

Course Description

Course Number: BI 192

Course Title: Engaging the New Testament Letters

Name of Instructor: Troy Troftgruben, Ritva Williams, May Persaud

Semester and Year: Fall 2022

Required for all M.Div. students. Optional for all others

Number of hours, grading option: 3 hrs, taken for grade or credit

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is the second of two NT survey courses, focusing on reading, interpreting, teaching the New Testament writings. We will explore the diverse messages and various contexts of the NT letters—from Romans to Revelation—and give special attention to their uses of Israel’s theological heritage, engagement with political and cultural forces, and approaches to ethics, practice, and ecclesiology. The course focuses especially on the life, ministry, and legacy of Paul, highlighting the occasional nature of his letters and the missional focus of his theology and ethics. The course also considers how other letters express theological diversity among believing communities within a century after Jesus’ life and death.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To gain deeper appreciation for the cultural contexts in which Paul’s ministry took shape and the NT epistolary writings were written. (*Practice of Engagement with Cross-cultural and Global Dimensions*)
- To read and study the NT Letters several times in their entirety, paying close attention to their distinctive messages, theologies, passages, and themes. (*Practice of Biblical and Theological Wisdom*)
- To interpret passages (exegesis) through close reading, comparative analysis, translation tools, and careful reflection. (*Practices of Curiosity and of Complex Analysis*)
- To teach others significant themes of these letters through class discussions, questions, and projects. (*Practices of Evangelical Listening and Speaking the Faith to Others*)

PROCEDURE:

Two weekly meeting times will feature plenary teaching, small group discussion, translation work, and other forms of dynamic engagement. Asynchronous distance students will engage the class through prerecorded presentations, real-time web-conferencing, and asynchronous online interactions. Through these various means, students in all three programs (residential, distance, collaborative) will engage in learning together as a unified class.

EVALUATION:

Evaluation will be based on weekly participation and assignments, an exegesis paper, a short-answer essay assignment, and a final project.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Required: Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2018.

Suggested: One of the following study Bibles:

- *The HarperCollins Study Bible NRSV, including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. Edited by H.W. Attridge. Atlanta: SBL, 2006.
- *The New Interpreter’s Study Bible, NRSV with the Apocrypha*. Edited by W.J. Harrelson. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.

- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: NRSV*. 5th ed. Edited by M.D. Coogan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- *The Jewish Annotated New Testament, NRSV*. Second Edition. Edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.