

## NT502: New Testament Interpretation

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Spring 2019  
Tue/Thurs 9:35-11:00am  
Requirements: OT500, NT501, and GL502

### 1. Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the hermeneutical principles and exegetical methods involved in the interpretation of the text of the New Testament. It will cover two basic areas:

- foundational *principles* for interpretation;
- *methods* for establishing the text, locating it in its historical, literary and biblical contexts, and analyzing its grammatical, lexical, and discourse features;

Attention will also be given to the different genres of the New Testament and their specific interpretive issues.

The course is practice oriented, combining introductory lectures, supplemental reading, demonstrations of the methods, and practical assignments. The skills developed will enable the student to produce a well-informed exegetical paper on an assigned passage of the New Testament.

### 2. Learning Objectives

The successful completion of the course will entail the following goals:

- To develop an appropriate framework for approaching the New Testament, appreciating its historical, literary and theological aspects
- To understand the hermeneutical issues involved in reading an ancient text
- To understand the history of the New Testament text and to make informed text critical decisions
- To evaluate the different features of the text (grammatical, lexical, rhetorical) and follow its logical structure and argument
- To identify the different genres of the New Testament and their specific interpretive aspects
- To analyze the historical background of the New Testament
- To situate a given passage in its literary context, understanding its role in the New Testament book as a whole.
- To identify and explore inner-biblical connections and their interpretive significance
- To identify critical issues and assess them in light of secondary literature (commentaries, monographs, articles, etc)

The ultimate goal of the course is to develop a deeper relationship with the New Testament and with its divine author, in order to be able to serve the Church and the world through the faithful teaching of Scripture, for the glory of God. The understanding and application of these principles and methods should not reduce Scripture to an object of study, but deepen one's appreciation of its transformative power.

### 3. Academic Requirements

The analyses of the texts will be carried out in the original Greek language. Therefore, students are expected to have completed two semesters of Basic Greek (GL501 and 502). The exegetical steps that require more extensive interaction with Greek grammar (Sentence diagramming/Discourse analysis) are deliberately introduced halfway through the course, in order to give students who are concurrently taking GL502 the chance to acquire a solid understanding of the Greek verb system. However, students should be advised that these steps demand a concrete knowledge of Greek grammar.

The course will also assume acquaintance with the canonical books (developed in OT500 and NT501), especially with the New Testament corpus.

### 4. Course Format

Given its introductory nature and the complexity of the interpretive task, this course is academically challenging. The lectures are introductory and will assume the previous reading of the assigned material. In general, the lectures will alternate between the discussion of exegetical methods and a 'demonstration' of their application. Students will then have the opportunity to practice the methods in assignments. All assignments will apply the exegetical steps to a designated passage (1 Peter 2:21-25), with a view to the completion of the final exegetical paper, where the skills learned are to be integrated.

**NOTE:** In some cases, extra tutorial sessions might be offered to reinforce the understanding of the methods. Sessions are not mandatory since no new material will be introduced in tutorials. However, further examples may be covered so as to enhance learning.

### 5. Course Requirements

**Readings.** As pointed out, the assigned readings are to be completed before the respective lecture. A reading statement mentioning the percentage of the material read must be included on the cover page of the final exegesis paper. A penalty of 1% of the final grade will be applied for every 10% of incomplete reading.

**Practice Assignments.** These are to be done during the week following the respective lecture, i.e. after the student has been introduced to the method. They are to be completed in one week, unless specified. Due dates are indicated below and will be strictly enforced. Adjustments to the due

dates may occur according to the pace of the class. Official due dates will be posted on the learning platform. Failure to complete the assignments by the due date will directly affect grades. Extensions under extenuating circumstances are to be discussed with the professor.

