

EAST TEXAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

SYLLABUS FOR MINISTRY (MINS) 1114

New Testament 1: The Interbiblical Period and the Gospels

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION: a study of the interbiblical period and the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. Attention will be given to the historical and literary background and the theological aspects of the Gospel literature.

II. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Bible

Achtemeier, Paul J., Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson. *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Chapter 1. What is the New Testament?

1. Students will identify and place in their respective genres the 27 books of the NT.
2. Students will explain the significance of studying the NT “books” in light of their variety.
3. Students will explain the significance of acknowledging the historical character of the NT documents and distinguish between giving attention to the history “within the text” and the history “behind the text.”
4. Students will explain the significance of reading the NT as part of the Bible that begins with the Old Testament.
5. Students will suggest what dispositions and sensitivities ought to accompany the reading of the NT as Scripture.

Chapter 2. The Many Worlds of the New Testament

1. Students will identify what writers and resources provide material for understanding the socio-historical picture of 1st century Palestine.
2. Students will contrast the socio-historical realities of the 1st century Mediterranean world with the world as the NT materials actualize it.
3. Students will discuss whether the early Christian movement should be read against a Hellenistic or Jewish background.
4. Students will define Hellenism, relate such to the achievements of Alexander the Great, and discuss the significance of Hellenism for understanding the NT and the diversity within 1st century Judaism.
5. Students will identify the following: the Ptolemies, the Seleucids, Antiochus IV, and Hasmonean rule.
6. Students will identify the significance of the following dates: 336-323 BCE, 175, 167-164, 150-100, 37-4, ca. 6-4; 26-36 CE, 30 (or 33?), ca. 33-35, 66-70.

7. Students will identify the general borders and primary aims of the 1st century Roman Empire.
8. Students will describe the form (structure) and extent (tax burden) of the Roman tax system.
9. Students will identify and illustrate the diverse responses within Judaism (e.g., Apocalypticism, Pharisees, etc.) to the threat of cultural assimilation brought on by its domination by foreign powers.
10. Students will identify and briefly discuss the shared elements of common Judaism of the Second Temple period.
11. Students will give a brief account of the uncertainties of peasant life.
12. Students will briefly explain the role of wealth, clubs, and religion in urban life of the 1st century.
13. Students will define “legitimization” and illustrate how the Temple and the Scriptures functions in this regard in 1st century Judaism.
14. Students will define *domus* and describe the extent of the father’s legal rights in the Greco-Roman world.
15. Students will describe the patron-client relationship and how such functioned in the Roman Empire.
16. Students will describe the relationship between wealth and status and distinguish between ascription and performance as a source of honor.

Chapter 3. The Nature of the Gospels

1. Students will identify, discuss, and evaluate the concerns, presuppositions, and results of David Strauss’s quest for the historical Jesus.
2. Students will identify William Wrede, Albert Schweitzer, and Rudolf Bultmann with respect to their contributions to the quest for the historical Jesus.
3. Students will identify and illustrate Ernst Troeltsch’s three principles of historical inquiry and illustrate their significance for the research in the Gospels.
4. Students will identify and illustrate use of the criteria of authenticity used in the Second Quest for the historical Jesus.
5. Students will discuss the background of the use of the term “gospel” in Isaiah and in the larger Roman world.
6. Students will discuss the relationship between life in early Christian communities and the oral transmission of the Jesus-material.
7. Students will define “Synoptic” and outline the evidence for a literary relationship between Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
8. Students will identify and evaluate the various possibilities for Synoptic relationships (e.g., the Two-Document Hypothesis).
9. Students will identify the purpose of ancient genealogies in general and the function of the genealogies in Matthew and Luke in particular.
10. Students will explain the setting and function of symposia and illustrate the unconventional character of Jesus’ table-fellowship.
11. Students will define “parable” in terms of literary form and indicate something of the function of the parables in Jesus’ teaching.
12. Students will distinguish between “historical knowledge” and a concern for “what actually happened.”

