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**12-500 X**

**Introduction to the New Testament  
Online**

**Fall Semester 2017**

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**FORMAT OF THE COURSE:** This is an *online* course. All class discussion takes place in online forums (in the Moodle format). The class discussions are online forums. These forums are not “live.” They are essentially threaded conversations. Students are permitted to make their contributions (called “posts”) to these forums at any time of day or night.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The purpose of this course is to provide a historical introduction to the writings of the New Testament. Special attention will be given to the social settings of the writings in the early church and wider Mediterranean world.

**GOALS OF THE COURSE:** The student should leave this course with the following knowledge and skills:

1. an introductory knowledge of early Christianity in its social environment;
2. a working knowledge of the historical formation and content of the New Testament;
3. basic skill in exegesis of the New Testament.

**Achievement and Assessment**

Goals 1. and 2. The required textbooks provide information pertaining to goals 1 and 2. The reading of these textbooks as assigned for the various online forums and the use of

the textbooks in studying for exams promotes the achievement of these goals. The exams also provide a means of assessment.

Goal 3. The online forums are focused to a large degree on the interpretation of New Testament passages. In these forums students have a chance to practice exegesis in a collegial format and to see it modeled by their professor and by other students. The writing of the exegesis paper, based on instructions and a model outline, is also designed to teach skill in exegesis. Evaluation of student contributions to the online forums and the grading of the exegesis paper provide means of assessment. See the description of the forums below and also the Appendix for a grading rubric.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

Cosgrove, Charles H., Herold Weiss, and K.-K. Yeo. *Cross-Cultural Paul: Journeys to Others, Journeys to Ourselves*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. ISBN-13: 9780802828439 Amazon retail price: \$25.20 new; also available used.

Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament. A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. Sixth edition. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN-9780190203825 retail price: \$70.95 Note: Do not order the 5<sup>th</sup> edition or any other earlier edition. The exams will be keyed to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

Mills, Watson et al., eds. *Mercer Commentary on the New Testament*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2003. ISBN: 978-0865548640 Amazon.com price new \$31.98; also available used

## **Additional Readings**

Cosgrove, Charles H. *A Day in the Ancient Mediterranean* (posted on Moodle); others to be provided.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

1. Online forum posts: 40% (on posting, see below under Posting to the Online Forums)
2. Exams: 30%
3. Exegesis Paper: 30% (see description of this assignment below)

## **Posting to the Online Forums:**

Each week of class is divided into two successive **forums**, an A forum and a B forum. Posting runs from Monday through Wednesday for the A forum, Thursday through Sunday for the B forum. Once a forum is over, no more posting to it will count. You are permitted to distribute your posts however you wish through the week. You may participate in the A forum, the B forum, or both. Each forum will also be divided into have two groups, Groups 1 and 2. You will be assigned to a group and are responsible only to the discussion in their group and must always post to their own group. You are free to read the posts in both sections but are responsible only to read the posts in your assigned section.

You must make **at least three substantial posts each week**. As stated above, you may distribute the posts over the course of the week as you wish—dividing them between the two forums or devoting all your posts to only one of the forums. Students may contribute more frequently to any of the forums than 3 posts per week. *Note, however, that the forum “Honor and Shame in the New Testament” and the forum “Paul and Peoplehood in African-American Perspective” have required participation components for everyone.*

Each “substantial post” should be somewhere in the range of a couple paragraphs. **A post should be in the range of 250--300 carefully-chosen words. This is not a hard-and-fast rule, but a guideline.** Posts will be graded and weighted as 40% of the final grade. It is not possible to pass the course without participating in the forums. If you have an emergency or serious illness that prevents you from posting, please contact the course professor.

The following are **specific guidelines for posts**:

1. Each forum begins with Discussion Questions provided by the professor, which orient the discussion. You should make posts directed to these Discussion Questions. But you are also free to bring up other related subjects as the forum gets under way.
2. Your posts should reflect the assigned readings where relevant. This does not mean that you must have a reference to the readings in every post. The idea is to bring into our discussion relevant information where it is helpful.
3. As the conversation gets going, you are expected to read everyone's posts in your section and you should include (in at least some of your posts) interaction with/reference to posts by your classmates and professor.
4. Be sure to pay close attention to the professor's posts, which contain comments and summaries of discussion. They will help you post in the light of preceding discussion in the forum. Remember, in posting you are contributing to a discussion, not simply answering questions as if taking a quiz by yourself.
5. No posts to a forum will be counted if they are made after the forum has ended. The only exception is posts to a past forum with the permission of the professor as part of a make-up agreement.

