

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BNT 530 NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION
SYLLABUS

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Fall 2005 (3 Credit Hours)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

- An introductory analytical study of the literature of the New Testament in its historical-cultural context with attention to the theological use of the New Testament books.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- At the end of the term the student should:
 1. Demonstrate a solid understanding of the history of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world from the end of the monarchy in Judah to the end of the Apostolic Age, or roughly from 539 BCE to CE 135.
 2. Be familiar with the life of Christ and the early development of the church.
 3. Be able to identify and describe the various literary genres found in the New Testament.
 4. Be able to identify how various circumstances and characteristics led to the penning of New Testament texts.
 5. Appreciate the diversity of the New Testament canon and its implications for preaching and teaching.
 6. Develop a greater appreciation for the significance and relevance of the New Testament and a heightened interest for living out the principles gleaned from personal Bible study.
 7. Develop skills necessary for a lifelong posture of primary and secondary analysis of the New Testament.

TEXTBOOKS

- Paul Achtemeier, Joel Green, M.M. Thompson. Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology. Eerdmans, 2001.
- John Howard Yoder. The Politics of Jesus. Eerdmans, 1972 (2nd Edition, 1994).
- Luke Timothy Johnson. Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel. Harper, 1998.
- Richard Foster. Streams of Living Water. Harper, 1998.

The following supplementary readings will be placed on reserve in the library. While only portions of the texts will be required reading it is suggested that the student look into purchasing these texts for further use.

- James Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the NT. Chapter 15.
- Krister Stendahl, Paul Among Jews and Gentiles. Pages 78-97.
- Erik Heen in Paul and the Roman Imperial Order (ed. R. Horsley). Chapter 6.
- Herbert Maier, Apocalypse Recalled. Chapters 6 + 7.
- Robert Jewett, "Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter," Interp 36 (1982) 9-20.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- During the term each student will be expected to:
 1. Attend class regularly. Excessive absenteeism is defined by the AGTS catalogue and may result will grade reduction.
 2. Read weekly selections of the NT and/or secondary readings in conjunction with the course schedule. Prepare five –seven questions each week to emerge from your readings. These questions should prepare your mind for critical thinking and analysis prior to each class. Due on the day of the final exam.
 3. Complete the following critical reviews:
 - a. Yoder’s Politics of Jesus
 - b. Johnson’s Living Jesus
 - c. Foster’s Streams of Living WaterFormat details attached; Content directives will be offered as the course emerges.
 4. Take a final exam.

GRADING POLICY

1. Class Preparation and Participation	10 %
2. Yoder Review	20 %
3. Johnson Review	20 %
4. Foster Review	20 %
5. Final Exam	<u>30 %</u>
	100 %

AGTS Grading Scale:

Publishable: A+	100-94: A	93-90: A-
89-87: B+	86-84: B	83-80: B-
79-77: C+	76-74: C	73-70: C-
69-67: D+	66-64: D	63-60: D-
59--- : F		

METHODOLOGY

- Class lectures will supplement the material in the required readings and discussion will focus on selected topics of interest. See the course outline below.
- The class schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of any such changes. In light of this, be sure to supply *turnitin.com* your regular email address.
- Bibliographical supplements will be included on a weekly basis. Students are encouraged to build their library with the best primary and secondary materials during these formative years.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Aug. 30	Syllabus and Introduction		
Sept. 6	Political Bkgd to NT Chapel 6:00 – 7:15 p.m.	AGT 1 + 2	
Sept. 13	Social Bkgd to NT		
Sept. 20	Religious and Philosophical Bkgd Discuss Heen	Heen (Horsley)	
Sept. 27	Christianity outside the NT		
Oct. 4	Canon Discuss Dunn	AGT 25 Dunn	
Oct. 11	Gospel Criticism / Narrative Analysis	AGT 3	
Oct. 18	Mark / Matthew	<i>Mark, Mt 5-7;</i> AGT 4, 5	
Oct 24 – Oct. 28 Fall Study Break (no regular classes)			
Nov 1	Luke / John Discuss Yoder	<i>Luke 9:51- 24; John</i> AGT 6, 7	Yoder Review
Nov. 8	Acts	<i>Acts 1-8</i> AGT 9	
Nov. 15	Paul / Letter Form Discuss Stendahl	AGT 10-11 Stendahl	
Nov. 22	Corinthians / 1 Cor 7 Chapel 6:00 – 7:15 p.m.	<i>1 Cor</i> AGT 13	Johnson
Review			
Nov. 29	Romans/ Philemon/ <i>Haustafeln</i> Discuss Jewett	<i>Philemon, Ephesians</i> Jewett	
Dec. 6	Revelation Discuss Maier, Foster	<i>Revelation</i> Maier	Foster Review
Dec. 13	Final Exam		Weekly Q

