

BI 550-60 and -01

University of  
Dubuque  
Theological  
Seminary

Spring 2024

Online and  
Residential

Residential Meetings:  
Mondays  
9-10:40 AM

Introduction to The New Testament



Christ in Glory (6th cent.)

### Course Thesis

The New Testament is a collection of texts of varying genres that exhibit the manifold ways that the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of a Galilean Jew named Jesus were theologically significant for the authors and audiences of these writings. Knowledge about the historical, cultural, and religious contexts in which New Testament texts were written is essential for understanding them.

#### Instructor Information

**Instructor:**  
Dr. Nick Elder  
nelder@dbq.edu  
Van Vliet Hall 209

**Virtual Office Hours:**  
Tuesdays  
12:00-2:00 PM and  
by appointment  
(Link at top of course Moodle page)



#### Grade Items

- Course Community (x 13)
- Lecture Pauses (x 13)
- Synoptic Marking Assignment
- Book Report
- Exam One
- Presentation on a New Testament Text
- Exam Two

#### Important Dates

- February 19:** Synoptic Marking Assignment Due
- March 5:** Exam One Due
- March 18:** Book Report Due
- March 25, April 8, or April 15:** New Testament Book Presentation Due
- April 26:** Exam Two Due

## ✓ **Course Outcomes and Curricular Objectives**

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### **Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:**

1. Explain what the New Testament is.
2. Articulate the various genres that New Testament texts represent and the constituent literary features of these genres.
3. Explain how the historical, theological, cultural, and religious contexts in which the New Testament texts were written are relevant to their interpretation.
4. Evaluate interpretive debates about specific New Testament texts.

### **Course Catalog Description:**

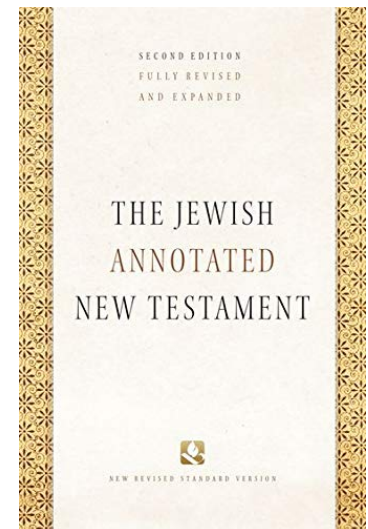
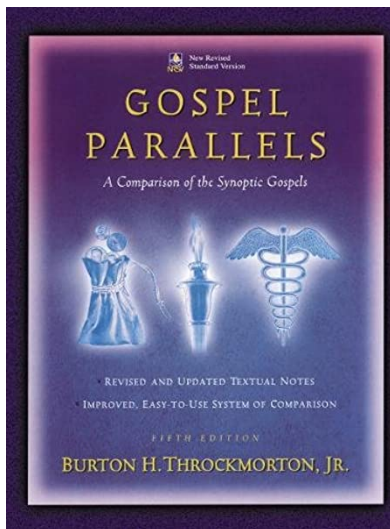
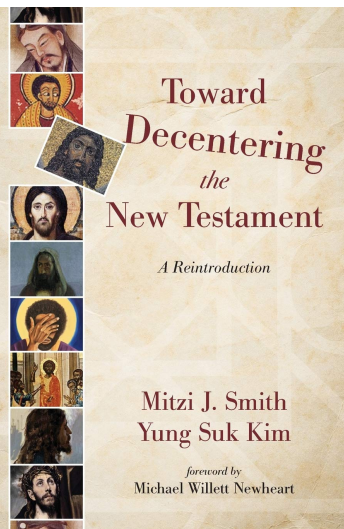
This course introduces the New Testament as a collection of ancient texts from varying genres. By the end of the course students will be able to articulate what the New Testament is, to identify the various ancient literary genres that New Testament texts represent, to explain how both modern and antique contexts shape interpretation of the New Testament, and to evaluate interpretive debates about specific New Testament texts.

