

READING THE NEW TESTAMENT (NT 6301)
Thursday 4–6:40 PM

MATS Educational Goals Supported by the Course

1. The student will identify and offer informed discussion of major issues in the interpretation of representative books of the New Testament (Gospels and Acts, Pauline letters, General Letters, Apocalypse).
2. The student will prepare papers, sermons, classes, and other assignments demonstrating familiarity with methods and principles of exegesis of the Old and New Testaments.

Course Objectives

1. Students will increase their familiarity with the contents and literary structure of the Scriptures of the New Testament, the founding documents of the Christian Church.
2. Students will acquire the essential information needed to profit from the literary, historical, and theological exegesis of Scripture available in English.
3. Students will compile a bibliography of works useful for the interpretation of Scripture in personal study and in the preparation of sermons and classes.

Required Texts

1. A recent translation of the Bible (e.g., ESV, NRSV, RSV, NASB, REB, NIV, NJB). Two excellent tools for study are the *HarperCollins Study Bible* and the *NIV Study Bible*, which give the reader rapid access to current mainline Protestant/academic and evangelical lines of interpretation, respectively.
2. David deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry Formation* (2nd ed., IVP)
3. Jonathan Reed, *HarperCollins Visual Guide to the New Testament: What Archaeology Reveals about the First Christians* (HarperCollins)
4. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Eerdmans)
5. Recommended reading: A collection of essays available for individual duplication in the David Worley Library. (See the detailed list on the reading schedule below.)
6. Recommended tools for study:
 - a. The Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th or 28th ed.), for consultation of both the Greek text of the New Testament (if applicable) and the full marginal references to parallel passages.
 - b. Kurt Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (American Bible Society); also available in Greek and Greek-English editions as *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*.
 - c. For definition of various terms introduced in the course, a general dictionary (Webster's, American Heritage, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, etc.) or a specialized dictionary such as Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*.

Course Requirements

1. Prompt attendance at all scheduled meetings of the class, completion of assigned reading, and informed participation in class discussion. The student should note that the reading assignment includes consultation of the Scripture references in the secondary discussion. Each student is allowed one free absence in the course of the semester without grade penalty. Absence beyond this may result in the reduction of the course grade by one letter per additional absence; in this connection, three tardies will be treated as one absence.
2. Each week, *no later than the midnight preceding each class meeting*, each student will email to the instructor at least **two (2) quotations** from the reading assignment in deSilva, Reed, or Bauckham, each quotation conveying a *point significant for the interpretation of the NT book(s) under consideration that week*. The student may also include in the email comments or questions raised by the week's preparation, which the instructor will consider for discussion in class.

3. Preparation of two (2) brief **essays** (2 pp. double-spaced) identifying the aim/thesis of a book or related books of the NT and showing how each section of the book contributes to or develops this aim/thesis, and two (2) **oral presentations** of ten (10) minutes each based on these essays to the class, according to the class schedule (see below). In preparation for this assignment, the student should plan to carefully review the reading assigned for this NT book(s) and reread the NT book (or books) as many times as needed to discern the principal aim/or thesis and see how each of its parts furthers this. The list of “Focal NT Texts” provided in course may be used as a starting point for the student’s attempt to identify the thesis that provides coherence to the NT book(s). To satisfy the requirement, a student must submit via email a draft of the essay one (1) week in advance of the session at which the NT book is scheduled to be discussed and prepare the oral presentation in the intervening week.

4. A semester writing assignment to be completed and turned in during the week scheduled for final examinations (i.e., by 4:30 PM on Thursday, May 16). The assignment is a critical review (7–9 pp. in length) of Richard Bauckham’s book *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Eerdmans). The review must cite at least three (3) of the other books or articles assigned for the class and employ a substantive point from each work cited in the evaluation of one of Bauckham’s principal theses. The general sort of reading appropriate to a critical review is fully discussed in Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book*. Michael Gorman’s *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* is a useful guide to interpreting biblical literature specifically. Helpful models for the assignment can be found by consulting the reviews and review essays appearing in the journals *First Things*, *Pro Ecclesia*, and *Touchstone*, or in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and other specialized journals available for consultation in the David Worley Library.