5. A grading rubric is provided at the end of the syllabus in an Appendix.

**The Exams:** three take-home exams based on Ehrman. These exams are due October 8, November 12, and December 10.

Note: Both the exegesis paper and the final exam are due on the same day—the last day of the semester, so budget your time accordingly. You may turn in either one earlier, of course.

### **The Exegesis Paper**

The plan is for everyone will write an exegesis paper on Luke 4:16–30. *If you wish to write on a different passage, this can be arranged. But you must get the professor's prior approval.*

The exegesis paper is to be 10–12 double-spaced pages plus a bibliography page. Use footnotes, not endnotes. You may write more than ten pages, but not more than twelve. The bibliography must contain at least five scholarly sources from the bibliography below. All quotations from sources must be in quotation marks with a footnote. All other references to information found in sources must also be footnoted. Commentaries on Luke have been placed on library reserve in the United Library for your use. You may also use other sources—scholarly books and articles—besides these if you wish.

The paper should examine the detail of the passage in consultation with the scholarly resources (commentaries, etc.). In using the scholarly resources, look for **evidence and arguments** in support of the author's interpretations. Do not treat scholarly sources as authorities for interpretations, only as authorities for evidence. (In other words, if a commentator states that the ancient writer Josephus says such and such about synagogue customs, you can treat that as authoritative information. But you should not treat the commentator's interpretation of a verse in Luke 4 as authoritative information, only as opinion, and you should examine the commentators' arguments and evidence to see how well they support their opinions before you embrace those opinions in working out your interpretation.) Hence, in your exegesis paper you should back up what you say with evidence and arguments in consultation with the commentaries. Referring to the detail in Luke is part of this with appropriate citations in parenthesis. Note, in a research paper, biblical citations should generally be in the body of the paper as follows: "Later in Luke John the Baptist has his disciples ask Jesus' disciples who Jesus is (Lk. 7:18–23).

This assignment assumes that you have not done an exegesis paper before (although, of course, some of you have). The purpose of the paper is to teach methods of exegesis and the presentation of interpretation in a formal paper. The "Outline of the Paper" given below is designed to model this. *Please conform your paper to this outline, and use the headings and subheadings.*

*Due date for paper:* December 10

The footnotes and bibliography must conform to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., rev. by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).

*Caution:* This paper is subject to all the stated seminary rules and policies regarding academic integrity. See specifically the section on plagiarism (and how to avoid it) in the *G-ETS Academic Handbook*. Credit cannot be given for plagiarism, whether the plagiarism is intentional or unintentional. In particular, be aware that using exact language from a source (a phrase, sentence, paragraph, etc.) with a note attached but with no quotation marks (or, in the case of more than one sentence, without indenting the material in a block quotation) is plagiarism. Be aware also that a paper made up mainly of quotations from sources, even if these are properly cited, does not satisfy the requirements for an exegesis paper, which should be mostly in your own words. Use quotations sparingly. Present the information and opinions found in your sources by putting them in your own words, paraphrasing and attaching proper citations.

### **Outline of Paper**

In writing the paper, please follow this outline, using the prescribed numbered headings and subheadings. Note that in 2. and 3. where there are sub-headings, you need not write anything for the main heading unless you wish to make general remarks.

1. Introduction (one paragraph describing the subject and setting of the passage)
2. Luke's sources
  - 2.1 Luke's use of Mark in telling this story
  - 2.2 The scripture quotation from Isaiah
3. The key concepts of Isaiah 61 as quoted in Luke 4:
  - 3.1 "anointing"
  - 3.2 "preach good news"
  - 3.3 "the poor" and others mentioned in v. 18
  - 3.4 the meaning of vv 18–19 as a whole in their context
4. The response of the people and Jesus' interaction with them
5. The relation of the story to the concept of the kingdom of God message in Luke

Use this exact outline for the paper. Your task is to treat the passage under the different headings of the outline, which models a comprehensive exegetical treatment of the passage on its own terms and within the frameworks of Luke and Luke-Acts. You should make connections between the different sections as you go along, so that your overall interpretation is consistent and integrated. You may add a summarizing conclusion if you wish to help you make this overall integration more explicit. Note, however, that number 5 is an opportunity for integrative interpretation. Your treatments, section by section of the outline, do not have to be of equal length. Exercise judgment in deciding what deserves lengthier treatment. Also, be sure to digest the instructions in the syllabus before completing the paper.

