



TYNDALE
• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

Winter 2014

NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY AND HISTORY
NEWT 0522W

ONLINE FORMAT

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To access your course material, please go to <http://mytyndale.ca>.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the New Testament focusing on its over-arching vision of God's mission in the world and how human beings are called to respond. Each book will be placed in its cultural and historical setting as we focus on its distinctive contribution to the New Testament. Along the way students will be introduced to critical methods for studying the New Testament and will reflect on how we can integrate scholarly perspectives with a conviction that the New Testament is the word of God.

PREREQUISITES

- Recommended: Interpreting and Applying the Bible (BIBL 0501)

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- make careful and detailed observations about the text,
- describe the how the text was meant to transform the thoughts, feelings, and actions of its first-century audience; and
- accurately identify an analogous transformation that could take place in a specific contemporary community.

In forming this interpretation of a passage students should be able to take into account:

- the historical and cultural context in which the passage was written,
- the context of the book in which the passage is found (including its genre, themes, rhetoric, and literary structure),
- the relationship of a Gospel passage to other parallel episodes,
- the forms, rhetoric, and literary devices employed in the passage,
- the context of the whole biblical canon (including the over-arching biblical story and theological themes running through the canon), and
- the implications of biblical inspiration.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (2009). ISBN-10: 080102868X | ISBN-13: 978-0801028687

Ian W. Scott, *Witnesses of Hope: A Pathway into the New Testament* (This is a work in progress, available free-of-charge at <http://www2.tyndale.ca/~iscott/Witnesses/>.)

A copy of the Bible in one of the following translations: NIV, TNIV, NRSV, NJB, NET Bible, CEV

(Note that the NASB is not preferred, and please do not use the KJV or Authorized Version, or the RSV. Loose translations such as the New Living Translation, the New English Bible, and the Message are also not appropriate for this kind of study. If you do not own an appropriate

translation you may use the electronic copies available online at Bible Gateway, <http://www.biblegateway.com/>).

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There are four principles of learning that undergird the assignments for this course. *First, we learn best when we put new knowledge to use right away.* Rather than simply feeding information back to an instructor, we learn best when we are engaged in a project or problem that requires us to apply our new skills and information. So, throughout this course we will focus on applying our new knowledge in the interpretation of NT passages.

Second, we learn better when we acquire new knowledge in the context of the same activities we will pursue outside the course. If we learn by pursuing artificial “textbook” problems, then we will not necessarily transfer that knowledge into real-world contexts. On the other hand, if we practice real-world activities from the beginning, then we are likely to use new skills and information beyond the course. Although students will put their Seminary education to use in many different ways, we will all be involved somehow in reading and interpreting Scripture. This activity is, in many ways, the common core of our multi-faceted roles in God’s kingdom. It is central to our personal devotional lives, our leading of small groups, our strategizing about community outreach, our preaching, our teaching, our spiritual direction, our counseling, our visiting of prisoners, our creation of music and works of art, etc. So as we learn about the New Testament in its context, we will focus at each stage on how this new knowledge helps us to interpret specific passages in each biblical book.

Third, we learn best when we are pursuing questions we form for ourselves, rather than questions that are set for us by an instructor. When we help to set the direction of our own learning, we are immediately more motivated and more likely to connect what we learn with other areas of knowledge. So students will decide for themselves what questions they want to make the focus of their blog discussions and what passage they want to examine in their final interpretation essay.

Fourth, we learn best when we help one another grapple with questions. Much of the North American educational system is oriented toward isolated, individual learning. This fosters a competitive, status-driven mindset in which I evaluate my learning based on my victory over others (“top-of-the-class”) and based on self-centred external rewards (“grades” and a good transcript). The problem is that both of these tendencies run directly counter to the values of God’s kingdom in which we are called to “build up” the community and sacrifice our own status for the sake of others. So most of your learning activities in this course will consist of co-operative, group activities. You will not just be graded on your own contribution. You will also be graded on how further the learning of others in your group. This does not mean being an “expert” and dispensing knowledge. It also means helping your group members to ask good questions. In many cases we build others up best by allowing *them* to teach *us*. So part of your group assignments will also involve inviting your group members to reflect on your own suggestions—what is strong and what is missing or incorrect. This is often a threatening experience for all of us, particularly in such an individualistic society. .

