Introduction to the New Testament (NT500; 3 credit hours)
Trinity School for Ministry, spring 2021

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Course Description
The purpose of this course is to become better equipped to read the New Testament as Christian Scripture. We will focus on many themes and various historical and theological particularities along the way as we “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the New Testament, but the overarching aim is to learn to engage with these documents as a diverse-yet-unified, coherent witness to the living reality of Jesus Christ and thereby deepen our grasp of the gospel.

The general set of outcomes Trinity desires for each of our graduates includes the following:

1. The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
2. The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology. Students of other traditions, especially those in the Lutheran and Presbyterian programs, should be able to articulate the theological perspective of their own tradition.
3. M.Div.: The student will be able to effectively communicate the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.
   M.A.R.: The student will be able to effectively teach the Christian faith.
   S.T.M.: The student will demonstrate the ability to carry out research from original sources.
4. M.Div.: The student will be prepared to effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities.
   M.A.R.: The student will be equipped to apply scholarship to the life of the church in his or her chosen theological discipline.
   S.T.M.: The student will be equipped to successfully pursue further independent research and post-graduate study in his or her chosen theological discipline.

This course is one of the core courses in the curriculum that provide an understanding of Scripture and biblical theology, thereby grounding this curriculum as a whole (outcome 1). Such attention to biblical theology is at the heart of a classic Anglican approach to Scripture (outcome 2; see Article XX of The XXXIX Articles of Religion), and an understanding of the Bible is a prerequisite for both effectively communicating the Christian message and offering effective leadership (Outcomes 3 and 4). So this course contributes to each of these general outcomes, doing so through the following specific objectives:
1. Increased understanding of the historical issues related to each of the documents of the New Testament, including the purposes and themes of each of the documents.

2. Increased understanding of the theological shape of the New Testament canon, as well as its location in the wider theological curriculum (i.e., alongside church history, liturgy, preaching, etc.).

3. Increased skill in interpreting individual passages in the light of the book in which they occur, the context of the author(s)’ overall thought, and the canon as a whole (biblical theology).


For discussion of how I will assess whether these outcomes have been met, see the discussion below of the course requirements.

**Required Texts**

There are three required textbooks for this course:

1. A “standard,” “literal” Bible translation (e.g., RSV, NRSV, ESV, HCSB, etc.).


**Course Requirements**

*Attending lectures, participating in class, and completing the assigned readings.* This is the basic minimum requirement, which will be assessed through a self-report on the “honor system.” According to the TSM *Student Handbook*, “Students who miss more than three classes in one term may forfeit credit for the class and may be in danger of failing the course. As a matter of courtesy, students who must miss any classes should notify their professors, ahead of class if possible.” (A word about taking an “Incomplete”: Incompletes are given only in the most serious of cases. They are not granted as a way to extend the semester due to unfinished work. In order to request an incomplete, you must obtain the necessary form online and bring it to me so that I can list the specific assignments to be completed along with due dates. The revised due date will not extend beyond six weeks from the last day of class. The form will then be submitted to the Academic Dean for final approval and will only be granted in the most serious of cases.)

*Mid-term exam.* Prior to Reading Week, students will take an exam (in multiple-choice and short-answer format) that will cover some of the material in the Brown textbook as well as the content of several books in the New Testament. More information on how to prepare for this exam will be given in class.

*Book report.* Three-quarters of the way through the course, students will submit a 1,500-word review (including summary and critical analysis) of the Longenecker textbook. Again, more information will be given after the start of the course on how to complete this assignment.
**Final exam.** This exam will cover the parts of the Brown textbook that were not covered in the mid-term exam, as well as the remaining books of the NT that were not covered there. Further information TBA.

**Course Evaluation**

Final grades for the course will be calculated as follows: Class attendance and participation will count for 10% of your final grade, the mid-term for 25%, the book report for 40%, and the final for 25%.

