

New Testament History & Religion

BIB 102 - Section 3 (TR)
Spring, 2007
Point Loma Nazarene University

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I. Course Description

Within the context of Christian origins, an overview of the canonical literature of the New Testament with special attention to its literary history and theological themes. (PLNU Catalog).

New Testament History and religion is designed to help the general college student understand the literary, historical, and theological aspects of the New Testament, and to develop skills useful for meaningful personal Bible Study. If this course serves its purpose, students will feel more comfortable reading and studying Scripture with the goal of understanding its message and its impact on their own spiritual journey and for the life of the Church of which they are a part. This course is designed to provide a foundation for a lifetime engagement with the Bible and the New Testament as part of the larger message of Scripture.

The methodology of the course will be to consider the New Testament as testimony and witness, the various ways men and women of Faith have told about the interaction between God and people in the coming of Jesus who is the Christ. This testimony takes many different forms in Scripture that include recollection, personal letters, preaching, teaching, contemplation, disputation, correction, encouragement, and historical reflection. As a result the literature of the New Testament uses a range of literary styles to communicate its message. This course will examine not only the various kinds of literature of the New Testament used to bear witness to Jesus as the Son of God, but also the historical and cultural context of that testimony, always with a view to hearing what the text says about God, about human beings, and about our relationship with God.

This course is one of the components of the General Education Program at PLNU, under the category of "Responding to the Sacred." By including this course in a common educational experience for undergraduates, the faculty supports the study of Scripture and Christian heritage as foundational in the pursuit of knowledge and the development of personal values.

II. Objectives of the Course

The readings, lectures, and class interaction of this course aims to enable the student to:

- ..become acquainted with the basic content of the New Testament, including persons, events, general themes, and significant theological affirmations.
- ..recognize the literary structures and forms used in the New Testament and understand their importance for interpretation.
- ..become familiar with the historical, cultural, and social context of the New testament writings.
- ..gain some expertise in reading and studying the New Testament using historical, literary and theological methods.
- ..come to an appreciation of the New Testament as Christian Scripture and its application to both corporate and personal spiritual growth and Christian living.

III. Textbooks

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed.; Zondervan, 2003

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*, Zondervan, 2002.

The New Interpreter's Study Bible, Abingdon, 2003

M. Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation: The Hermeneutical and Theological Implications of the Article on the Holy Scriptures in the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*. PLNU Monograph Series 4. San Diego: Point Loma Press, 2004.

Other required readings as assigned: <http://www.crivoice.org/PLNU/NT/BIB102.html>

IV. Class Schedule, Course Outline, and Textbook Readings

All sections listed in the reading will be included in the corresponding Unit Exam. You are expected to read this material before the time indicated as preparation for class discussion. *A word to the wise: Since there is a lot of reading for this course, it is better to plan a little reading each day throughout the semester, taking notes on important persons, events, and ideas as you read. You will not do well on exams if you try to "cram" a lot of reading into a short amount of time.*

A note about the Bible readings: In addition to the biblical texts assigned, you are expected to read all of the additional material in *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*, including the Excurses, Book introductions, outlines, and footnotes.

The following schedule is tentative, and may be adjusted based on class response and interest. All of the web readings are located on the web site: <http://www.crivoice.org/PLNU/NT/BIB102.html>. These Readings are NOT available in EClass.

BB= *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* AW=*How to read the Bible for all Its Worth* NISB=*New Interpreter's Study Bible*