1. **Weekly Group Discussion:** 40% of final grade

Students will participate in small-group discussions on a discussion forum at <http://classes.tyndale.ca>. The discussion will largely focus on the interpretation of one passage from the New Testament book(s) under consideration each week.

1. **Each week one student will be responsible to provide a thoughtful draft answer of approximately 700-1000 words** to the week's interpretation questions. This responsibility will rotate, with each student giving an answer **three times over the term. (Due by 11pm each Thursday night)**
2. Those who are not responsible to provide the draft answer in a given week are responsible to **post a constructive response to that draft**. All responses are **due by 11pm each Saturday night**. Group members may, of course, hold continuing discussions about the answer in order to help with the following step. Each response will be at least **150 words** in length and must include:
 - at least 2 affirmations of strong elements in the draft answer;
 - at least 2 specific and concrete suggestions for improving the answer
3. After all of the responses have been posted, the student who wrote the original draft is then responsible to **post a revised answer on behalf of the group**, integrating the suggestions offered by the other group members. This revised, group answer is due by **11pm on the Friday night of the following week**.

Each student's discussion grade will be decided based on

- The quality of her/his four draft posts;
- The quality of her/his responses to others' posts; and
- The overall quality of her/his final, revised answers.

These three components will not be weighted according to a set ratio. Rather, each student's contribution to the group's learning will be evaluated as a whole at the end of term. This allows the instructor to take into consideration things such as varied English competencies, different levels of prior knowledge, and improvements made over the term.

Posts (draft answers, responses, and revised group answers) will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

	Understanding and use of assigned readings.	Use of assigned interpretive methods.	Clarity, appropriateness, and depth of contributions.
A	Shows sophisticated understanding of readings; May notice relevant aspects of the readings that were not obvious; Synthesizes ideas from previous weeks' readings with current week's readings well.	Sophisticated understanding of the interpretive methods; Contributions add significantly to the group's grasp of the passage at each stage; Creative and critical thought;	Speaks clearly and coherently; Shows exceptional judgment in making her/his contributions; Is kind when voicing disagreement or suggested changes, yet offers meaningful and specific critical reflection; Receives suggested changes or corrections gracefully.

B	Good understanding of readings; Significant use of several obviously relevant aspects of the readings.	Interpretive steps are used competently in discussing the passage; Contributions are focused in keeping with the questions assigned;	Shows good judgment in making her/his contributions; Generally clear and understandable; Is not overly harsh in suggesting additions or corrections; makes the required number of affirmations and suggestions in all posts;
C	Fair understanding of readings; May be some significant errors in use of the readings; Interaction with the readings is vague and non-specific.	Some minor interpretive steps or aspects of the question are missed; Some significant mistakes in performing steps; Some correct application of the interpretive steps; Some aspects of post are off topic.	Makes most of the required contributions; Contributions may occasionally be difficult to understand; May occasionally show some lack of sensitivity in offering suggested additions or corrections; Does not always offer the required number of affirmations or suggestions; Suggestions are sometimes vague or insubstantial.
D	Poor understanding of readings; Obviously relevant aspects of the readings are overlooked;	Poor use of interpretive steps; Post may include good insights but not employ the assigned interpretive steps or questions.	Minimal post; Contributions are often difficult to understand; May make comments that are off-topic or confused; Often does not offer the required number of affirmations or suggestions.
F	No post; No evidence that readings were done	No post; No significant insights into the passage AND no evident use of the assigned interpretive steps.	No post; Contributions are extremely difficult to understand; May be hostile or inappropriate toward other members;

2. **Open Forum Participation:** 20% of final grade

Over the term students will contribute to a second discussion forum open to the entire class. Where the small-group discussions are focused on applying students new knowledge to the task of interpreting a biblical passage, the open forum provides an opportunity for students to talk about questions and issues arising from the reading and course content. Each student is responsible to

- Make at least **10 new main posts** to the open forum over the term; and
- Make a substantial contribution to at least **10 discussions of other posts**.