13. Students will identify and illustrate from the Gospels the six elements that contribute to the overall dynamic of narrative: aim, sequence, timing, characters, point of view, and presuppositions.

Chapter 4. The Gospel According to Matthew

1. Students will identify and illustrate how the Gospel of Matthew addresses the question of continuity (Israel, Jesus, and Church).
2. Students will explain how the first and last words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew indicate basic emphases of the Gospel.
3. Students will illustrate how the birth narratives in the Gospel of Matthew relate Jesus to both his Jewish heritage and the Gentile world.
4. Students will illustrate and explain how in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus relates the authority of the Torah to his own authority as interpreter of God's will.
5. Students will illustrate and explain the significance of Jesus' healing ministry (8:1-9:34) in light of the cultural context of ancient Palestine.
6. Students will illustrate and account for the increasing opposition Jesus encounters in his ministry as depicted in Matthew 11:1-12:50.
7. Students will briefly discuss the "character of the church's inner life" as presented in Matthew 18:1-35.
8. Students will identify what accusations Jesus levels against the Scribes and Pharisees (and Church) in Matthew 23.
9. Students will indicate how Jesus answers the disciples' two-part question of Matt. 24:3.
10. Students will briefly discuss the significance of the resurrection for Matthew's presentation of Jesus.
11. Students will relate the concern with identity (relations with outsiders/internal cohesion) to Matthew's depiction of the scribes and Pharisees.

Chapter 5. The Gospel According to Mark

1. Students will identify and briefly discuss the three features of narrative that contribute to its usefulness in communicating the significance/identity of Jesus.
2. Students will identify the two apparently conflicting images of Jesus as presented in the Gospel of Mark and indicate how the Gospel of Mark relates them to one another.
3. Students will illustrate how the two motifs of conflict and discipleship relate to the issue of the identity of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.
4. Students will illustrate ways in which the Gospel of Mark gives expression to Jesus' status as a conqueror of evil.
5. Students will identify in what ways Jesus' feeding miracles challenged the conventional social and purity lines of Israel.
6. Students will identify and briefly discuss the "mixed" picture concerning disciples and discipleship in Mark 1:16-8:26.
7. Students will identify and briefly discuss the three ways the Gospel of Mark relates Christology and discipleship in Mark 8:27-15:11.
8. Students will discuss and illustrate the use of irony in Mark's account of the crucifixion.

9. Students will identify and briefly discuss what two motifs are brought together in Mark's account of the empty tomb.
10. Students will identify reasons why the abrupt ending of Mark is preferred and what possible significance the abrupt ending might have.
11. Students will discuss the issues related to the authorship of the Gospel of Mark including anonymity, the Papias quote, and the "implied author."
12. Students will discuss the range of dates possible for the writing of the Gospel of Mark and the likely historical setting and character of the original audience.

Chapter 6. The Gospel According to Luke

1. Students will identify and illustrate how Luke/Acts achieves the four purposes (interrelated benefits) of ancient historiography.
2. Students will indicate and evaluate what evidence exists for the traditional authorship of Luke/Acts.
3. Students will discuss what factors were at work to separate Luke and Acts into distinct volumes.
4. Students will identify what concerns Luke addresses in the prologue to his Gospel.
5. Students will identify and illustrate the two features used to structure and indicate the meaning of the birth narrative in Luke's Gospel.
6. Students will briefly discuss how his encounter with the devil in the wilderness relates to Jesus' identity as the Son of God.
7. Students will identify the background and broad content of the synagogue sermon given by Jesus in Nazareth.
8. Students will identify and illustrate ways in which hospitality and table-fellowship relate to the character of discipleship as depicted in the travel narrative of Luke 9:51-19:48.
9. Students will illustrate and explain the use of irony in Luke's account of the death of Jesus.
10. Students will relate features of economic practice in ancient Mediterranean life to the warnings about wealth in the Gospel of Luke.
11. Students will discuss the place of Israel in God's plan of salvation according to Luke.

