Course Description

This course is a survey of the contents of the New Testament, its historical contexts, diverse literary forms, and religious ideas. It includes analyses of selected texts from representative sections of the New Testament and consideration of their various theological visions of God, the human person, and the people of God in interrelationship, along with the ethics of these documents.

Course Objectives:

The student, at the completion of this course will be able to:

1. demonstrate familiarity with the contents of the New Testament and its major theological formulations with awareness of its diversity (demonstrated by successful completion of the course exams).

2. locate the New Testament its proper historical context; i.e. having developed an accurate mental picture of what the 1st century was like for Jesus, Paul, and the early Christians (demonstrated by successful completion of the course exams, completion of exegetical exercises, and explication of the historical context of selected texts in the final exegetical project).

3. read the New Testament critically; engaging a variety of methods used to interpret the New Testament today (demonstrated by successful completion of course exams and clarity about the critical methods used in the final exegetical project).

4. appropriate the witness of the New Testament and its major theological insights for the life of faith, for the life of faith communities, and for the needs of the world today (demonstrated by clear, coherent, and integrated application of exegetical insights in the final project – sermon, curriculum, retreat plan, etc.).

Required Outcomes

Students will be evaluated according to their levels of ability to meet these M.Div./M.A. Outcomes Criteria:

I. Religious Heritage
   A. Scripture
      1. Place the text in its historical context. (outcome 2)
      2. Locate the text’s relationship to the biblical narrative. (outcomes 1 and 2)
      3. Effectively use source, literary, and sociological criticism. (outcome 3)
      4. Develop effective word studies. (outcome 3)
5. Converse with various hermeneutical positions. (outcomes 3 and 4)

B. The Broader Church’s Theologies
   1. Engage contemporary theological ways of thinking. (outcomes 3 and 4)

II. Cultural Context
   A. Contemporary Social/Cultural Issues
      1. Recognize new opportunities posed by cultural developments (outcomes 3, 4)

III. Personal and Spiritual Formation
   A. Spiritual Growth
      1. Express mature personal faith sensitively and skillfully. (outcomes 3, 4)
      2. Articulate responsibly one’s theological identity and authority. (outcomes 2,4)
   C. Moral Development
      1. Be oriented by prophetic hope. (outcomes 1 and 4)

IV. Capacity for Ministry and Public Leadership
   A. Arts of Ministry
      1. Integrate biblical, historical, theological, and pastoral disciplines (outcome 4)

**Required Texts**

1. The Bible (a modern critical edition, preferably the New Oxford Annotated, College Edition or the HarperCollins Study Bible; any respectable scholarly translation, e.g. RSV, NRSV, NAB)


5. There will occasionally be copies of chapters, short essays, handouts, and on-line readings that will be assigned.

**Recommended**

   - We will be reading three chapters from this book: chapter 7, “Writing the Biblical Essay Well: Part I”; chapter 8, “Writing the Biblical Essay Well: Part II”; and chapter 9, “Toward a Theological Style and Voice of Your Own”

   - We will be reading the “Introduction,” Chapter One/“Texts and Readers,” and Chapter Two/“Midrash, the Bible, and the Early Church” from this volume.
Course Requirements

1. Active class participation and preparedness. (15%)
   - Regular attendance, constructive participation in class discussions, active listening. There are no excused absences (although they will be treated with compassion and understanding). Two and more absences will result in an incremental lowering, by half-grades, the grade for this part of the course.
   - Read the assigned biblical texts and prepare for class discussions by identifying passages that are confusing, provocative, require more background knowledge, would be challenging to preach, are good examples of points made in the secondary reading, etc.
   - Read secondary reading assignments and be prepared to participate in discussions – bringing two to three questions, discussion starters, comments. When a chapter from Harris has been assigned, please give attention to the “Review” and “Discussion/Reflection” questions posed at the end of the chapter.