Students are not required to participate in the open forum every week (although you will likely find it interesting to skim over what others are saying). This allows you some flexibility in planning your time and following your interests. Keep in mind, though, that **only two posts and two discussion contributions will be counted toward your grade in any single week**. So you will need to plan to spread your contributions out over the term. Students are free to use the blog to discuss aspects of the course materials (readings, lectures, etc.) that they find difficult to understand. For a strong grade on this portion of the course, though, each student should offer 10 posts and 10 responses that go beyond summary or explanation and consider the further implications of the course content.

Your contributions will be marked using the following rubric:

		asking for clarification of course material; responses tend to simply summarize the original question or post.		the basis of course materials; posts demonstrate clear logic, critical thought, and/or unusual creativity.
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3. **Interpretation Essay:** Due by 12 midnight on **Friday Apr. 12th**; 40 % of final grade

Students will write a final essay of 12-15 pages providing and defending an interpretation of one relatively short passage from a New Testament book. Full instructions, marking criteria, and a grading rubric are available on the class web-page.

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

A full set of essay guidelines, along with the grading rubric and sample essays, is provided on the class web page at <http://classes.tyndale.ca>. The student's **interpretive essay should be submitted by email attachment** to iscott@tyndale.ca. Please DO NOT submit paper copies. Email confirmation that the essay has been received will be provided within 12 hours. Feedback on the interpretive essay will be provided by email **to the address listed on her/his user profile** (the same address at which the student receives notices from the registrar's office). These assignments may be submitted in any standard word processing file format (.ODT .DOC .DOCX .WPD or .RTF).

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.46 to 10.51](#) and [14.253 to 14.254](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar>.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

	% of Grade	Average Time Required	Average Weekly Time Required
Weekly Reading and Listening (12 weeks)	--	60 hours	5 hours/week
Weekly Small Group Discussion (12 weeks)	40%	28 hours	5 hours/week when making draft posts; 1 hour/week at other times.

Open Forum Participation (10 new posts and 10 responses)	20%	10 hours (student schedules)	
Interpretation Essay (Due Saturday, April 12th)	40%	36 hours (student schedules)	
Total Grade	100 %	126 hours	10.5 hours/week (average)

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Please note: Required audio recordings are included in the appropriate chapter of Scott, *Witnesses of Hope*.

