

Syllabus and Assignments COS 311 New Testament I

**Upper Midwest Extension Course of Study School
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311 New Testament I

A panoramic view of the content, main characters, and message of the books of the New Testament in light of their historical, political, socio-economic, cultural and religious environment, as well as their importance as literary expressions of the faith and history of the Early Church. The practice of exegesis is again emphasized with special focus on Luke, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, and Galatians.

Course Objectives

1. Review of the nature, scope, and purpose of the New Testament.
2. Review of the origin and formation of the New Testament Canon.
3. Describe the historical and social background out of which the New Testament emerged.
4. Develop and practice an exegetical methodology that is appropriate and helpful to the study of the New Testament.
5. Articulate an introductory explanation of the origin, formation, development and expansion of the Christian faith during the first century.
6. Examine some of the ways in which the Early Church interpreted the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and how that interpretation informed how its members lived out their faith in various social circumstances.
7. Reflect on the meaning and significance of the message of the New Testament for the faith and mission of the church in its contemporary context.

A. Books (can be new or used)

Furnish, V.P. (2010). The moral teachings of Paul: Selected issues. 3rd ed. Abingdon Press.
ISBN-13: 978-0687332939

Johnson, L.T. (2010). The writings of the New Testament: An interpretation. Fortress Press.
ISBN-13: 978-0800696894

Malina, B., & Rohrbaugh, R. (1993). Social-science commentary on the Synoptic Gospels. 2nd ed.
Fortress Press. ISBN-13: 978-0800629922

Throckmorton, B., ed. (1992). Gospel parallels: A comparison of the Synoptic Gospels. 5th ed.

Thomas Nelson Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-0840774842

B. Instructions

Read the pages assigned, take notes, and answer the questions in your own words, using complete sentences (unless otherwise noted). Do not quote extensively from the texts you read. Digest the ideas and information, and then put them in your own words. If a question has more than one part, be sure to answer both parts.

Follow approximate length given for each item of written work. Your written work should be double-spaced, with a one-inch margin. Please use 12-point font. Do not use script, condensed, or all caps.

On each page of your work, include a header with your name, the class number, and the page number. Begin each new question on a new page, writing the number of that question at the beginning of your answer.

If you quote from a printed text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including pages) in parentheses at the end of each usage. Quotations should never be more than a sentence or two long. Ideas and information should be stated in your own words, not in the words of the authors you have read. For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the first letter of each word in the title. For example, if the source is *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, then use (*HBD*, pp. 34-35). If you refer to books that are not listed on the class reading list, then you must give full bibliographic information.

Add a title page to each course of each module that includes a) the name and number of the course, and b) your name.

Submit your written work one month before classes begin. Assignments may be sent electronically. You may want to make a copy of assignment and bring it with you for your own use.

POLICY NOTE: Using other people's materials without documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. Such activity, otherwise known as plagiarism, usually means failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry. Professors will report all instances of plagiarism to the Director of the Course of Study. The Director will arrange for a meeting with the professor and the student, and the student will be given opportunity to explain the situation. The Director, in consultation with the professor, will make a decision about what action is appropriate for a first instance of plagiarism. Such action could include, rewriting the material, or failure of the course. A brief summary of the meeting will be prepared by the Director, and placed in the student's file in the Course of Study Office and kept there until the student completes the Course of Study Curriculum. If a second instance of plagiarism is documented, the student will fail the course and the Director will determine what other consequences may apply. (policy rev. 6/00)

C. Assignments (to be read and written in the order in which they are listed.) Answers to the questions 1-12 are due two weeks before the first class begins. Answers to questions 13-23 are due one week before the second weekend.

For question 1, make a photocopy of the pages from Throckmorton and underline as follows: Blue ink = words found identically in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Yellow ink = words found identically in Matthew and Mark. Red ink = words found identically in Matthew and Luke. Green ink = words found identically in Mark and Luke.