Date	Course Outline	Text/Assigned Readings	Biblical Readings
Week 1	Introduction A. Faith Journeys B. Why Study Scripture? C. Two types of Bible reading	(Web) " What I Learned from My First Bible Class " AW, 17-31; (Web) " Beginning Bible Study " (Web) " Devotional and Exegetical Reading "; " The Problem with 'Plain Sense' Reading of Scripture "	
Week 2	I. NT Backgrounds A. Contexts 1. the NT canon 2. translations 3. the world of the NT 4. Greco-Roman context	BB 9-20 AW, 33-53 NISB, Maps 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 NISB, 2297-2298; (Web) " Key Biblical Dates "; " Palestine under the Herods "; " First Century Roman Political Rulers of Palestine "	
Jan 23	Map Quiz		
Week 3	B. Methods and Tools 1. inspiration and revelation 2. Scripture as literature 3. interpreting Scripture	Lodahl, 7-50; NISB, 2243-2259; (Web) " Revelation and Inspiration of Scripture "; (Web) " Guidelines for Interpreting Biblical Narrative " NISB, 2261-2273	
Jan 30	Exam 1	Introduction, Unit 1, Lodahl, People	
Week 4	II. Synoptic Gospels/Acts A. Introduction to the Gospels 1. what is a Gospel? 2. the historical Jesus 3. honesty with the text	AW, 127-162 (Web) " The Gospel of Thomas " (Web) " The Synoptic Problem "; " The Time of the Crucifixion "	
Week 5	B. Mark	BB, 267-268, 277-285; NISB, 1801-1845	Mark
Week 6	C. Matthew	BB, 269-276; NISB, 1745-1800	Matthew
Week 7	D. Luke	BB, 286-295; NISB, 1847-1903	Luke
Week 8	E. Acts	AW, 107-125; BB, 296-303; NISB, 1953-2006	Acts
Mar 1	Exam 2	Unit II, People	
Week 9	III. Paul and the Church A. NT epistles B. Paul the Apostle C. letters to the Churches 1. occasional letters	BB, 315-316; AW, 55-87; (Web) " New Testament Letters and Epistles " BB, 340-346; 353-358; 364-372; 387-389; NISB, 2079-2088; 2099-2106; 2115-2127; 2147-2150	1-2 Thess, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon
Week 10	2. the Corinthian letters 3. the letter to the Romans D. the Pauline tradition 1. theological letters	BB, 324-339; NISB, 2035-2077 BB, 317-323; NISB, 2007-2034 BB, 347-352; 359-363; NISB, 2089-2098; 2107-2113	1 and 2 Corinthians Romans Ephesians, Colossians
Week 11	1. the Pastoral Epistles IV. General Epistles A. Hebrews	BB, 373-386; NISB, 2129-2146 BB, 390-396; NISB, 2151-2170	1 and 2 Timothy, Titus Hebrews
Week 12	B. James C. Petrine letters and Jude	BB, 397-401; NISB, 2171-2179 BB, 402-410; 423-425; NISB-2181-2193; 2207-2209	James 1, 2 Peter; Jude
Apr 3	Exam 3	Units III-IV, People	
Week 13	IV. John/Johannine Literature A. The Johannine community B. John	BB, 304-313; NISB 1905-1951 BB, 411-422; NISB 2195-2206	
Week 14	C. The Epistles D. Apocalyptic literature	AW, 249-264; (Web) " Interpreting the Book of Revelation "	1, 2, 3 John
Week 15	E. The Revelation	BB, 426-436; NISB, 2211-2240	The Revelation
May 8	Final Exam:	Unit V, Comprehensive	

A note about internet resources: There are a lot of good resources online, as well as a lot of junk! Be aware that not all internet sites are a good source for outside reading or for biblical study resources. One of the best portal sites for biblical study is [The Text this Week \(http://www.textweek.com/\)](http://www.textweek.com/). It is organized around the lectionary readings of the Church Year, but there is also an [index by biblical books](#). There are links to many helpful articles on various aspects of biblical history and interpretation. There are also a variety of articles and Bible Studies on the [CRI/Voice](#) site that you might find helpful.

V. Course Requirements

1) Reading

Attached is a checklist of the assigned biblical readings. You should check off this list as you read the material. Do not count any biblical readings that you have read before the start of this course or any that you intend to read in the future. You may only report as read those chapters that you have read for this class and during this semester. The report of this reading on the checklist is due **May 3**. Reading will count for 10% of the course grade. *NOTE: The reporting of this reading is on the honor system. You will be expected to demonstrate honesty and personal integrity in reporting your readings.* On the other hand, it is unlikely that you will do well on exams without reading the material.

