



**Course Syllabus  
Fall Semester 2011**

**NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY AND HISTORY  
NEWT 0522**

**September 13 to December 6, 2011  
TUESDAYS, 6:30-9:20 PM**

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## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course we survey the New Testament, focusing on its over-arching vision of God's mission in the world and how human beings are called to respond. Each book will be placed in its cultural and historical setting as we focus on its distinctive contribution to the New Testament. Along the way students will be introduced to critical methods for studying the New Testament and will reflect on how we can integrate scholarly perspectives with a conviction that the New Testament is the word of God.

## **II. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course students gaining a "B" grade will be able to *interpret a passage in the New Testament well*. For our purposes this means being able to:

- make careful and detailed observations about the text,
- describe the how the text was meant to transform the thoughts, feelings, and actions of its first-century audience; and
- accurately identify an analogous transformation that could take place in a specific contemporary community.

In forming this interpretation of a passage students should be able to take into account:

- the historical and cultural context in which the passage was written,

- the context of the book in which the passage is found (including its genre, themes, rhetoric, and literary structure),
- the relationship of a Gospel passage to other parallel episodes,
- the forms, rhetoric, and literary devices employed in the passage,
- the context of the whole biblical canon (including the over-arching biblical story and theological themes running through the canon), and
- the implications of biblical inspiration.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Charles B. Cousar, *Introduction to the New Testament: Witnesses to God's New Work* (Wesminster John Knox, 2006).

Ian W. Scott, *Witnesses of Hope: A Pathway into the New Testament* (This is a work in progress, available free-of-charge at <http://www.tyndale.ca/~iscott/Witnesses/>).

A copy of the Bible in one of the following translations: NIV, TNIV, NRSV, NJB, NET Bible, CEV

*(Note that the NASB is not preferred, and please do not use the KJV or Authorized Version, or the RSV. Loose translations such as the New Living Translation, the New English Bible, and the Message are also not appropriate for this kind of study. If you do not own an appropriate translation you may use the electronic copies available online at Bible Gateway, <http://www.biblegateway.com/>).*

#### B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There are four principles of learning that undergird the assignments for this course. *First, we learn best when we put new knowledge to use right away.* Rather than simply feeding information back to an instructor, we learn best when we are engaged in a project or problem that requires us to apply our new skills and information. So, throughout this course we will focus on applying our new knowledge in the interpretation of NT passages.

*Second, we learn better when we acquire new knowledge in the context of the same activities we will pursue outside the course.* If we learn by pursuing artificial “textbook” problems, then we will not necessarily transfer that knowledge into real-world contexts. On the other hand, if we practice real-world activities from the beginning, then we are likely to use new skills and information beyond the course. Although students will put their Seminary education to use in many different ways, we will all be involved somehow in reading and interpreting Scripture. This activity is, in many ways, the common core of our multi-faceted

roles in God's kingdom. It is central to our personal devotional lives, our leading of small groups, our strategizing about community outreach, our preaching, our teaching, our spiritual direction, our counseling, our visiting of prisoners, our creation of music and works of art, etc. So as we learn about the New Testament in its context, we will focus at each stage on how this new knowledge helps us to interpret specific passages in each biblical book.

*Third, we learn best when we are pursuing questions we form for ourselves, rather than questions that are set for us by an instructor.* When we help to set the direction of our own learning, we are immediately more motivated and more likely to connect what we learn with other areas of knowledge. So students will decide for themselves what questions they want to make the focus of their blog discussions and what passage they want to examine in their final interpretation essay.

*Fourth, we learn best when we help one another grapple with questions.* Much of the North American educational system is oriented toward isolated, individual learning. This fosters a competitive, status-driven mindset in which I evaluate my learning based on my victory over others ("top-of-the-class") and based on self-centred external rewards ("grades" and a good transcript). The problem is that both of these tendencies run directly counter to the values of God's kingdom in which we are called to "build up" the community and sacrifice our own status for the sake of others. So most of your learning activities in this course will consist of co-operative, group activities. You will not just be graded on your own contribution. You will also be graded on how further the learning of others in your group. This does not mean being an "expert" and dispensing knowledge. It also means helping your group members to ask good questions. In many cases we build others up best by allowing *them* to teach *us*. So part of your group assignments will also involve inviting your group members to reflect on your own suggestions—what is strong and what is missing or incorrect. This is often a threatening experience for all of us, particularly in such an individualistic society.