The practice assignments are:

- 1) Text Critical Analysis
- 2) Specific Historical context
- 3) Literary Structure
- 4) Grammatical Analysis
- 5) Discourse Analysis
- 6) Lexical Analysis

Assignments are to be:

- 1 (one) page only (strictly enforced, except where noted), with 1-inch margins.
- Type-written, except for diagrams and charts, single-spaced, using seriffed fonts (Brill, Times New Roman, etc) of *no less than 10 point type face*.
- Tagged in the top right corner as follows:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment number \_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Box Number \_\_\_\_\_

- All assignments (except when noted) are to be submitted electronically via the online learning platform. For essays, please submit a .docx document with Greek/Hebrew fonts in Unicode. This will facilitate the professor's comments and grading. For diagrams and graphics, please submit a .pdf file. For hand-drawn diagrams send a .pdf with the image properly scanned (please do not submit smartphone photos).
- Documents uploaded to the learning platform should be named according to the following format: NT502\_Last Name\_Assignment # \_Assignment title. For example, NT502\_Smith\_Assignment 1\_Text Critical Analysis
- While aesthetics is not a priority, the neatness of the presentation of the assignments is important and will affect grades. Please refrain from submitting work containing coffee or water stains, or lines and arrows drawn without the use of a ruler.
- Detailed guidelines for each assignment will be provided on the learning platform.

**Final Paper.** Students are to complete a major exegesis paper (12-15 pages, including footnotes but not bibliography) integrating the findings of the methods learned in class. **The paper must be an exegesis of the Greek text. Papers that do not show a substantial interaction with the Greek text will receive a failing grade.** A full guide with detailed instructions will be provided.

**NOTE:** This course introduces students to a different step of exegesis each week, which are to be practiced on 1 Peter 2:21-25 throughout the semester. These will build the foundation for writing the final paper, which integrates the findings in an exegetical essay on the same passage. Students will

arrive at the final weeks of the course with some of the primary exegetical work done. However, inevitably, some of these steps will only be introduced during the final weeks of the course. Students are therefore encouraged to plan their final weeks wisely, considering that the workload at that stage may be intensified.

## 6. Evaluation

Practice Assignments	40%
Final Paper	60%

**Note on attendance:** Given the fast pace and the range of topics covered in this class, missing lectures may seriously affect the assimilation of the methods. A minimum of 85% of attendance is required to pass the class. Provisions for absence under extenuating circumstances may be discussed with the professor.

## 7. Class Outline

Class	Date	Lecture	Reading	Assignment
1	29-Jan	Introductions/ Principles for faithful interpretation of Scripture		
2	31-Jan	Principles (cont.)/ Hermeneutics and Exegesis		
3	05-Feb	Hermeneutics (cont.)		
4	07-Feb	Establishing the Text: Unit delimitation and Translation	Fee, 9-12	<b>Assignment 0 (not graded): Read through 1 Peter three times in English.</b>
5	12-Feb	Establishing the Text: Textual Criticism	Metzger*, 3-134; 250-343 Wallace (Bock&Fanning), 33-56	

6	14-Feb	Establishing the Text: Textual Criticism	Fee, 59-70 Introduction to NA <sup>28</sup> , 46-88	
	19-Feb	READING WEEK		
	21-Feb	READING WEEK		
7	26-Feb	Locating the Text: Historical Context	Fee, 96-111 Osbourne, 158-180	<b>Assignment 1: Text Critical Analysis</b>
8	28-Feb	Locating the Text: Historical Context	Bauckham (Green), 65-84 Alexander (Green), 85-101 Green, The World of the NT** (see appendix 1)	
9	05-Mar	Locating the Text: Genre Analysis	Fee, 16-31 Bailey (Green), 140-165	
10	07-Mar	Locating the Text: Genre Analysis	Schreiner, 11-38; Burer (Bock&Fanning), 197-220; Harris III (Bock&Fanning), 241-254	<b>Assignment 2: Historical Context</b>
11	12-Mar	Genre Analysis (cont.) Locating the Text: Literary Context	Osbourne, 39-45	
12	14-Mar	Locating the Text: Literary Context		<b>Bibliography Seminar (Jim Darlack)***</b>
	19-Mar	READING WEEK		
	21-Mar	READING WEEK		
13	26-Mar	Literary Context (cont.)/ Exploring the Text: Grammatical Analysis	Fee, 71-7	
14	28-Mar	Exploring the Text: Grammatical Analysis		<b>Assignment 3: Literary Structure</b>