Send your paper by email attachment to me.

**Commentaries on Luke (some to be provided on reserve, some excerpts to be posted; the Bovon commentary is on permanent reserve on the south wall)**

Bock, Darrell L. *Luke*. 2 vols. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994, 1996.

Bovon, François. *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*. Hermeneia. Translated by Christine M. Thomas. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

Carroll, John T. *Luke: A Commentary*. New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012.

Edwards, James L. *The Gospel according to Luke*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

Evans, C. F. *Saint Luke*. TPINTC. London: SCM Press, 1990; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Gospel according to St. Luke*. 2 vols. AB28–28A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981, 1985.

Garland, David. *Luke*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

Gonzalez, Justo. *Luke*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

Green, Joel B. *The Gospel of Luke*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Gospel of Luke*. Sacra Pagina 3. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991.

Lieu, Judith. *The Gospel of Luke*. London: Epworth Press, 1997.

Nolland, John. *Luke*. 3 vols. WBC 35A–C. Dallas: Word, 1989–93.

Ringe, Sharon H. *Luke*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. New American Commentary. B. & H. Publishing, 1992.

Talbert, Charles H. *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel*. Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2002.

Tannehill, Robert C. *Luke*. Abingdon NT Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Wolter, Michael. *The Gospel according to Luke*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016–2017; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016–2017.

### **Additional Resources on Luke**

Crowder, Stephanie Buckanon. “Luke.” In *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian Blount et al. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Jeong, Paul Yonggap. “Mission from a Position of Weakness in Luke-Acts” [including discussion of Luke 4:16ff]. In idem, *Mission from a Position of Weakness*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

Assigned readings from our textbooks for each forum are indicated in parenthesis. Discussion Questions and other instructions are given online for each forum.

Ehrman = Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament. A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*

*MCNT* = *Mercer Commentary on the New Testament*

#### **Week of September 5–10 (you are permitted to post on Labor Day, the 4th, if you so wish)**

Forum A: The Muratorian Canon (Ehrman, ch. 1: What Is the New Testament?—The Early Christians and Their Literature; *MCNT*, 61–83)

Forum B: Religion in the Graeco-Roman World (Ehrman, ch. 3: The Greco-Roman World of Early Christian Traditions; Ehrman, ch 4: The Jewish World of Jesus and His Followers)

#### **Week of September 11–17**

Forum A: The Gospels and Ancient Biography (Ehrman ch. 6: The Christian Gospels: A Literary and Historical Introduction)

Forum B: The Gospel of Mark (Ehrman, ch. 7: Jesus the Suffering Servant of God—The Gospel according to Mark; Mark in *MCNT*)

#### **Week of September 18–24**

Forum A: The Synoptic Problem (Ehrman, ch. 8: The Synoptic Problem and Its Significance for Interpretation)

Forum B: The Kingdom of God in the Synoptic Gospels

### **Week of September 25–October 1**

Forum A: The Gospel of Matthew (Ehrman, ch. 9: Jesus the Jewish Messiah—The Gospel according to Matthew; Matthew in *MCNT*)

Forum B: The Gospel of Luke (Ehrman, ch. 10: Jesus the Savior of the World—The Gospel according to Luke; Luke in *MCNT*)

### **Week of October 2–8**

#### ***Exam I due by October 8***

Forum A: Acts of the Apostles (Ehrman, ch. 19: Luke’s Second Volume—The Acts of the Apostles; Acts in *MCNT*)

Forum B: The Gospel of John (Ehrman, ch. 11: Jesus, the Man Sent from Heaven: The Gospel according to John; John in *MCNT*)