Chapter 7. The Gospel According to John

1. Students will identify and explain the significance of the twin affirmations concerning the significance of "the Word" with which the Gospel of John begins.
2. Students will illustrate and indicate the significance of the use of the wisdom motif in the prologue of John's Gospel (1:1-18).
3. Students will indicate and illustrate how the titles of "Messiah" and "prophet" function in the Gospel of John in light of conventional Jewish expectations.
4. Students will illustrate and indicate the significance of the themes of misunderstanding and recognition of Jesus' identity with reference to Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, and Jesus' signs.
5. Students will illustrate and indicate the significance of Johannine irony.

6. Students will explain how the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection narratives of the Gospel of John highlight the tensions of judgment and revelation.
7. Students will illustrate and indicate the significance of the differences between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John with reference to Jesus' teachings and miracles.
8. Students will discuss the purpose of the Gospel of John with respect to the Gospel's relationship with Judaism.

Chapter 8. Jesus of Nazareth

1. Students will define and discuss the pros and cons of "the quest for the historical Jesus."
2. Students will summarize what are appropriate guidelines for engaging in the quest for the historical Jesus.
3. Students will briefly discuss the significance of John the Baptist's activity in the wilderness and of the baptism of Jesus.
4. Students will discuss the phrase "kingdom of God" in the teaching of Jesus with respect to its reference of "reign" or "realm."
5. Students will outline the five factors that pervade all expectations of the Kingdom of God rooted in the Old Testament.
6. Students will discuss and identify biblical materials concerning the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus concerning the following:
 - a. Present and future aspects of the Kingdom
 - b. The identity and character of the righteous
 - c. Fellowship and social boundaries
 - d. Israel's sovereignty and the nations
7. Students will relate Jesus' miracles to the issues of his identity as Messiah and the presence and character of the Kingdom of God.
8. Students will illustrate the variety of expectations associated with hope for a Messiah in the literature of Second Temple Judaism (e.g., Psalms of Solomon, Dead Sea Scrolls).
9. Students will explain how Jesus' "triumphal entry" and his actions in the Temple "enact" his messianic vocation.
10. Students will identify the background and use by Jesus of the phrase "Son of man."
11. Students will briefly discuss how Jesus interpreted his own death on the cross.
12. Students will outline the reasons why both Roman and Jewish authorities considered Jesus enough of a threat that he had to be put to death.
13. Students will discuss various views of the resurrection of Jesus with respect to a) "general resurrection" and b) alternative explanations for Jesus' resurrection.

IV. COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE[‡]

INT = *Introducing the New Testament*, Achtemeier, Green, and Thompson

Week 1:

Hour One: Registration

Hour Two: Review of the Certificate in Ministry, Introduction to Course

Hour Three: What is the New Testament?
[INT Chapter 1: What Is the New Testament?]

Week 2:

Hour One: The Social, Cultural, and Historical Background of the New Testament
[INT Chapter 2: The World of the New Testament]

Hour Two: The Historical Jesus and the Nature of the Gospels
[INT Chapter 3: The Nature of the Gospels]

Hour Three: The Gospel of Mark
[INT Chapter 5: The Gospel according to Mark]

Week 3:

Hour One: The Gospel of Mark (*continued*)

Hour Two: The Gospel of Matthew
[INT Chapter 4: The Gospel according to Matthew]

Hour Three: The Gospel of Luke
[INT Chapter 6: The Gospel according to Luke]

Week 4:

Hour One: The Gospel of Luke (*continued*)

Hour Two: The Gospel of John
[INT Chapter 7: The Gospel according to John]

Hour Three: Jesus of Nazareth
[INT Chapter 8: Jesus of Nazareth]

Week 5

Final Exam

‡ **The course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.**

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Students should overview the pertinent biblical material and read the assigned pages in the textbook prior to each class session.

