

## **ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**NT 601**

**NEW TESTAMENT I**

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**John Montgomery Bell Professor of New Testament**

**Columbia Campus**

**Fall, 2008**

**COURSE MEETS SATURDAYS, 9:00-5:00, ON SEPTEMBER 20, OCTOBER 18, NOVEMBER 15, AND DECEMBER 13.**

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### **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course explores the background, literary art, theological teaching, and contemporary message of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. Attention is given to the canonical significance of these writings and to their value for ministry.

REQUIRED. Three hours credit.

### **II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The Seminary's Mission Statement affirms: "The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church." (ETS 2007-2008 *Catalogue*, p. 5) Central to any kind of Christian ministry is bearing witness in word and deed to the coming of Jesus into the world as the God-Man. The New Testament is an account of the life and work of Jesus as well as a witness to its significance for human life. Thus, a course that introduces students to the New Testament is at the very heart of the Seminary's mission.

**More specifically, by the end of this course, the student should be able to:**

1. Describe the major historical events that occurred in Palestine from the time of Alexander the Great through the Jewish War (336 B.C. – A.D. 70);

2. Define rabbinic and Hellenistic Judaism and describe the major commonalities and differences of the two;
3. Describe the major geographical features of Palestine and show their importance for understanding the New Testament;
4. Describe the major religious and political parties of Judaism in Palestine in the first century A.D.;
5. Describe the major intellectual and religious movements in the Greco-Roman world in the first century A.D.;
6. Discuss the problems confronted in the quest of the historical Jesus;
7. Describe current attempts to uncover the historical Jesus;
8. Define "Gospel" as a literary form;
9. Describe the likely process by which the Gospels were written and transmitted and indicate the probable uses they had in the early churches;
10. Describe the basic process by which the canonization of the New Testament occurred;
11. Describe the process by which the text of the New Testament has come to us;
12. Describe the probable historical circumstances that called forth Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts;
13. State in his/her own words the major themes of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts;
14. Describe the picture of Jesus that emerges in each of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John;
15. Outline the basic contents of each of the four Gospels and the book of Acts;
16. List and describe major tools that are valuable in studying the New Testament.

### III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Each student must purchase the following textbooks for the course. Note that required textbooks may be purchased through the Erskine Theological Seminary Virtual Bookstore at [www.ecampus.com/erskine](http://www.ecampus.com/erskine).

Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Patzia, Arthur G. *The Making of the New Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995.

Roetzel, Calvin J. *The World That Shaped the New Testament*,

Revised Edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Soulen, Richard N. and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. Third Edition, Revised and Expanded. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

Two recommended but not required books are D. S. Russell, *Between The Testaments* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965) and James C. Vanderkam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

In addition to these texts, the student will need a New Testament in the translation of his/her choice.

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. **Each student must attend each session of class.** If the student must be absent from all or part of a class session, he/she is responsible for all work missed and for any work due. **A student who misses more than one class meeting for any reason will automatically fail the course.**
- B. The student must be adequately prepared for each class session. Adequate preparation consists of reading all required assignments and being able to participate intelligently in classroom discussions. Notice that in addition to textbook reading assignments, the student is also assigned reading from the New Testament. The assigned reading from the New Testament is important and should not be neglected.
- C. **Three one-hour tests will be given.** See the **COURSE OUTLINE** for the dates and contents of these tests. The professor will indicate prior to these tests the nature of the questions, the proper way to prepare, etc. These tests will be given during the first part of the class period. The class will resume after the test is finished. All tests must be taken on the assigned dates.
- D. **Two book reviews will be required.** The student will write an analysis of Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament*. This analysis will be written in response to a

guide-sheet which will be provided. This analysis is due **in Session 3 (November 15)**. The analysis of Calvin J. Roetzel, *The World That Shaped the New Testament* is **due on December 20**. A guide-sheet will also be provided for this analysis.

- E. The student is encouraged to keep a loose-leaf notebook for the course. He/she can use it for class notes, reading notes, hand-outs, sermon ideas, bibliographical information, etc. If done properly, this notebook can be a helpful resource for further study, teaching, and preaching from the New Testament.
- F. The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men.")
- G. Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.
- H. The student should review the Seminary policy on "Incompletes." **A grade of "Incomplete" is not a privilege of the student. It is the prerogative of the professor. It can be given as a final grade only (1) when the student has completed most of his/her course work and (2) when the student has been providentially hindered from doing**

**the rest. In this class, the grade “Incomplete” will be given only when both of these conditions are met.** If the student’s situation meets the above criteria and he/she is given a grade of “Incomplete” for the course, the deadline for removing the “Incomplete” is March 1, 2009. After this date, the grade will automatically become an “F.”