### **Week of October 9–15**

Forum A: The Johannine Epistles (1, 2, and 3 John) (Ehrman, ch. 12: From John’s Jesus to the Gnostic Christ—The Johannine Epistles and Beyond; 1, 2, & 3 John in *MCNT*)

Forum B: The Corinthian Correspondence (Ehrman, ch. 22: Paul and the Crises of His Churches [sections on 1 and 2 Corinthians]; 1 and 2 Corinthians in *MCNT*)

### **Week of October 16–22**

Forum A: Discussion of Cosgrove “A Day in the Ancient Mediterranean”—Mentor and Ariston

Forum B: Discussion of Cosgrove “A Day in the Ancient Mediterranean”—Chreseme and Semele

### **Week of October 23–29**

Forum A: Cosgrove, “Paul and American Individualism,” in *Cross-Cultural Paul*



Forum B: Yeo, “Paul’s Theological Ethic and the Chinese Morality of *Ren Ren*” in *Cross-Cultural Paul*

**Week of October 30–November 5**

Forum A: Philippians (Ehrman, ch. 22: Paul and the Crises of His Churches [section on Philippians]; Philippians in *MCNT*)

Forum B: Womanist Interpretation of the NT— Kerri Allen

**Week of November 6–12**

***Exam II due on November 12***

Forum A: Galatians (Ehrman, ch. 22: Paul and the Crises of His Churches [section on Galatians]; Galatians in *MCNT*)

Forum B: The Purpose and Occasion of Romans (Ehrman, ch. 23: The Gospel According to Paul—The Letter to the Romans)

**Week of November 13–19**

Forum A: Theological Argumentation in Romans (Romans in *MCNT*)

Forum B: The Pauline Legacy — Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles (Ehrman, ch. 24: Does the Tradition Miscarry?—Paul in Relation to Jesus, James, Thecla, and Theudas; Ehrman, ch 25: In the Wake of the Apostles—The Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles; and ch. 26: From Paul’s Female Colleagues to the Pastor’s Intimidated Women—The Oppression of Women in Early Christianity; Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus in *MCNT*)

**Week of November 20–26 Thanksgiving Break — No Forums**

**Week of November 27–December 3**

Everyone is required to participate with at least one post to Forum B by engaging with the two assigned articles by Houston and Reynolds posted online.

Forum A: Herold Weiss, “Paul’s Visit to the River Plate,” in *Cross-Cultural Paul*

Forum B: Cosgrove, “Paul and Peoplehood in African-American Perspective” in *Cross-Cultural Paul*

## Week of December 4–10

### *Exam III on Ehrman due December 10*

### *Exegesis paper due December 10*

Forum A: James (Ehrman, ch. 29: Christians and Christians—James, the *Didache*, Polycarp, 1 Clement, Jude, and 2 Peter; James in *MCNT*)

Forum B: Revelation (Ehrman, ch. 30: Christians and the Cosmos—The Revelation of John, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*; Revelation in *MCNT*)

## **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDANCE FOR THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Books and articles on the New Testament are constantly being published in great numbers. The following offers some guidance about how to carry out research on a biblical text or topic and how to build a working library.

### **Research:**

**1. Commentaries.** Once you have identified a topic or passage and have an idea which New Testament text or texts you wish to research, a very useful starting point is the commentary. Find the most recent scholarly commentaries on your text and look carefully at their bibliographies. Examining several commentaries in this way will give you an orientation to the scholarly literature. Some commentaries provide a complete bibliography at the front; others divide up their bibliographies and distribute them to the individual sections of the commentary.

Scholarly commentaries in English are found in the following commentary series: Hermeneia, Sacra Pagina (SP), The Anchor Bible (AB), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT), The International Critical Commentary (ITC), Word Biblical Commentary (WBC), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BCNT), The New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC), and the New American Commentary (NAC).

In addition to these series there are other scholarly commentaries, some in other series and some published outside of series. A test of whether a commentary is “scholarly” or not is whether it interacts with other scholars. A commentary with no references to or discussions of the variety of interpretations may be well informed but is deficient as a resource for engaging the exegetical issues. Commentaries also tend to be more useful for the researcher when they are detailed in their coverage. In this respect long commentaries tend to be more helpful than short ones.