B. Students will complete one examination.

VI. COURSE ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES:

- Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Please be in class and be on time. An automatic failing grade will be given if the allowed percentage of absences set by East Texas Baptist University is exceeded. According to school policy, to be eligible to earn credit in a course, the student must attend at least 75% of all class meetings. Students **must attend a minimum of twelve** of the fifteen one-hour class sessions in order to be eligible to receive credit.
- Please turn off all electronic equipment that makes a sound during class (e.g., cell phones, PDA alarms, and beepers). **If you are seen using your cell phone for any purpose (calling, text messaging, etc.) and/or if you are seen listing to an ipod or any other electronic devise that does not pertain to the day's subject matter, you will be asked to leave the class, and you will be counted as absent for the day.**
- Students who must leave early are asked to give notification to the professor in advance.
- Constant tardiness as well as constant early departures will incur a semester grade percentage reduction of five (5)%, at the discretion of the professor.

- Although I do understand that a state of sleepiness can attack anyone at anytime, especially in a classroom, please do not make it a habit in class, and certainly, please do not lay your head on the desk and sleep, because you will be asked to leave the class and encouraged to go home to rest; **you will also be counted as absent for the day.**
- Please do not spend class time working on assignments for another class. If it becomes known that you have done so, **you will be counted as absent for the day.**

VII. COURSE GRADING

The grade for the course will be determined by the grade on the Final Examination. The grading scale is:

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

VIII. SUGGESTED READING

Barrett, C. K. *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961.

Beare, F. W. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

Boren, H. C. *The Ancient World: An Historical Perspective*. 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1986.

Bruce, F. F. *Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1954.

_____. *The Books and the Parchments*. Revised ed. Westwood: New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1953.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *The Gospel of John*. Translated by G. R. Beasley-Murray. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971.

Burkert, Walter. *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Carson, Donald A. *From Triumphalism to Maturity*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.

Collins, Adela Yarboro. *Christ and Catharsis*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984.

Danker, F. W. *Luke*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Falk, Harvey. *Jesus and the Pharisee: A New Look at the Jewishness of Jesus*. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

- Farmer, W. B. *Jesus and the Gospel: Tradition, Scripture, and Canon*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.
- Farmer, William R. *The Synoptic Problem*. New York: Macmillan, 1964.
- Finkelstein, Louis. *The Pharisees*. Vols. 1 & 2. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962.
- Fox, R. L. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Knopf, 1987.
- Greenlee, J. Harold. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964.
- Hendriksen, William. *More Than Conquerors*. 6th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.
- Johnson, Richard W. *Going Outside the Camp: The Sociological Function of the Levitical Critique in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 209. Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Kee, H. C. *Jesus in History: An Approach to the Study of the Gospels*. 2d ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.
- Ladd, G. E. *The Blessed Hope*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956.
- Lohse, Eduard. *The New Testament Environment*. Translated by J. E. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976.
- Malina, Bruce J. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. 3d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Pfeiffer, Charles F. *Between the Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959.
- Pfeiffer, Robert H. *History of New Testament Times*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949.
- Reicke, Bo. *The New Testament Era: The World of the Bible from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100*. Translated by David E. Green. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.

- Russell, D. S. *Between the Testaments*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965.
- Shepherd, Massey H., Jr. "Are Both the Synoptics and John Correct About the Date of Jesus' Death?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80 (1961): 123-32.
- Stein, Robert H. *The Synoptic Problem* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.
- Tenney, Merrill C. *New Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961.
- _____. *New Testament Times*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965.
- Witherington III, Ben. *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*, 2nd ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Wright, N. T. *Christian Origins and the People of God*. Vol. 1, *The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.
- _____. *Christian Origins and the People of God*. Vol. 2, *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- _____. *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- _____. *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- _____. *Christian Origins and the People of God*. Vol. 3, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.