2) Geography of the New Testament World

There will be a short in-class quiz covering significant areas and locations in the New Testament world. Students are responsible for compiling the information and preparing for the quiz using the maps in the back of *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. A data study guide is provided listing the locations that will be covered in these quizzes. The quiz will consist of outline maps on which to locate these places. Practice maps are available on the website. This quiz will be taken on January 23 and will count for 8% of the course grade.

3) People of the New Testament

The data study guide also includes significant people of the New Testament and some key NT chapters. A section of each exam will include facts about the people related to that Unit of study. The final exam will also include a section covering all of the people on the study guide. While some of these people may be discussed in class lectures, **the student is responsible for compiling the information and preparing for this part of the exams.** Resources to consult are Bible Dictionaries, such as *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (1996), or *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1998). These are available in the reference section of the library. There are several online Bible dictionaries, such as *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, but they are sometimes less reliable.

4) Weekly Worksheets

Periodically throughout the semester (about 10 times) worksheets will be assigned. These will cover various aspects of the material in the reading and classroom discussion. Due dates will depend on the assignment, but will normally be the class period after they are assigned. These will count for 40% of the course grade (10 worksheets @ 4% each). *Caution: These worksheets must be handed in on the date due. Since they relate to the current classroom discussion and reading, they cannot be made up later! Also note that they comprise a large percentage of the course grade!*

5) Exams

There will be four exams, three unit exams and a final that will include the last unit as well as material from the entire course. Exams will cover both the textbooks and class lectures, including biblical reading, and will count for 45% of the course grade (3 Unit exams @ 10% and the Unit exam/final @ 15%). Note that the first Unit Exam will also cover the booklet *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation* by M. Lodahl. **NOTE: Keep in mind while reading and taking class notes that these exams count for a large percentage of the course grade. You will not do well on the exams without reading the textbooks carefully AND taking careful class notes.** Group study is often helpful for these exams. Exam dates: Unit 1: January 30; Unit 2: March 1; Units 3-4: April 3; Unit 5/Final: May 8.

6) Extra Credit

There will be opportunity to do a limited amount of extra credit work that will be accepted at the discretion of the professor. This option is given to allow students who have unexpected problems arise during the semester the opportunity to catch up or is offered to those who want to excel. It is not intended to provide an escape for students who do not regularly hand in assignments, who are habitually late with assignments, or who simply do not study for tests. Information on this will be provided about mid-term. While you may do the extra credit work any time during the semester, no work for extra credit will be accepted finally unless all regular assignments have been completed. Only students who have not missed more than 3 class periods will be allowed to count extra credit points in their grade. Maximum credit for all extra credit work is 5 percentage points of the course grade. This will not be

averaged into the grade, but will simply be added directly to the grade. NOTE: Extra credit work is not an automatic grade. It will be graded just like any other assignment. Extra credit work will not be accepted after April 26!

VI. GRADING

Exams and papers will be given a numerical grade of 0-100, which represents a percentage of credit for the assignment. Grades for this course will be posted on EClass (Blackboard) as soon as they are available.

Grading scale:

94-100 A	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	below 60 F
90-93 A-	83-86 B	73-76 C	63-66 D	
	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-	

NOTE - A word about grading: Since this is an undergraduate course, average work is considered a C. The process of grading will assume that as a rule undergraduate students will be working at a “C” level. Papers handed in late receive 80% credit. Students should ask the professor if there are any questions about the grading.