15	02-Apr	Exploring the Text: Grammatical Analysis/Discourse Analysis	Smith(Bock&Fanning), 73-134; Sowell, 3-25 (Canvas) Schreiner, 97-126	
16	04-Apr	Exploring the Text: Discourse Analysis		<b>Assignment 4: Grammatical Analysis</b>
17	09-Apr	Exploring the Text: Lexical Analysis	Fee, 79-95 Osbourne, 82-112	
18	11-Apr	Exploring the Text: Lexical Analysis		<b>Assignment 5: Discourse Analysis</b>
19	16-Apr	Exploring the Text: Inner-biblical Exegesis	Hays and Green (Green), 122-139	
20	18-Apr	Exploring the Text: Inner-biblical Exegesis		<b>Assignment 6: Lexical Analysis</b>
21	23-May	Exploring the Text: Inner-biblical Exegesis/ Specific cultural background	Barton (Green), 34-64	
22	25-Apr	Integration		
	06-May	<b>Last Day for submission of written work</b>		<b>Final paper Due</b>

\* While the whole of Metzger & Ehrman is highly recommended, only the assigned pages are required.

\*\*This reading (Green, The World of the NT) may be completed by the end of the semester. While the whole book is recommended, only the chapters assigned on Appendix 1 are required.

\*\*\*This seminar will be offered on the Thursday prior to the reading week, after the regular class (11am-12pm). It is highly recommended that students participate in order to learn how to do research for biblical studies.

## 8. Grade Scale

97-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+
94-96	A	84-86	B	74-76	C	64-66	D
90-93	A-	80-83	B-	70-73	C-	60-63	D-

## 9. Bibliography

### Textbooks

Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th edition (NA28)

Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis, Third Edition: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. 3 edition. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Green, Joel B, and Lee Martin McDonald, eds. *The World of the New Testament : Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013.

Green, Joel B., ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. 2nd ed. edition. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2010.

Metzger, Bruce M., and Bart D. Ehrman. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. 4 edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Osborne, Grant R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral*. 2nd Revised & Expanded ed. edition. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP USA, 2006.

### Recommended Texts

Black, David Alan, and David S. Dockery. *Interpreting the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001.

Bock, Darrell L., and Buist M. Fanning. *Interpreting the New Testament Text: Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006.

Brown, Jeannine K. *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.

Evans, Craig A. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic; Hendrickson, 2005.

Goodacre, Mark. *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze*. London, UK: A&C Black, 2004.

Jr, Walter C. Kaiser, and Moisés Silva. *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation: 3rd Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.
- Meadors, Gary T. *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Parker, D. C. *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Sanders, E. P., and Margaret Davies. *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*. 1st Edition edition. London, UK: SCM Press, 1989.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. 2nd Revised edition edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Silva, Moisés. *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*. Rev Exp edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Stein, Robert H. *Studying the Synoptic Gospels, 2nd Ed.: Origin and Interpretation*. 2nd Revised edition edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001.
- Tate, W. Randolph. *Biblical Interpretation: Integrated Approach*. 2nd Revised edition edition. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc, 1997.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.
- Vanhoozer, Professor Kevin J. *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Anniversary ed. edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

### **Recommended electronic resources**

**Bible Arc:** <https://biblearc.com>. A website with tools designed for Sentence Diagramming and Discourse analysis.

**Bible Software:** Accordance, Logos, BibleWorks.



## Appendix 1

### Required chapters in *The world of the New Testament*

Chapters in Green&McDonald *The World of the New Testament* covering General Historical Background.

#### History and Worldview:

- Helyer, Larry, *The Hasmoneans and the Hasmonean Era*, pp. 38-53
- Instone-Brewer, David, *Temple and Priesthood*, pp. 197-206
- Lee-Barnewall, Michelle, *Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes*, pp. 217-227
- Dunn, James D.G., *Prophetic Movements and Zealots*, pp. 242-251
- Wright, Archie, *Jewish Identity, Beliefs and Practices*, pp. 310-324

#### Second Temple Jewish Literature :

- Elledge, C.D., *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 228-241
- Gurtner, Daniel, *Noncanonical Jewish Writings*, pp. 291-309
- Bird, Michael, *Josephus and the New Testament*, pp. 398-404
- Seland, Torrey, *Philo and the New Testament*, pp. 405-412
- Chilton, Bruce, *Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament*, pp. 413-423