Week of Jan. 13 th	The NT as Canon and Word of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott, "The Growth of the NT Canon" • Scott, "Hearing God's Voice in the NT"
	Preparatory group discussion question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine you are out with a friend for coffee. The topic comes around to the small group study you're a part of. She asks "How can you believe that nonsense about the Bible being 'God's Word'? Isn't it just a bunch of books picked by some old white men?" Based on this week's reading, how might you respond? • NOTE: Students are advised, if possible, to do some of this week's reading in advance. 	
Week of Jan. 20 th	Mark's Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott, "Mark: God Rescues His People" • Powell, "The New Testament World" • Mark (biblical book)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion passage: Mark 10:13-16? • Jesus' audience: Sarah (see Scott reading) 	
Week of Jan. 27 th	Matthew's Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott, "Matthew: A New David, A New Moses" • Powell, "Jesus," "The Gospels" • Matthew (biblical book)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion passage: Matthew 22:33-46 • Jesus' audience: Sarah • Matthew's audience: Demetrius 	
Week of Feb. 3 rd	Luke's Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott, "Luke: A New Day for the Poor" • Powell, "Luke" • Luke (biblical book)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion passage: Luke 10:38-42 • Jesus' audience: Martha • Luke's audience: Theophilus 	
Week of Feb. 10 th	John's Gospel The Johannine Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powell, "John" • Powell, "The Johannine Letters : 1 John, 2 John, 3 John" • Scott, "John: Light in the Darkness" • John; 1, 2, 3 John (biblical books)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion passage: John 6:22-71 • Jesus' audience: Peter • John's audience: Patroclus 	
Week of Feb. 17 th	Acts of the Apostles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powell, "Acts" • Scott, "Acts: God's Witness to the World" • Acts (biblical book)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion passage: Acts 17:16-34 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul's audience: Krates Luke's audience: Theophilus 	
Week of Feb. 24 th	Letters in the New Testament Paul's Letters I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scott, "I and II Thessalonians: Paul's Witness to the Nations" Scott, "I and II Corinthians: Living the New Creation" Powell, "New Testament Letters," "Paul," "1 Thessalonians," "2 Thessalonians," "1 Corinthians," "2 Corinthians" 1-2 Thessalonians (biblical books) 1-2 Corinthians (biblical books)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion passage: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 Paul's audience: Cassandra 	
Week of Mar. 3 rd	Paul's Letters II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scott, "Galatians and Romans: God's Gift to the Nations" Powell, "Galatians," "Romans" Galatians and Romans (biblical books)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion passage: Romans 3:21-26 Paul's audience: Orpheus 	
Week of Mar 10 th	Reading Week (No assignments)	
Week of Mar 17 th	Paul's Letters III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powell, "Philippians," "Colossians," "Philemon" Scott, "Philippians, Colossians, Philemon: Christ above All" Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (biblical books)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion passage: Phil 3:17-21 Paul's audience: Lydia 	
Week of Mar. 24 th	Paul's Disputed Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powell, "Ephesians," "The Pastoral Letters : 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus" Scott, "Ephesians and the Pastorals: The Disputed Letters" Ephesians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus (biblical books)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Timothy 2:14-21 Paul's audience: Timothy or Pelleus 	
Week of Mar. 31 st	Hebrews The "Catholic" Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powell, "Hebrews," "James," "1 Peter," "2 Peter," "Jude" Scott, "Hebrews: A Life Worth the Struggle" Scott, "The Catholic Letters: The Long Road Home" Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, Jude (biblical books)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> James 4:4-10 James' audience: Maria 	
Week of Apr. 7 th	The Revelation of John Summing Up: God's Mission in Our World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scott, "Revelation: Hope for a New Beginning" Powell, "Revelation" Revelation (biblical book)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revelation 18:1-8 The seer's audience: Nympha 	
	Essays due by 12:00 midnight on Saturday, Apr. 12th	

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Items marked with an asterisk () are highly recommended.*

A. Appropriate Commentaries on New Testament Books

See the list of good commentary series at <http://ianwscott.webfactional.com/articles/12> and the list of my commentary “picks” at <http://ianwscott.webfactional.com/articles/14>.

B. Appropriate Academic Journals

See the list online at <http://ianwscott.webfactional.com/articles/11>

C. Specific Issues and Themes

I have posted a brief bibliography on Paul's statements about women's roles in the home and church at <http://ianwscott.webfactional.com/articles/21>

See also the chapter bibliographies in Powell.

C. Appropriate Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Reference Works

Alexander, T. Desmond, and Brian S. Rosner, ed. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester/Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

Davids, Peter H., and Ralph P. Martin, ed. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997.*

Green, Joel B., I. H. Marshall, and Scot McKnight, ed. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992).*

Hawthorne, Gerald F.; Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, ed. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.*

Porter, Stanley E., ed. *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992).*

Aune, David E., ed. *Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric*. Westminster John Knox, 2003.

D. Other Useful Reference Works

Cancik, Hubert, et al., ed. *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopedia of the Ancient World: Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.*

- Craig A Evans and Stanley E Porter, ed. *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.*
- Johnston, Sarah Iles. *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Potter, David S., ed. *A Companion to the Roman Empire*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006.
- Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism in Late Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Neusner, Jacob, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, ed. *Encyclopaedia of Judaism*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999.
- Neusner, Jacob, and Alan J. Avery-Peck, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 BC–AD 400)*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.
- Sanders, E. P. *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE–66 CE*. London: SCM Press, 1992.
- Schiffman, Lawrence H., and James C. VanderKam, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Schürer, Emil. *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*. Revised. Edited by G. Vermes et al. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973–1987.*
- Shipley, Graham, et al., ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Classical Civilization*. Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University, 2006.
- Stern, E. *New Encyclopaedia of Excavations in the Holy Land*. Jerusalem, 1993.