpreting Parables,” pp. 296-299; “Narrative Criticism,” pp. 345-348; “Redaction Criticism,” pp. 231-233; “The Use of Comparative Material,” pp. 241-244

**Due:** Exegesis Part 1 draft

**Key Terms:** Synoptic Gospels, synoptic problem, Q, source criticism, Two-Source Hypothesis, redaction criticism, John Mark, messianic secret, kingdom of God, ransom, covenant, legion, inclusion, election, justification,

#### Reading Questions:

1. What is the “Synoptic Problem”?
2. When and where do scholars believe Mark was written?
3. What do we know about Mark’s community?
4. How would you describe Mark’s style and structure?
5. What is the “problem” with Mark’s ending?
6. What are some of the conflicts in Mark’s gospel?
7. What is the “kingdom of God” according to Jesus in Mark?
8. How does Mark portray Jesus?
9. How is Jesus’s death portrayed in Mark?
10. How does Mark portray the disciples?
11. What are some key themes in Mark?

### Week 4 Matthew \* Monday, Feb 13 is state holiday, so this week we will meet on a different day TBA

**Read:** Gospel of Matthew

INT: Chapter 6

+Jonathan Klawans, “The Law”

**Key Terms:** Levi, Peter, M material, Sermon on the Mount, triad, doublet, passion, Hades, transfiguration, antithesis, Community Rule, Didache, centurion, righteousness

#### Reading Questions:

1. When and where do scholars believe Matthew was written?
2. What do we know about Matthew’s community?
3. How would you describe the style and structure of Matthew?
4. What material is unique to Matthew’s gospel?
5. What are some of the conflicts in Mathew’s gospel?
6. What is the “kingdom of God” according to Jesus in Matthew?
7. What are some key themes in Matthew?
8. How is Jesus portrayed in Matthew?
9. How is Jesus’s death portrayed in Matthew?
10. How are the disciples portrayed in Matthew?
11. What is righteousness in Matthew?

**Read:** Gospel of Luke, Acts  
INT: Chapters 7 & 8  
+ David Stern, "Midrash and Parables in the New Testament"  
+ Willie James Jennings, selections from Acts commentary

**Key Terms:** Luke the Physician, Theophilus, Magnificat, infancy narrative, L material, parable, Sermon on the Plain, mammon, Parousia, apostle, persecution, historiography, "Christ Crucified," Pentecost, predestination, ascension, gifts of the Spirit, glossolalia

**Reading Questions:**

1. When and where do scholars believe Luke was written?
2. What do we know about Luke's community?
3. What material is unique to Luke's gospel?
4. How would you describe the style and structure of Luke?
5. What are some distinctive emphases and themes of Luke?
6. What is the meaning of salvation in Luke?
7. How is Jesus portrayed in Luke?
8. How is Jesus's death portrayed in Luke?
9. How are the disciples portrayed in Luke?
10. How is Jerusalem emphasized in Luke?
11. How is the Holy Spirit emphasized?
12. When and where do scholars believe Acts was written?
13. Why did Luke write Acts?
14. How would you describe the style and structure of Acts?
15. What are some parallels between Luke and Acts?
16. How are the apostles and the church portrayed in Acts?
17. What are the major themes in Acts?
18. What is the Christology of Acts?
19. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in Acts?

**Read:** Gospel of John; 1, 2, & 3 John  
INT: Chapters 9 & 10  
+ Stephen Fowl, "The gospels and 'the historical Jesus'"  
+ Sarah Jobe, "Jesus' First Week Home from Prison"

**Key Terms:** John the Evangelist, John the Elder, Johannine, beloved disciple, Farewell Discourse, signs, words from the cross ("Seven Last Words"), Lord's Supper, Logos, eternal life, Paraclete, Gnosticism, atonement, propitiation, expiation, antichrist, Elect Lady

**Reading Questions:**

1. When and where do scholars believe John was written?
2. What do we know about John's community?
3. How are "the Jews" portrayed in John?
4. How is John distinct from the Synoptic Gospels?
5. How would you describe the style and structure of John?
6. How does Jesus reveal God in John?
7. How is Jesus's death portrayed in John?
8. What is salvation in John?

9. What are some other key themes in John?
10. When, where, and by whom were the three letters of John written?
11. What is the occasion for each letter? What is the problem being addressed?
12. How does John respond to each?
13. What are the major themes of each letter?
14. How are these letters related to the Gospel of John?

<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Exegesis Pt 2 Draft &amp; Hermeneutics Pt 3 (World Behind the Text)</b>	<b>Mar 6</b>
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**Read:** BIAR: Chapter 4  
 INT: "Examining Literary Context," pp. 197-199; "Cultural Awareness," pp. 204-205, 249-254, 293-295, 379-383; "Social-Scientific Criticism," pp. 380-383

**Due:** Exegesis Pt 2 draft

**Due:** Quiz #1

<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Reading Week: NO CLASS</b>	<b>Mar 13</b>
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## UNIT TWO

<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Intro to Paul – Philemon – Quiz #1</b>	<b>Mar 20</b>
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**Read:** Philemon (recommended: Galatians)  
 INT: Chapters 11 & 17 (recommended: 12)  
 + Mark Nanos, "Paul and Judaism"

**Key Terms:** Saul, Paul, Damascus, amanuensis, circumcision, subsistence level, signs and wonders, Muratorian Fragment, new creation, Lord's Supper, "the law," apostolic authority, deacon, grace, saints, creeds, chiasm, doxology, benediction, deuterio-Pauline, pseudepigrapha, "second-career theory," Philemon, Onesimus

**Reading Questions:**

1. What are our sources for knowing about Paul's life?
2. Briefly describe Paul's early life and missionary journeys.
3. Why do some scholars dispute the authorship of some letters attributed to Paul?
4. What are some major themes in Paul's theology?
5. How are Paul's letters arranged in the New Testament?
6. How are Paul's letters like and unlike ancient letters?
7. How is reading a letter different from reading narrative?
8. Identify the parts of a typical ancient letter in Philemon.
9. When and where do scholars believe Philemon was written?
10. To whom was this letter written? Why?
11. What are the major themes of this letter?

