1. **Course description**. This lecture course is intended to introduce the beginning student in theological disciplines 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: language, sources, genres. The second deals with methodological concerns. The third with the texts and theology of the New Testament. There will be a short in-class quiz at the end of each section in lieu of mid-term. There are weekly exercises on methodology which are due on or before Thursday of the week for which they are assigned. 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 course. The final grade will be 50% for the exercises and 50% for the final project.

2. **Course objectives**.

- The student will be able to discuss the traditions that make up the New Testament, their foundation in Second Temple Judaism and background in the Greco-Roman World or the First Century CE.
- The student will have a grasp of the distinctive Christology, soteriology, and eschatology of each of the different New Testament writings as they are transformed from the time of Jesus to the beginning of the Second Century CE.
- The student will be able to discuss the intertextuality of the Old Testament and New Testament and the intertextuality of the New Testament books themselves.
- The student will be able to distinguish the particular concerns of each of the gospels and of the epistles.
- In light of the above the student will understand the New Testament as the principal foundation of the theological disciplines.
- The final project will reflect the student’s knowledge of the tools and methodologies for researching and writing on New Testament issues.

3. **Textbooks**. 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](http://astore.amazon.com/dspt-20).


Recommended with some reservations is

The background material is very good as is the description of content of the books. The treatment of some questions of authorship and dating is sometimes superficial or eccentric, not in accord with most mainstream biblicists. Pauline issues tend to emphasize Lutheran readings.

The following works are frequently referred to in the syllabus and will be identified by author only. NOTE: Required readings and supplementary material are posted on Moodle.


For resources for biblical study see 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.

On September 9th part of the class period will be taken up with a field trip to the GTU library to introduce you to important resources (that is, books and periodicals) and how to use them.

4. The weekly exercises (♣) 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.
5. **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.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

- Reading week: 21-25 October
- Thanksgiving day: 28 November – No class
- Depending on the size of the class, the final projects will be presented on the 5th, 9th, and 12th of December.

**I. BACKGROUND ISSUES FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDY.**


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

4. Scripture, memory, and identity.


7. Messianism in the Late Second Temple Period. See “Messiah” [on Moodle]

II. ISSUES FOR NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM


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.

**D. CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

- 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”]
- READ “The Nativity of Mary” [on Moodle]

**Go to exercise 2.**


**III. CRITICAL METHODOLOGY.**


**Go to exercise 3.**


**Go to exercise 4.**


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3. Use of Hellenistic material.


Go to exercise 5.


Go to exercise 6.

Go to exercise 7.


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).]

IV. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. FUNDAMENTAL CONCERNS


B. THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.


Go to exercise 10


Go to exercise 11


   For class discussion: Read and compare the Letter of Jude and 2 Peter. What do they have in common? How do the common elements differ?

8. Post-New Testament use of the Gospels. The pseudepigraphal writings were discussed with the development of the canon. How was this development reflected in the Qur‘an?

Go to exercise 11
WEEKLY EXERCISES


Exercise 3 [due 26 Sep]. (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 4 [due 3 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 6 [due 17 Oct]. 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 8 [due 7 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 9 [due 14 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 Corinthians chapter 7 have implications for male-female relationship in Christ?


Exercise 11 [due 5 Dec]. What features of “The Protoevangelium of James” [on Moodle] 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-Andyaya’ – the Prophets), Sura 66:12 (Al-Tahreem – the Prohibition), Sura 3:33-59 (Āli-‘Imrān – the Family of ‘Imran [see Exod 6:20]) [on Moodle]