- **Contribution to In-Class Group Discussions:** 45% of final grade

Students will participate in small- and large-group discussions in class. These discussions will be based in part on reading questions set by the instructor. Students are expected to demonstrate in the discussions that they have (a) read and understood the week's sections in John's Gospel and in the textbook; (b) reflected on the set reading questions enough to offer a substantial response; (c) reflected enough on the reading to formulate questions of their own to share with the group. **After each class, students will provide the instructor (by email) with a peer evaluation grade out of 4 for each of their fellow group members.** Students should use the rubric posted on the class web-page in order to formulate these marks. The instructor will also observe the discussions and will reserve the right to balance peer grades that he judges not to reflect a student's actual learning and contribution.

- **Interpretation Essay:** Due by midnight on **Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**: 45% of final grade.

Students will write an essay of 12-15 pages in length providing and defending an interpretation of one passage from a New Testament book in light of what we have learned over the term. A grading rubric and full instructions for the essay are provided on the class web-page.

- **Outlines and Themes Quiz:** 10% of final grade

Students will write a brief quiz during the final class period in which they will provide a basic structural outline and/or the basic themes for one of 10 books in the New Testament.

### **C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

- Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.
- For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254.
- All assignments must be submitted on deadline. Late interpretation essays will be penalized according to the policy laid out in the current academic calendar. **Students absent from class will receive 0/4 for their class discussion contributions** unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor or the student can demonstrate that the lateness is the result of a medical emergency.
- The student's **interpretive essay should be submitted by email attachment** to [iscott@tyndale.ca](mailto:iscott@tyndale.ca). Please DO NOT submit paper copies. Email confirmation that the essay has been received will be provided within 12 hours. Feedback on the interpretive essay will be provided by email **to each student's MyTyndale email account**. These assignments may be submitted in any standard word processing file format (.ODT .DOC .DOCX .WPD or .RTF).

### **D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignment:

Contributions to In-Class Discussions	45 %
Interpretation Essay	45 %
Outlines and Themes Quiz	10 %
<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>100 %</b>

#### IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sept. 13th	Introduction The Context of the New Testament	
Sept. 20th	The NT as Canon and Word of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, "The Shaping of the NT Canon"</li> <li>• Scott, "God's Voice in Human Texts"</li> </ul>
	Preparatory group discussion question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagine you are out with a friend for coffee. The topic comes around to the small group study you're a part of. She asks "How can you believe that nonsense about the Bible being 'God's Word'? Isn't it just a bunch of books picked by some old white men?" Based on this week's reading, how might you respond?</li> <li>• NOTE: Students are advised, if possible, to do some of this week's reading in advance.</li> </ul>	
Sept. 27th	Mark's Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, "Mark: God Rescues His People"</li> <li>• Mark</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: Mark 10:13-16?</li> <li>• Jesus' audience: Hananiah (see Scott reading)</li> </ul>	
Oct. 4th	Matthew's Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, "Matthew: A New David, A New Moses"</li> <li>• Matthew</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: Matthew 22:33-46</li> <li>• Jesus' audience: Sarah</li> <li>• Matthew's audience: Demetrius</li> </ul>	
Oct. 11th	Luke's Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, "Luke: Good News to the Poor"</li> <li>• Luke</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: Luke 10:38-42</li> <li>• Jesus' audience: Martha</li> <li>• Luke's audience: Theophilus</li> </ul>	
Oct. 18th	John's Gospel The Johannine Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, "John: Light in the Darkness"</li> <li>• John; 1, 2, 3 John</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: John 6:22-71</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus' audience: Peter</li> <li>• John's audience: Patroclus</li> </ul>	
Oct. 25th	Acts of the Apostles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cousar, "Acts"</li> <li>• Scott, "Acts: The Mission of the Spirit"</li> <li>• Acts</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: Acts 17:16-34</li> <li>• Paul's audience: Krates</li> <li>• Luke's audience: Theophilus</li> </ul>	
Nov. 1st	Letters in the New Testament Paul's Letters I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, "I and II Thessalonians: Paul's Witness to the Nations"</li> <li>• Scott, "I and II Corinthians: Living the New Creation"</li> <li>• Cousar, "Introduction to Paul's Letters", "1 Corinthians", "2 Corinthians", "2 Thessalonians"</li> <li>• 1-2 Thessalonians</li> <li>• 1-2 Corinthians</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13</li> <li>• Paul's audience: Cassandra</li> </ul>	
Nov. 8th	Paul's Letters II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, "Beyond the Law: Paul's Model of God's Strategy"</li> <li>• Galatians and Romans</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: Romans 3:21-26</li> <li>• Paul's audience: Orpheus</li> </ul>	
Nov. 15th	Paul's Letters III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cousar, "Ephesians," "Philippians", "Colossians", "Philemon"</li> <li>• Scott, "Christ above All: Trinitarian Roots in Paul"</li> <li>• Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion passage: Phil 3:17-21</li> <li>• Paul's audience: Lydia</li> </ul>	
Nov. 22nd	** Dr. Scott away at SBL conference (no class)	
Nov. 29th	Paul's Disputed Letters Hebrews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cousar, "1 Timothy", "2 Timothy", "Titus", "Hebrews"</li> <li>• Scott, "Beyond Paul? The Problem of Authorship and the Pastoral Letters"</li> <li>• 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Passage: 2 Timothy 2:14-21</li> <li>• Paul's audience: Timothy or Pelleus</li> <li>• <b>Essays due by 12:00 midnight on Friday, Dec. 2nd</b></li> </ul>	

Dec. 6th	The "Catholic" Letters The Revelation of John God's Mission in Our World	a) Cousar, "James", "1 Peter", "2 Peter", "Jude" b) James, 1-2 Peter, Jude c) Scott, "Revelation: Hope in a Violent World"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James 4:4-10</li> <li>• James' audience: Maria</li> <li>• Revelation 18:1-8</li> <li>• The seer's audience: Nympha</li> <li>• <b>Outlines and Themes Quiz in Class</b></li> </ul>	

## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Items marked with an asterisk (\*) are highly recommended.

### A. Appropriate Commentary Series

See the list online at <http://www.tyndale.ca/~iscott/home/?q=content/good-academic-commentary-series-nt>

### B. Appropriate Journals

See the list online at <http://www.tyndale.ca/~iscott/home/?q=content/good-journals-studying-new-testament>

### C. Appropriate Biblical Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

Alexander, T. Desmond, and Brian S. Rosner, ed. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester/Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

Davids, Peter H., and Ralph P. Martin, ed. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997.\*

Green, Joel B., I. H. Marshall, and Scot McKnight, ed. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992).\*

Hawthorne, Gerald F.; Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, ed. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.\*

Porter, Stanley E., ed. *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992).\*

Aune, David E., ed. *Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric*. Westminster John Knox, 2003.

??? *New Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*.

#### **D. Other Useful Reference Works**

- Cancik, Hubert, et al., ed. *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopedia of the Ancient World: Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Craig A Evans and Stanley E Porter, ed. *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Johnston, Sarah Iles. *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Potter, David S., ed. *A Companion to the Roman Empire*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006.
- Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism in Late Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Neusner, Jacob, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, ed. *Encyclopaedia of Judaism*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999.
- Neusner, Jacob, and Alan J. Avery-Peck, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 BC–AD 400)*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.
- Sanders, E. P. *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE*. London: SCM Press, 1992.
- Schiffman, Lawrence H., and James C. VanderKam, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Schürer, Emil. *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)*. Revised. Edited by G. Vermes et al. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973-1987.
- Shipley, Graham, et al., ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Classical Civilization*. Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University, 2006.
- Stern, E. *New Encyclopaedia of Excavations in the Holy Land*. Jerusalem, 1993.
- ??? Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*.

#### **D. Specific Issues and Themes**

See the chapter bibliographies in the required texts.