<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Paul as Pastor: 1 Corinthians</b>	<b>Mar 27</b>
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**Read:** 1 Corinthians (recommended: 2 Corinthians)  
 INT: Chapter 14  
 +Theodore Jennings, "The Community of the Crucified"

**Key Terms:** Corinth, Cephas, "Christ crucified," firstfruits, *charismata*, *glossolalia*

**Reading Questions:**

1. When and where did Paul write 1 Corinthians?

2. What do we know about the community to which Paul addresses this letter?
3. What are the problems facing the church in Corinth?
4. How is the letter structured?
5. What are some major themes in 1 Corinthians?
6. What are some of the practical matters Paul addresses in the letter?

<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Paul as Theologian: Romans</b>	<b>Apr 3</b>
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**Read:** Romans  
 INT: Chapter 15  
 + Jessica Van Denend, "The People v. The State: Understanding Romans 13:1-7 in a Maximum-Security Women's Prison"

**Key Terms:** monotheism, creation, covenant, election, supersessionism, eschatology, collection for Jerusalem, righteousness of God, justification by faith, sanctification

**Reading Questions:**

1. When and where did Paul write this letter?
2. Who are the Romans to whom Paul addresses the letter?
3. Why is Paul writing this letter?
4. What is the structure of the letter?
5. What are some major themes in Romans?

<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Pastoral Epistles &amp; Book Discussion</b>	<b>Apr 10</b>
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**Read:** 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus  
 INT: Chapter 19  
 + David Scholar, "A Biblical Basis for Equal Partnership: Women and Men in the Ministry of the Church"  
 + Evangelical Covenant Church, 2006 Covenant Resolution on "Women in Ministry"  
 either *Reading While Block* OR *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts*

**Key Terms:** Pastoral Epistles, Timothy, Titus, parenetic

**Reading Questions:**

1. Why do some scholars question the authorship of these letters and how do other scholars defend Pauline authorship?
2. When and where do these latter scholars suggest Paul wrote them?
3. Why did Paul write them?
4. What are some major themes of these letters?

**Due:** Book Response Essay (#3 in Course Requirements above)

<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Exegesis Part 3 – Quiz #2</b>	<b>Apr 17</b>
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**Read:** BIAR: Chapter 5  
 INT: "Exploring Ideological Texture in a Text," pp. 401-406; "Post-Colonial Criticism and Cultural Studies," pp. 598-601; "Feminist Biblical Criticism," pp. 673-681  
**Due:** Exegesis Part 3 draft  
**Quiz #2**

**UNIT THREE**

<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Catholic Epistles: Jude &amp; 2 Peter – Exegesis Part 4</b>	<b>Apr 24</b>
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**Read:** Jude & 2 Peter (recommended: 1 Peter)  
INT: Chapter 23 (recommended 22)

**Key Terms:** Catholic Epistles, General Epistles, Jude, apostolic faith, Peter, testament genre, Second Temple, proleptical, postapostolic

**Reading Questions:**

1. When and where was Jude written?
2. What do we know about the author and the recipients?
3. What is the crisis facing the recipients of Jude?
4. What is the response the letter offers?
5. What does the letter say about judgment?
6. What does the letter say about “apostolic faith”?
7. When and where was 2 Peter written?
8. What do we know about the author and recipients?
9. What is the form and structure of this letter?
10. How does 2 Peter relate to Jude?
11. What is the problem addressed in 2 Peter? What is the response?

**Due:** Exegesis Part 4 draft

<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Revelation</b>	<b>May 1</b>
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**Read:** Revelation  
INT: Chapter 24  
+ Juan Stam, “Revelation: A Latin American Perspective”  
+ Brian Blount, “The Rap Against Rome: The Spiritual-Blues Impulse and the Hymns of Revelation”

**Key Terms:** John of Patmos, apocalypse, apocalyptic, eschatology, prophecy, dualistic, deterministic, remnant, historical interpretation, idealist interpretation, futurist interpretation

**Reading Questions:**

1. What different genres does the book contain?
2. What are the features of the apocalypse genre?
3. In what ways is Revelation like and unlike other apocalypses?
4. What are some different ways of reading Revelation?
5. When and where was Revelation written?
6. What do we know about the author and the recipients of the book?
7. What are some major themes in Revelation?
8. How is this a book of hope?

**Quiz #3**

<b>Week 16</b>	<b>Wrap-up</b>	<b>May 8</b>
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**Read:** NT Wright, “Bringing It All Together: Making the New Testament Matter for Today”

**Due:** Exegesis Paper final draft (#6 in Course Requirements above)  
NT Book Introduction (#5 in Course Requirements above)