Your written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria: clarity and charity of thought and expression, accuracy of information, and breadth and depth of discussion. I will use letter grades or their equivalent to mean the following:

- **B (80-89):** The thought and expression are clear and the information is accurate. The discussion is broad and deep enough to indicate a solid understanding of the issue. By “broad” I mean that sufficient aspects of the topic are covered, and by “depth” I mean that enough supporting and illustrating material is offered to flesh out the basic thought.

- **C (70-79):** The material shows an adequate grasp of the topic, but at points the discussion is unclear, inaccurate, narrow or shallow.

- **D (60-69):** The material shows something close to an adequate grasp of the topic but is notably defective according to one or more of the criteria.

- **F (below 60):** The material does not indicate that the student has an adequate grasp of the topic, or it is severely defective according to the criteria.

A (90-100): The material is exceptional. Usually this means that it is not only clear and accurate but also develops the topic in breadth and depth beyond what is necessary for a good understanding of it. Such material is often, though not always, marked also by creativity, exceptional insight, and/or relatively extensive research.

The school’s grade scale is as follows: A = 100-95; A- = 94-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = below 70; F = below 60.

Note: All papers must conform to SBL specifications, as found in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

**Course and School Policies**

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a violation of an author’s/artist’s intellectual property rights and is a serious offense. Please see the Academic Catalog for a full explanation of Trinity’s plagiarism guidelines and note, as stated there, that every student is expected to be fully aware of the guidelines. A student who plagiarizes will automatically receive a failing grade on the assignment and risks failing the course. If a student does not know whether or not they may be engaging in plagiarism, they are encouraged to speak to Leslie Thyberg, our Learning Skills Coordinator.
**Late Assignments:** Work turned in late (quizzes, exams, etc.) for any reason, barring documented medical emergency, will be accepted up to 3 days after it was due, with a grade level reduction (an A becomes a B, etc.). Any work turned in 3 days after the due date cannot be counted for credit.

**Missed Class Policy:** Being absent from a course for three weeks (consecutive or not) is grounds for administrative withdrawal, which will be noted on the student’s transcript.

**Incompletes:** Incompletes are not normally given and are granted only in the most serious of cases. They are not granted as a way to extend the semester due to incomplete work. In order to request an incomplete, the student must obtain the necessary form online and bring it to the professor who will list the specific assignments to be completed with due dates. The date for submission of all materials cannot be beyond six weeks from the last day of class. The form will be submitted to the Academic Dean for final approval.

**ATS Review of Student Work:** Samples of student work may be used as part of an ongoing assessment of courses and degree programs by Trinity School for Ministry/North American Lutheran Seminary and the Association of Theological Schools. Students’ names will be removed from any work used for this purpose.

**Learning Materials:** All learning materials (handouts, study guides, etc.) are the property of the instructor. All materials produced in the Trinity Media Center (video and audio lectures) are the property of Trinity School for Ministry. Please contact the appropriate owner for reproduction guidelines, as well as usage outside Trinity School for Ministry.

**Computer Policy**
Use of computers or other electronic devices such as mobile phones or tablets is STRONGLY DISCOURAGED. I will provide detailed handouts for each class period so that you will not need to try to type up the main points and references in my lectures.

For information about how note taking on laptops can hinder rather than help your retention of what you hear in the classroom, see Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking,” *Psychological Science* (April 23, 2014). As Ruth Graham summarizes, “Note-taking is a two-part action: creating the notes (‘encoding’) and reviewing them later (‘storage’), both of which confer learning benefits. When the encoding becomes too easy, that first opportunity to learn is wasted, particularly when it comes to absorbing concepts rather than rote facts…. Taking notes by hand, by contrast, forces students to grapple with the material enough to summarize it, since they aren’t physically capable of writing down every word. The constraints enforced by the rudimentary technology of pen and paper force a deeper engagement with the material, the paper concludes” (“Taking Notes? Bring a Pen, Skip the Computer,” *Boston Globe* [May 25, 2014]).

**Course Schedule**
TBA.