- I. All papers must be typed/processed (twelve point type, double-spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in the “Style and Form Standards for All Masters Level Programs” (Erskine Seminary). The two papers required in this course are essentially book reviews. The student may use the page numbers in parentheses for any direct quotes from the books.
- J. The student must be careful about plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. Plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community. The student should read the appropriate section in the Catalog about plagiarism.
- K. The professor has regular office hours posted on his door (Office 20). However, the student is advised to set up an appointment first especially if he/she is driving a long distance to Due West.
- L. If a student registers for a course and decides not to attend the class meetings, he/she must officially withdraw by submitting a drop/add form to the Registrar. **Failure to withdraw will result in a grade of “F” and responsibility for paying the full tuition for the course.** The professor cannot withdraw a student from a course. **No exceptions will be made to this policy.**
- M. Students who plan to graduate this year must make application for graduation. **If the degree is to be conferred in January, the deadline for application for graduation is September 1, 2008. If the degree is to be conferred in May or September, the deadline is November 1, 2008.**

## V. EVALUATION

The Seminary grade scale (ETS 2007-2008 *Catalogue*, p. 35) will be used. The student’s final grade will be determined as follows:

**Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning**

Three tests	=	70%
Two book reviews	=	30%

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Session 1: September 20**

#### **Course introduction, requirements, procedures, etc.**

#### **I. An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament**

- A. Introduction
- B. Approaches to New Testament study
- C. The historical-critical method
- D. Types of New Testament literature and the interpretive significance of recognizing types
- E. The New Testament canon and its development
- F. The history of the text of the New Testament

#### **II. The World of the New Testament**

- A. Introduction
- B. The geography of Palestine in the first century A.D.
- C. Palestine under Roman rule
  - 1. Alexander the Great to the Maccabean revolt (336 – 167 B.C.)
  - 2. The Maccabean revolt and its aftermath (167 – 142 B.C.)
  - 3. The Hasmonean rule (142 – 63 B.C.)
  - 4. The Roman period (63 B.C. – A.D. 70)
- D. Judaism in the first century A.D.
- E. The Greco-Roman world in the first century A.D.

#### **ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 1:**

1. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. xxxiii – xxxvii, 3-96.
2. Read Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*: “Apocryphal N. T.” (pp. 11-12); “Biblical Criticism” (pp. 18-23); “Canon” (p. 29); “Codex” (p. 34); “Exegesis, etc.” (p. 57); “Historical Critical Method” (p. 78); “Historical

- Criticism” (p. 79); “Papyrus Manuscripts” (p. 128); “Postmodern Biblical Interpretation” (pp. 140-142); “Textual Criticism” (pp. 189-192); “Textus Receptus” (p. 192); “Theological Interpretation” (pp. 192-196); “Variant Reading” (p. 204); “Vellum” (p. 205).  
 “Am Ha Arez” (p. 6); “Dead Sea Scrolls” (pp. 43-44); “Gnosis, etc.” (pp. 67-68); “Haggadah” (p. 70); “Halakah” (p. 71); “Josephus, Flavius” (pp. 91-92); “Mishnah” (pp. 113-114); “Midrash” (p. 113); “Philo of Alexandria” (p. 137); “Talmud” (p. 186); “Targum” (p. 187).
3. Read Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament*, pp.102-149.

## **Session 2: October 18**

### **TEST # 1 ON I AND II ABOVE (11:30 a.m.)**

#### **III. An Introduction to the Gospels**

- A. Introduction
- B. What is a Gospel?
- C. The probable process of composition of the Gospels
- D. The Synoptic problem
- E. The problem of finding the historical Jesus
- F. Disciplines for the study of the Gospels
  - 1. Source criticism
  - 2. Form criticism
  - 3. Redaction criticism
  - 4. Narrative criticism

#### **IV. The Gospel of Mark**

- A. Introduction
- B. Unique features of Mark
- C. Authorship, date, recipients, historical situation addressed
- D. The purpose(s) of Mark
- E. The themes of Mark
- F. Resources for the study of Mark

#### **ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 2:**

1. Read Mark 1-16 in a translation of your choice. Note the tone of Mark’s account of Jesus. What are the particular emphases in Mark that strike you as being significant? What portrait of Jesus emerges from Mark?

2. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 99-170.
3. Read Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*: “Aretalogy” (pp. 13-14); “Form Criticism” (pp. 61-64); “Four Document Hypothesis” (p. 64); “Gospel” (p. 68); “Griesbach Hypothesis” (p. 70); “Harmony of the Gospels” (p. 71); “Jesus Seminar” (p. 91); “Literary Criticism” (pp. 105-106); “Messianic Secret” (p. 110); “Nag Hammadi Codices” (pp. 116-117); “Narrative, Narrative Criticism” (pp. 118-120); “Oral Tradition” (pp. 125-126); “Pericope” (p. 136); “Q” (pp. 151-153); “Quest of the Historical Jesus, etc.” (pp. 153-156); “Redaction Criticism” (pp. 158-160); “Rhetorical Criticism” (pp. 164-165); “*Sitz-em-Leben*” (pp. 173-174); “Source Criticism” (pp. 178-179); “Streeter” (pp. 179-180); “Synopsis” (p. 184); “Synoptic Problem” (pp. 184-185); “Theos Aner” (p. 192); “Two Source Hypothesis” (p. 200); “Parable, etc.” (pp. 128-132); “Urmarkus” (p. 204); “Wrede, William” (p. 210).
4. Read Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament*, pp. 35-68.

### **Session 3: November 15**

#### **TEST # 2 ON III-IV ABOVE (11:30 a.m.)**

#### **V. The Gospel of Matthew**

- A. Introduction
- B. Unique features of Matthew
- C. Authorship, date, recipients, and historical situation addressed
- D. The purpose(s) of Matthew
- E. The structure of Matthew
- F. The themes of Matthew
- G. Resources for the study of Matthew

#### **VI. The Gospel of Luke**

- A. Introduction
- B. Unique features of Luke
- C. Authorship, date, recipients, and historical situation addressed

- D. The relationship between Luke and Acts
- E. The purpose(s) of Luke
- F. The themes of Luke
- G. Resources for the study of Luke

### **ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 3:**

1. Read Matthew 1-28 in a translation of your choice. What things seem to be emphasized in this Gospel? What is the relationship between Jesus and Judaism in Matthew? What is the portrait of Jesus that emerges from Matthew?
2. Read Luke 1-24 in a translation of your choice. Note the things that Luke emphasizes in his story of Jesus. What is the portrait of Jesus that emerges from this Gospel?
3. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 171-278.
4. Read Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism: "Apology" (p. 12); "Benedictus" (pp. 17-18); "Proto-Luke" (p. 146).*
5. The review of Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament*, is due in this session.

### **Session 4: December 13**

#### **TEST # 3 ON V-VI ABOVE (11:30 a.m.)**

#### **VII. The Gospel of John**

- A. Introduction
- B. Unique features of John
- C. Authorship, date, recipients, and historical situation addressed
- D. The thought-world of John
- E. The structure of John
- F. The purpose(s) of John
- G. John and the Synoptic Gospels
- H. The themes of John
- I. Resources for the study of the Gospel of John

### VIII. The Book of Acts

- A. Introduction
- B. Unique features of Acts
- C. The relationship of Acts to the Gospel of Luke
- D. Authorship, date, recipients, and historical situation addressed
- E. The structure of Acts
- F. The purpose(s) of Acts
- G. The themes of Acts
- H. Resources for the study of Acts

#### ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 4:

1. Read John 1-21 in a translation of your choice. Note the tone of this Gospel. How is it significantly different from the Synoptic Gospels? What is the portrait of Jesus that emerges from John? How does this picture compare to that in Matthew, Mark, and Luke?
2. Read Acts 1-28 in a translation of your choice. Note the selective nature of Luke's account of the history of the church. Note the peculiar features of the story. How does Luke show concern for the Jew-Gentile problem in Acts?
3. Read Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 279-382.
4. Read Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*: "Glossolalia" (p. 67); "Kerygma" (pp. 93-94); "Realized Eschatology" (p. 157); "Signs Source" (p. 173).
4. Read Frank Stagg, "The Unhindered Gospel" in *Review and Expositor*, Vol. LXXi, No. 4 (Fall, 1974), pp. 451-462. **(to be provided)**

- 12-20** The review of Calvin J. Roetzel, *The World That Shaped the New Testament*, is due.