The course is intended to introduce the student to a critical reading and study of the New Testament. It is divided into three parts. The first part deals with general issues related to the study of the Bible. The second deals with methodological concerns. The third with the texts and theology of the New Testament. There are eleven weekly exercises due on or before Friday of the week for which they are assigned. There will be a final exam covering only the material from part 3. With the final project the student will present in class a brief analysis for discussion of a New Testament passage using one of the critical approaches covered in the class. The final grade will depend upon the exercises (50%), final project (25%) and final exam (25%).

Much of the required and recommended reading will be posted on Moodle. If you want to purchase a textbook, either of the following can be acquired through http://astore.amazon.com/dspt-20.


Brown’s introduction is a centrist Catholic presentation of the New Testament. McDonald and Porter is a centrist Protestant presentation. One may disagree with conclusions in either, but they each present the issues fairly.


☞ The Moodle password for this course is *nintro*

☞ See Moodle for Course Bibliography.

☞ On 10 September part of the class period will be devoted to a field trip to the GTU Library to familiarize the student with available tools for basic research in Biblical studies, including bibliographies, reference works, and important periodicals in English. Please print out and bring along the file on Moodle entitled “Tools for Biblical Study.” Available on Moodle is a selection of available (as of 2006) electronic media tools. Check also the following library link: [http://www.gtu.edu/library/electronic-resources](http://www.gtu.edu/library/electronic-resources) Staff can help you with any difficulty.


**IMPORTANT DATES**
- Reading week: 22-26 October
- Class evaluations & Final project due: 10 December
- Final exam: 13 December.

The weekly exercises (N) are found at the end of the syllabus. They are intended both to check your understanding of basic issues and to challenge your ingenuity in reading Biblical passages. None of them should exceed one page in length. Some may be accomplished in a single paragraph. If you consult commentaries, please so indicate. You may submit them to me as an e-mail attachment. Please note the due dates and do not let yourself fall behind.

Final Project. NB: For writing a paper on an exegetical topic, see on Moodle “How to write an exegesis paper” extracted from chapter 12 of Hayes and Holladay.

1. Produce a bibliography on a topic relating to a problem in one or more of the Synoptic Gospels, or the Gospel of John, or the Acts of the Apostles, or the Pauline Corpus.
   The bibliography should consist of at least twenty titles, at least ten of which should be from periodical literature. Include the vol. and page no. of the bibliographic source for each work cited. Articles in encyclopedias or similar works do not count.

2. Describe the methodological approach you would use for writing a paper on the chosen topic.

3. Write a brief (no more than one page) summary outline of a paper you would write on the chosen topic.

Make an appointment to discuss your topic with me before reading week.

[4. If size of class permits, the 10 December session will be devoted to each student making a brief presentation of proposed topic for research.]

The final exam will deal only with Part three and will cover apocalyptic, christological titles, basic concepts in Paul, the gospels, and Hebrews.

**I. BASIC TOOLS FOR BIBLICAL STUDY.**


Learn the Greek Alphabet. While knowledge of the Greek language is not required for this course, it is the language of the New Testament. You should be able to sound out and recognize words that appear in critical articles and commentaries.
The Greek Text.
Aramaic and Latin expressions in the Greek New Testament. Is there an Aramaic substratum to the Gospels?


Text-critical problems: READ E. J. Epp, “Textual Criticism...” 45-63, 69-70 (use of patristic quotations) [on Moodle as Text Criticism].

C. How to find words or phrases in the New Testament.

Use of dictionaries, concordances.
“The Unbound Bible” http://unbound.biola.edu/

Go to exercise 1.


READ Muratorian Fragment [on Moodle]
READ Irenaeus on the Four Gospels [see on Moodle “Development of NT Canon”]
READ Books that didn’t make the cut [see on Moodle “Non-canonical books”]¹
READ “The Nativity of Mary” [on Moodle]

Go to exercise 2.


D. What makes the Bible Inspired? [This section is for reference only, but READ Paretsky, “Notes on the Inspiration of Scripture,” on Moodle.]


II. Critical Methodology.


Go to exercise 3.


Go to exercise 4.


3. Use of Hellenistic material.


Go to exercise 5.


Go to exercise 6.

Go to exercise 7.

B. Form Criticism (Formgeschichte). READ Hayes and Holladay, “Form Criticism: The Genre and Life Setting of the Text,” 104-114 [on Moodle]; David R. Catchpole, “Source, Form and Redaction


Go to exercise 8.

E. Other critical methods:


Go to exercise 9.

[For your information only: Postcolonial Theory. Sugirtharajah, R. S. The Postcolonial Bible (Sheffield [UK]: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).]

III. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF THE new testament.

A. Background Issues for New Testament Study.


5. Messianism in the Late Second Temple Period. See “Messiah” on Moodle; McDonald and Porter, pp. 63-65.

7. Christological Titles. Paretsky, “Notes on Title Christology” [on Moodle]


8. Quest for the Historical Jesus. McDonald and Porter, pp. 100-111.


Go to exercise 10


Go to exercise 11


   c. What is the intertextual relationship between 1 John and the Gospel of John?

6. Hebrews. READ Paretsky, “Notes on Hebrews” [on Moodle]; Brown, pp. 683-703; McDonald and Porter, pp. 517-527;


13 December – Final examination
WEEKLY EXERCISES


Exercise 2 [due 20 Sept]. What features of “The Protoevangelium of James” and the selected passages from the Qur'an dealing with Mary are shared with the canonical gospels and with each other? READ “The Protoevangelium of James” and Qur’an Sura 19:2-40 (Maryam – Mary), Sura 21:89-91 (Al-‘Anbyā’ – the Prophets), Sura 66:12 (Al-Tahreem – the Prohibition), Sura 3:33-59 (ʿĀli-‘Imrān – the Family of ‘Imran [see Exod 6:20]) [on Moodle]


Exercise 4 [due 4 Oct]. (a) Read Mark 6:35-44 and identify Old Testament sources; describe incidents and cite chapter and verse. (b) To whom does Rev 11:3-6 refer? describe incidents and cite chapter and verse. READ Hays, R. B. and J. B. Green, “The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers,” in Green, 222-238 [on Moodle].

Exercise 5 [due 11 Oct]. (a) Read Life of Adam and Eve chapters 6-11 [on Moodle]. How can this account be used to interpret 2 Cor 11:2-15? (b) Compare Herodotus’s account of the birth of Cyrus with Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2.


Exercise 7 [due 1 Nov]. What are the narrative elements shared by John 4:4-30,39-42 and John 11:17-32? What narrative elements does John 20:1-18 share with the these two passages?


Exercise 9 [due 15 Nov]. Write a description of no more than one page of one of the critical methods in §II, E above: rhetorical criticism, structuralism and poststructuralism, reader-response criticism, social-scientific criticism, feminist & gender criticism. If you choose social-scientific, be
sure to include a commentary on the article by Smith on ancient slavery and Philemon. If you choose feminist & gender, be sure to include a commentary on the article by Schneiders.

Exercise 10 [due 29 Nov]. What is the paradox contained in 1 Cor 7:22? How is it related to Rom 6:16-22? Can you relate further to idea behind Gal 5:1? to Phil 2:6-7? Considering Gal 3:28 can 1 Cor 7:22 in the context of 1 Cor chapter 7 have implications for male-female relationship in Christ?