If you wish to build your own library of commentaries, consider how helpful you find the coverage, format, balance of perspectives, and level of detail in commentaries you use during your seminary studies. This may lead you in the direction of a particular commentary series,

which you may decide to purchase as a set or on subscription. Sometimes this sort of purchase involves a discount.

## **2. Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias**

Bible dictionaries are valuable when you want additional information on a key word or concept, institution, practice, figure, event, etc. The following are highly recommended choices:

*Harper's Bible Dictionary* (one volume, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier)

*Mercer Dictionary of the Bible* (one volume, ed. Watson Mills)

*Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols., ed. David Noel Freedman)

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (one volume, ed. Joel B. Green)

*Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (one volume, ed. Joel B. Green et al.)

*Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (many volumes, most still in production; ed. Hans-Josef Klauck)

**3. Using NUCat, WorldCat, First Search, the ATLA database, etc.** via the library website you have access to a variety of search engines for finding books and articles on your subject. It takes practice to become adept at these, but it pays off, especially since so much of what you will find in these databases is available in the seminary library or through interlibrary loan.

Don't forget that some of the most detailed discussions of a topic or passage are published in articles. Most articles appear in journals but some are published in books (books with an editor and multiple authors whose contributions make up the body of the book).

**4. Using GoogleBooks.** One way to discover information on your topic and to identify books is to use the Google search engine in GoogleBooks. Not only will you be able to view many pages of books in GoogleBooks, you will also discover in those pages references to other pertinent literature. Looking in GoogleBooks at a source first identified through WorldCat or in a commentary's bibliography will also give you an idea whether the book will be helpful and is worth ordering through interlibrary loan (if the seminary library does not have a copy) or even purchasing.

**5. Browsing the old-fashioned way.** Once you have identified a book on your subject (commentary, monograph, etc.) and have located it in the library stacks, it is always worthwhile to examine others books shelved in that area. Browsing may lead you to a source you might not have found in another way.

**6. Publication dates.** Because the field and sub-fields of biblical studies are always developing, it is a mistake to rely on sources that are outdated. A paper that depends on sources that are all forty years old or older is likely to be deficient in relevant information. It will certainly be out of touch with current interpretation. Older books can contain valuable information and some have achieved the status of classics. But always be sure to consult recent scholarship as well. To determine when a book was first published, look at the copyright date, not the date of

reprintings. If the book has been revised, the date of revision can be taken as a guide so long as the revision is substantial.

## Appendix

### Intro to NT, Discussion Board Rubric

GRADES	A [ 100 - 90 ]	B [ 89 - 80 ]	C [ 79 – 70 ]	D-F [<70]
<b>CRITICAL THINKING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates excellence in distinguishing different interpretations.</li> <li>- Demonstrates ability to present and weigh evidence for different interpretations.</li> <li>- Logically supports position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to distinguish different interpretations.</li> <li>- Makes an acceptable effort to present and weigh evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does little to demonstrate the ability to present and weigh evidence.</li> <li>- Offers limited logical support of position.</li> </ul>	Falls short by six or more posts (the equivalent of missing two weeks of class) If illness or an emergency affects your ability to post, please notify the professor.
<b>CONNECTIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes detailed connections to assigned readings and course topics;</li> <li>- Builds on prior discussion by classmates and professor,</li> <li>- Draws helpful inferences and integrates new learning.</li> <li>- Interacts with/reference to the posts others have made.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes vague connections to: a) assigned readings; b) other discussion posts;</li> <li>- Lacks evidence of having read the posts of others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes little or no connection to assigned readings;</li> <li>- Gives no reference to the posts of others</li> <li>- Posts lack relevance to the posted questions.</li> </ul>	No posts to a forum will be graded if they are made after the forum has ended. (Exception may be granted as part of a make-up agreement.)
<b>INSIGHT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contributes at least three substantial posts per week. (Substantial = a couple of paragraphs.)</li> <li>- Exhibits creative insight and interacts with peers and professor.</li> <li>- Is able to introduce related subjects that add meaningfully to the discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contributes at least three weekly posts.</li> <li>- Reflects a basic understanding of the course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimally contributes to the discussion.</li> <li>- Rehashes or summarizes other postings.</li> </ul>	