1. For the pericopes entitled "Confession at Ceasarea Philippi and the First Prediction of the Passion" (#122) and "The Entry into Jerusalem" (#196), found in your Gospel Parallels, underline the words in the colors as indicated above.
2. How can the large number of identical words in Matthew, Mark, and Luke in these two passages be explained? Suggest as many different possibilities as you can. This is a question about oral and/or written sources. It is not specifically about the Synoptic Problem. (1 page)
3. Read the article, "The Synoptic Problem," in the Harper's Bible Dictionary or The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. What is the two document hypothesis? What does it mean regarding the order in which the Synoptic Gospels were written? Are there other viable theories? Does it make a difference how you solve the Synoptic Problem? (1 1/2 pages total)
4. Does the author of Luke know about other written accounts concerning Jesus? Explain. List the three sources the author of Luke says he used in writing the Gospel. (1/2 page)
5. What parts of Luke 3:1-21 are not found in Matthew or Mark? What parts of Luke 3:1-21 are found in Matthew but not in Mark? List these verses. How do you explain this fact? (1/2 page)
6. The author of Luke locates John the Baptist's imprisonment at Luke 3:19-20 while Matthew and Mark report it elsewhere in the sequence of events in their Gospels. Consult several commentaries. What reasons do these commentaries suggest that the author of Luke might have had for placing it where he did? (1 page)
7. In the account of Jesus' death on the cross, the Centurion's confession is quite different in the Gospel of Luke than in Matthew and Mark (Gospel Parallels #250). What could account for this difference if Luke had access to either Matthew or Mark's Gospel? Consult several commentaries. (1/2 page)
8. Much of the material in Luke 9:51-18:14 seems to be found only in Luke or used by him in a special way. Examine this section and cite at least two passages that indicate Luke's special emphasis on each of the following. (1 page total)
 - a. Jesus was concerned about non-Jews (Gentiles).
 - b. Jesus gave women a role in his movement.
 - c. Prayer was important to Jesus.
 - d. Riches could be a barrier to hearing and doing the Word.
 - e. Jesus emphasized repentance and forgiveness.

9. Some parables can be interpreted allegorically (elements serve as symbols) very easily. See The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible or Harper's Bible Dictionary for allegory and parable. Read Luke 20:9-19 and Luke 10:29-37. How did the early Church interpret the first parable using allegory? Be specific. Why is more difficult to interpret the second parable using allegory? Did Jesus intend that his parables be interpreted allegorically? (1 page)
10. Luke's Gospel is a treasure store of the parables of Jesus. List at least five parables found only in Luke (give the name, the chapter, and verse); consult your Gospel Parallels for verification. Relate each parable to a possible situation in Jesus' ministry. Give a one-sentence account of the point Jesus makes in each parable you list. (1/2 page)
11. What did you learn from Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels? (1 1/2 pages)
12. Compare the resurrection reports in I Corinthians 15:3-8, Matt. 28:1-20, Mark 16:1-20, Luke 24:1-53, and John 20:1-21:25. Make a table with a column for each of these five passages. List the person(s) who are reported to have witnessed the resurrected Lord in each. (1/2 page) What do these passages tell us about the importance of the resurrection of Jesus for the early Church? (1/2 page)
13. Acts 1:8 forms a table of contents for the whole book. Give the outline of Acts covered by each part of this verse. Who are the major characters in each section? (1/2 page)
14. Discuss the points at which Acts chapter 15 and Galatians chapter 2 disagree in their account of the "Jerusalem Council" and its outcome. Consult commentaries as needed. How do **you** account for these differences? (1 page)
15. What possible positions do the troublers of the churches in Galatia represent? What does Paul say against their position(s)? Why is this issue important to the future of the church? Consult Luke T. Johnson's book and Harper's or IDB, before you write your answer. (1 page)
16. List and discuss briefly six problems Paul dealt with in I Corinthians. Give chapter and verses of each. (1 page)
17. Review several commentaries on I Corinthians 8:1-12.
 - a. What is the issue addressed in this passage?
 - b. Summarize the background of this issue (1/2 page)
 - c. How could this passage be used for preaching today? (1/2 page)
18. How many letters did Paul write to the Christians at Corinth? Explain your answer. (1/2 page)
19. Write a brief chronology in outline form for the life of Saul/Paul. Cite scripture texts to support your dates, and other sources if used. Items to include: family, education, profession, conversion, mission trips, dates of letters he wrote, and death. (1 page)

20. According to Luke T. Johnson, what does Paul's letter to the Romans tell us about the situation of the Christian churches in Rome? Why did Paul write this letter? (1/2 page)
21. What did Jesus preach about the kingdom of God? Consult The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible or Harper's Bible Dictionary for "the kingdom of God." (1/2 page)
22. What is your opinion about whether Jesus had a radical or realized eschatology. Consult The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible or Harpers Bible Dictionary for "radical" and "realized eschatology." (1/2 page)
23. Reflecting on the reading you have done, where do place Jesus in terms of his social context, his economic context, his political context, and his religious/philosophical context? (For example, in terms of his religious context, was Jesus a prophet, a sage, a cynic, a Pharisee?) (1/1/2 pages)

D. Grading System

Your grade of A,B,C, or F for this course will be based on the following:

- 60% assignments completed before the beginning of class
- 20% class participation
- 20% final exam