2. Three Take-Home Exams/Quizzes. (45% total; 15% each)
   Exams will be distributed during:
   - class session #3/February 13 (Paul, Philippians, Acts of the Apostles)
   - class session #6/March 5 (the Johannine literature)
   - class session #10/April 16 (Deutero-Pauline and other letters; Revelation)

3. Final project. (40% total; split between preparation of exegetical memos and the final project/presentation)
   You will develop retreat materials/adult bible study/sermon/confirmation class materials/OR something similar for use in a non-church-related setting, reflecting a process of exegesis and an awareness of hermeneutical issues.

   ** Directions and due dates for the exegetical memos can be found at the end of this syllabus. **

   ** We decided in class on 1/31 that we’d focus the exegetical exercises/projects on these three texts from the Gospel of John [you only choose ONE]:
   - the wedding at Cana/changing the water into wine John 2:1-12
   - the Samaritan women at the well John 4:1-26
   - the last supper/footwashing John 13:1-20

About Grades/Grading

Please refer to pages 3-5 of the 2011-12 Student Guide for information related to Faculty Grading Principles, Letter Grades, Grading of Written Work, the Seminary’s policy on Plagiarism, and other information related to the Seminary’s Instructional Practices.
### Schedule of classes

**#1 January 24**  
Personal introductions, course introduction, syllabus, calendar  
Picking up where we left off  
Paul’s letter to the Philippians; brief revisit of Romans  

Preparation:  
In the Bible: *Philippians, Romans 9-11*  
Harris, 17, first introductory pages; all sections include under heading *Letter to the Philippians*  

Recommended:  
Brown, *Intro to NT*, 20, 24 *Please try to read as much of the chapter on Philippians as you are able; just the introductory pages of the chapter on Romans will be helpful*  

**#2 January 31**  

Preparation:  
Harris, 13 [10 in the 7th edition]  
Read through and including “First Missionary Journey”  
Erickson, *Exegesis*: Chapter 8 – “Narratives II”  

**#3 February 7**  
Acts of the Apostles chapters 1-9  

Preparation:  
Harris, 13 [10 in the 7th edition]  
Read from “Second Missionary Journey” to chapter’s end  
Brown, *Intro to NT*, 10 pages 279-298  

**#4 February 14**  
*Exam 1 Distributed*  
Acts of the Apostles chapters 10-26  

Preparation:  
Brown, *Intro to NT*, 10 pages 299-319  
Erickson, *Exegesis*: Chapter 10 – “Moving On”  
Jasper, *Hermeneutics*, “Introduction” and Chapter 1  
*exegetical exercise 1 due*
Exam 1 Collected

February 21

Preparation: In the Bible, *Gospel of John 1-12*

Harris 10 [11 in the 7th edition]

Sections: introductory pages, Authorship, Hymn to the Word, The Book of Signs (this is all roughly half of chapter 10/11)


RESEARCH WEEK

February 25 – March 1

Preparation: Harris 10 [11 in the 7th edition]

Sections: *The Book of Glory, John’s Interpretation of the Passion, Epilogue/Postresurrection Appearances; Summary*


work on exegetical exercise 2

March 7

Preparation: In the Bible: *Gospel of John 13-21*

Brown, *Intro to NT*, 11

Jasper, *Hermeneutics*, Chapter 2

exegetical exercise 2 due

March 14

Exam 2 Distributed

Preparation: Harris 19 [11 in the 7th edition]

Section: *Letters from the Johannine Community*

[about two-thirds of way through chapter 19 (6th)/at the end of chapter 11 (7th); it’s only about 2 pages long]


Brown, *Intro to NT*, 12, 13, and 14
#8 March 21

Exam 2 Collected

The Passion Narratives revisited

Preparation: In the Bibles: the passion and resurrection narratives in all four gospels; (please read them in the Bible and then also in Aland’s Synopsis, or in another gospels parallel resources)

Yaghjian, Writing Theology Well, 8: “Writing the Biblical Essay Well: Part II” pp. 190-98

exegetical exercise 3

March 25-29

EASTER RECESS

#9 April 4

Issues of Pseudonymity, 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians

Preparation: In the Bible: 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians

Harris 18 [17 in the 7th edition]


Brown, Intro to NT, 25, 26, 27, 28

#10 April 11

the letters known as the Pastorals

Preparation: In the Bible: Letters to Timothy and Titus

Harris 18 [17 in the 7th edition]

Sections: The Pastorals: Letters to Timothy and Titus

Brown, Intro to NT, 29, 30, and 31

#11 April 18

the letter to the Hebrews, letters to Peter, James, and Jude

Exam 3 Distributed

Preparation: In the Bible: all these little letters 😊

Harris 19 [18 in the 7th edition]

Sections: first pages, Author and Dates, James, 1 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter

Brown, Intro to NT, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36

exegetical exercise 4
#12. April 25  
*Exam 3 Collected*  
Revelation and other apocalyptic works  
Development of the NT Canon  
Preparation:  
Harris 2 and 20 [19 in the 7th edition]  
Erickson 9 “Apocalyptic”  
Brown, *Intro to NT, 37*  
*exegetical exercise 5*

#13. May 2  
project presentations in class  
#14. May 9  
project presentations in class  

MAY 13 - 17  
FINALS WEEK  
MAY 17  
SEMESTER ENDS/ALL WORK DUE

*Scroll down for the directions on the exegetical exercises*
NOTES ON THE EXEGETICAL EXERCISES:

Exercise 1 [combination of elements from Yaghjian’s memos 1, 2, and 3]:

*prepare for February 14*

Write out the passage, word for word, not according to “verse” breaks, but according to the natural breaks in the text as you experience them in your reading. Using your own “written” version, read the text aloud to yourself and silently several times, until you have begun to internalize the language, sound and rhythm of the passage.

Stay as long as you can with the “text” as “text,” without trying to decipher or interpret it. Then, when you are ready, but before you proceed to what the text “says” or “means,” write three “impressions” and three questions about the text (these should be your own questions about the text, however seemingly “stupid” or insignificant, that could potentially direct your own investigation of this passage. To the extent that your questions address the original context of the document, so much the better; but sooner or later one of them will lead you there, so do not be afraid to cast a wide net at this stage of the process). [Yaghjian, 154]

Take this text and look at it. What are the literary features of the text? Is it a historical narrative, parable, poetry, dialogue, epistle? What structures provide clues to the beginning and end of the passage? If you had to teach this passage in a Bible study, how would you outline and divide it into sections? How many parts are there? How do they relate to the whole piece? Is there progress in the flow of the narrative? Can you identify a climax? Are there any key words, recurring themes, organizing metaphors? What does the passage show, prove, illustrate, argue? When you read this text, what other biblical texts come to mind? If it contains references from other Hebrew Bible or New Testament passages, what are they? How does this wider textual frame of reference enrich your comprehension of the passage? [Yaghjian, 155]

Exercise 2: Yaghjian’s Memo 5 and Memo 6

*prepare for March 7*

This exercise will require the use of commentaries on the Gospel of John; I’d recommend any of the following which are available in our library.

- *The Gospel of John* 225.7 Sa14p v.4  
  Francis J. Moloney
- *The Gospel of John* 226.5 B83g  
  F.F. Bruce
- *Becoming Children of God* 226.5 H838b  
  Wes Howard Brook
- *The Gospel according to John* 220.7An21 v. 29A  
  Raymond E. Brown
Exercise 3: Yaghjian’s Memo 7 and Memo 8
prepare for March 21
relevant entries in the Anchor Bible Dictionary or another biblical “Dictionary”
Malina, Bruce  Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology
 The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology
 The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels
 Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels

Exercise 4: Yaghjian’s Memo 10  [Memo 9 not really relevant since this passage has no parallel in the synoptic]
prepare for April 18
Resources/references needed here:
 Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)
 Greek-English Lexicon
 New Testament Concordance

Exercise 5: Yaghjian’s Memo 11
prepare for April 25