The Critical Review

- In today's world, so many books are written and published that one cannot hope to read everything, even in a specific field. In order to have an idea of what others are saying, I can read book reviews. They give the thrust of the work, an evaluation of its contents, and an assessment of its importance.
- In short, critical book reviews force students to read carefully and write thoughtfully.

What is a critical Review?

- A critical review is not a destructive criticism of the author and his or her ideas, but a careful analysis of the work. A critical review attempts to answer at least seven different questions:
 1. What is the basic thrust of the author's work?
 2. Why does the author say what he or she says?
 3. To whom is the writing directed and for what purpose?
 4. For whom or what (or against whom or what) does the author stand?
 5. How well has the author met his or her own objectives?
 6. How does this work compare with other writings?
 7. What is the reviewer's opinion of the work?

How to write a critical review?

- Preparing a 5-6 page book review entails reading, taking notes, evaluating what has been read, and writing out a summary, assessment, and comments of the book or article.
- A book review should contain four main components:
 1. A complete bibliographical entry as the title of the review. For example
Wright, N. T. What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity? Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 192 pp.-
 2. Relevant information regarding the author, his or her academic training, position, and other books authored. Information on the author may be obtained from the book itself, from biographical files many libraries keep, and from other sources.
 3. A summary should synthesize the thrust of the book and its main arguments. Take care not to distort the emphasis given by the author. The length of the summary will depend, not only on the length of the material, but on the complexity of its contents. Try to keep the summary to three or four paragraphs.
 4. An evaluation of the book should be made first of all on the basis of the author's own objectives, as stated in the introduction. This mandates a careful reading of the introduction or preface. For example, if an author states that the book deals with New Testament Christology, she will not be expected to deal with the topic in the sub-apostolic era. A critique must document the author's statements, giving the page where the item was found. Sometimes a review quotes paragraphs that show the author's position. Be sure to keep in mind the author's content in order not to distort the ideas. Although one may disagree with the author and with the position he or she espouses, the language of a book or article review must be courteous. A well-documented analysis will be more convincing than a heated, emotional tirade. The language of a review written for a class assignment should be similar to that of research—cool, calm, and collected. Think of meeting the author of the book at a professional meeting and having him say in dismay, "So are you the reviewer who hit me so hard?"

Questions to guide evaluation:

1. Is the subject vital? If so, to whom? What difference will it make ten years from now?
 2. Is the subject too broad or too narrow for the author? Is it too shallow, too restricted?
 3. Is the author straightforward? Does he announce his bias? His limitations? His intentions?
 4. In the introduction, are the purpose of the study and the statement of the problem clear?
 5. Is the presentation clear and logical? Is the sequence natural? Are there missing points? Are the sections clear and self-contained?
 6. Is the research reliable? Does anything indicate you cannot fully trust this paper? Do you feel the author really looked everywhere she possibly could and reported accurately and without bias?
 7. What does the use of footnotes show? Are there too many notes? Too few? Are they from old sources? All from similar sources? Or from the same sources? Is the form clear and consistently used?
 8. Does the bibliography tell you something additional about the paper? Can you tell whether the author is using primary sources? General sources? Or authorities in the field?
 9. Is the language clear, concise, or wordy and unnecessarily difficult? Does the choice of words show carelessness? Conceit?
 10. Does the paper show a sincere desire to search out truth or is it a defense of a position?
- Usually the last item in an evaluation includes assessment of what group(s) will profit from reading this book. You may also want to suggest how useful the book will be for this certain group.

Much of this material is taken from: Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, Quality Research Papers (Zondervan, 2001).