Factors considered in grading essays and research papers (roughly in order of importance):

1. How well the paper addresses the topic and expresses understanding of the church tradition
2. Demonstrated thought and reflection about the topic
3. Clarity and coherence of thought, good organization, smooth transitions
4. Amount and quality of reading done
5. References in the paper to specific sources read
6. Length of paper relative to assignment, adequate margins, correct spelling, proper grammar, neat appearance
7. Engaging style, readability, creativity
8. A separate bibliography page with references in proper form

Assignment Summary:	Weight	Due Dates
Geography Quiz	6%	January 23
Weekly Worksheets (10 @ 4%)	40%	Due as Assigned
4 Exams (40%) Unit 1	10%	Jan 30
Unit 2	10%	March 1
Units 3-4	10%	April 3
Unit 5, Final	14%	May 8
Reading	10%	May 3
<i>Extra Credit (maximum % points)</i>	5%	<i>No later than April 26</i>

VII. CLASS POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Given the nature of this course and the importance of class interaction regular attendance and participation is imperative. The attendance policies of PLNU as outlined in the 2006-2007 school catalog will be followed in this class. There are no excused absences unless directly related to University activities and approved in writing by the Provost.

Any student who misses 10% of the class (MWF=5; TR=3) will be warned by e-mail and a report to the Vice-Provost for Academic Administration that de-enrollment is pending. If absences reach 20% of the course (MWF=9; TR=6) the student will automatically be de-enrolled. Note that de-enrollment after the last day for dropping a class will result in a grade of F or NC. Absences are counted from the first day of class regardless of the time the student enrolled in the class. Excessive tardiness or leaving class early will count as an absence. It is the student's responsibility to sign the roll sheet. If extra credit work is offered, only students who have not missed more than 3 hours of class (MWF=3 classes; TR=2 classes) will be allowed to count extra credit points in their grade.

Technology Policy

Cell phones (including Blackberrys, etc.) should be turned off or to silent mode during class. Answering a phone during class will be considered leaving class. Students with any kind of audio headset (phone or music) in class will be counted absent. Laptop computers or PDAs are allowed in class **only at the discretion of the professor**. Any student using a laptop or PDA in class for any other purpose than taking class notes or referencing class material will be counted absent and may not be allowed to use a laptop in class.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please consult the Undergraduate school catalog in the section “The Academic Program” under the heading “Academic Honesty” (p. 61) to learn the professor’s intended policy regarding student dishonesty in academic work. Academic Dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic F on that assignment without the possibility of making up the assignment. A second violation will result in dismissal from the course with a grade of F. Signing roll sheets for another student is considered a breach of academic integrity and will result in an automatic absence for *both* students and a report to the Vice-Provost for Academic Administration

ESL Policy

If your first language is not English, consult with the professor for possible accommodations.

Learning Disability Assistance:

All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who have submitted appropriate documentation to the Academic Support Center (ASC) and may need accommodations should discuss options with the ASC during the first two weeks of the class. The ASC, at the request of the student, will then contact the instructor with suggested classroom strategies and recommended academic accommodations for this course. Approved documentation must be on file in the ASC prior to the beginning of the semester.

Inclusive Language Policy:

The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the department urges students, faculty and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings.

Miscellaneous

1. It is the responsibility of the student to read the syllabus and fulfill the requirements of particular assignments and the course. Excuses such as “I didn’t know” will not be accepted.
2. It is the student’s responsibility to sign the roll sheet each day.
2. **All assigned work is due at the beginning of class on the day due.** Assignments handed in after class time will be considered late. Except under extenuating circumstances, late work will receive only 80% credit. Work more than one week late may not be accepted. No late work or extra credit work will be accepted after April 26.
3. Because of a large number of students, all written assignments must be submitted in hard copy in class. The Eclass dropbox is not available for this course. Students should not attempt to hand in assignments by e-mail.
4. Students should arrange their schedules to insure that they take examinations at the scheduled time. In no case may any exam be taken early, and make up tests will be permitted only in very extraordinary circumstances and only with prior approval (8:00 AM the day of the exam will not normally be considered “prior”). Students do not have the option of choosing when to take exams. “Not feeling well” will NOT be considered a valid reason for missing an exam! Make-up tests will be at the discretion of the professor. Normally, an exam not taken at the scheduled time will only receive 50% credit. Students should not make travel plans at the end of the semester that interfere with the final no matter when it is scheduled. As per school policy, students who have more than two final exams falling on the same day may make arrangements ahead of time for an alternate exam schedule. **These arrangements must be made at least four weeks prior to the final exam.**