5. Plagiarism and Citation of Sources: Plagiarism is the representation of another person’s work as your own and is a form of theft. This includes material composed by other students, purchased from an online paper mill, or copied from published books and articles or from the Internet. If in any assignment you employ material written by someone else, you must give the author proper credit, documenting the source with an appropriate citation and marking any words directly quoted with quotation marks (or with indentation if four or more lines are quoted). Failure to appropriately credit the sources you use will result in a reduction in your grade for the assignment in question and/or the requirement that you revise the assignment. Intentionally representing another person’s work as your own will be grounds for academic discipline, including your possible dismissal from the School. For more information on how to acknowledge sources properly and avoid plagiarism, refer to the School’s “Guide to Written Work” (http://www.austingrad.edu/images/Resources/student/guide_for_written_work.htm).

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Required reading is in **bold type**, recommended reading in plain type. Collections of essays by Nils Dahl are abbreviated as follows:

JMEC = *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (1976)

SP = *Studies in Paul* (1977)

JTC = *Jesus the Christ* (1991); this collection incorporates Dahl's *Crucified Messiah* (1974)

Thursday, January 24: How to Read the New Testament: The New Testament as Literary Composition, as Historical Source, and as Norm for Christian Faith, Preaching, and Discipleship

deSilva 1–118

Thursday, January 31: The Pauline Mission and the Pauline Corpus; **Paul's Letter to Philemon**

deSilva 409–426, 590–604

Thursday, February 7: **Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians and Philippians**

deSilva 461–485, 565–589

Thursday, February 14: **Paul's Letters to the Corinthians**

deSilva 486–525

Recommended: Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth," SP 40–61

Thursday, February 21: **Paul's Letters to the Galatians and Romans**

deSilva 427–460, 526–564

Recommended: John Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *Journal for the Study of the NT* 31 (1987): 73-93; Dahl, "Missionary Theology in the Letter to the Romans," SP 70–94

Thursday, February 28: **Paul to Colossians, "Ephesians," 1–2 Timothy, Titus**

deSilva 347–402

Thursday, March 7: Paul, the Fourfold Gospel, and Jesus

deSilva 117–173

Recommended: Dahl, "Anamnesis, Memory, and Commemoration in Early Christianity," JMEC 11–29; Dahl, "The Crucified Messiah," JTC 24–47; E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (1993)

Thursday, March 14: **The Gospel: According to Mark**

deSilva 174–209;

Recommended: Dahl, "The Purpose of Mark's Gospel," JMEC 52–65

Thursday, March 21: NO CLASS MEETING (Spring Break)

Thursday, March 28: **The Gospel: According to Matthew**

deSilva 210–260

Recommended: Krister Stendahl, "*Quis et Unde?* [Who and Where?] An Analysis of Matthew 1–2," *The Interpretation of Matthew* (ed. Graham Stanton), 56–66; Dale Allison, "Structure, Biographical Impulse, and the *Imitatio Christi*," *Studies in Matthew*, 135–155

Thursday, April 4: **The Gospel: According to Luke, and Acts**

deSilva 261–340

Recommended: Dahl, "The Purpose of Luke–Acts," JMEC 87–98

Thursday, April 11: The Synoptic Question (a.k.a. “Synoptic Problem”)

deSilva 120–146 (review)

Mark Goodacre, “Fatigue in the Synoptics,” *New Testament Studies* 44 (1998): 45–58

Recommended: Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (2001),

www.archive.org/details/synopticproblemw00good

Thursday, April 18: **The Letters and Gospel of John**

deSilva 341–408

Recommended: Paul Minear, “The Original Functions of John 21,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 85–98; Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* (2007), esp. 9–124, 207–270

Thursday, April 25: **Hebrews and General Letters** (except Johannine Letters)

deSilva 686–785

Recommended: Richard Bauckham, “Pseudo-Apostolic Letters,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988): 469–94

Thursday, May 2: **The Apocalypse/Revelation to John**

DeSilva 786–830

Thursday, May 9: The New Testament Canon and the Faith of the Christian Church

•**Luke Timothy Johnson, “Epilogue: The New Testament as the Church’s Book,”** in *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (3rd ed.), 525–546

•**Eugene Lemcio, “The Unifying Kerygma of the NT,”** *Journal for the Study of the NT* 33 (1988): 3–17; 38 (1990): 3–11 (reprinted in Lemcio, *The Past of Jesus in the Gospels* [1991]: 115–131, 158–162)

Thursday, May 16

Critical review of Richard Bauckham’s book *Jesus and the God of Israel* due, emailed as attachment to peter@austingrad.edu.