### **This course supports the following curricular objectives:**

- Be formed by, live in, and minister out of scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the church (MDiv)
- Interpret the Christian Scriptures through faithful exegesis and in light of the Christian tradition (MDiv)
- Preach the Word of God with faithfulness and clarity (MDiv)
- Articulate and reflect critically and constructively on the biblical and theological foundations of God's mission to the world (MAMD)
- Articulate and interpret key themes from the Christian scriptures in conversation with contemporary and ecclesial contexts (MAM)

## Required Texts

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Mitzi J. Smith and Yung Suk Kim, *Toward Decentering the New Testament: A Reintroduction*, Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018. ISBN: 1532604653.

Burton H. Throckmorton Jr., ed., *Gospel Parallels, Fifth Edition*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992. ISBN: 0840774842.

Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament (NRSV)*, 2nd Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2017. ISBN: 0190461853.

## Optional Book Report Texts

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Students may choose from one of the following texts (or another with the professor's permission) to complete a book report on.

Jonathan Bernier, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: The Evidence for Early Composition*, Grand Rapids, Baker, 2022. ISBN: 1540961808.

Jeannine K. Brown, *The Gospels as Stories*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020. ISBN: 0801049849.

Bruce Chilton, *The Herods: Murder, Politics, and the Art of Succession*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2021. ISBN: 1506474284.

Paula Fredricksen, *When Christians Were Jews: The First Generation*, New Haven: Yale University Press. ISBN: 0300248407.

Matthias Henze, *Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017. ISBN: 1506406424

Love Lazarus Sechrest, *Race and Rhyme: Rereading the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022. ISBN: 0802867138.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, New York: Crossroad, 1983. ISBN: 0824506677.

Joseph Sievers and Amy-Jill Levine, editors. *The Pharisees*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021. ISBN: 0802879292.

If you are interested in another book not on this list, feel free to consult with me about it!

## Choose An Additional New Testament Introduction

The required introductory textbook for this class, *Toward Decentering the New Testament*, is “overtly interested in contemporary and justice issues.” In this way, it is not strictly a “traditional” New Testament textbook. I ask that, in addition to Smith and Kim’s book, you acquire your choice of one (or more) of the “traditional” New Testament introductory textbooks from this list. [In this video](#), I provide a brief overview of each one.

There are two reasons why I ask you to acquire an additional textbook. First, it allows you to compare and contrast approaches to the New Testament generally and to the respective books in it. Second, it helps to bring in a variety of viewpoints to course discussions and forums.

Additional Textbooks:

Achtemeier, Paul J., Green, Joel B., and Thompson, Marianne Meye. ***Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology***. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Bird, Michael F. and Wright, N.T. ***The New Testament in its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians***. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019.

DeSilva, David A. ***An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry Formation***. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

Ehrman, Bart. ***The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings***. 7th edition (or a previous edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Martin, Dale B. ***New Testament History and Literature***. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

Perkins, Pheme. ***Reading the New Testament: An Introduction***. New York: Paulist Press, 2012.

Powell, Mark Allan. ***Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey***. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018.

Spivey, Robert A., Smith, D. Moody, Black, C. Clifton. ***Anatomy of the New Testament*** 7th edition (or a previous edition). Minneapolis: Fortress: 2013.

If there is another introductory New Testament textbook that you are interested in using, I am happy for you to do so, but would like to know what it is to ensure that it will work for the purposes of the course. Do not hesitate to send me an email to ask about another option you might be interested in!



Additional required course readings will be provided through the course page on Moodle.



# Specifications Grading and Categories

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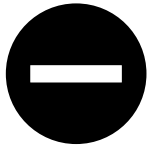
This class uses what is called specifications or "specs" grading. Final grades are **not** determined by the collective score of weighted items. Rather, they are determined by the number of grade items that you successfully complete. Each grade item is pass-fail and contains detailed specifications. If these specifications are met, then the item is passed. The rationale for using this grading system is that it removes much of the subjectivity of grading, restores rigor to academic work, and it is learning-outcome oriented.

There are several different kinds of grade items that are included under two categories for the purpose of the grading system used in the class.

## "Minor" Items

There are two different kind of minor grade items for this class: lecture pauses and course community engagement. Each week of the course there is the opportunity to complete at least one of each of these for a total of twenty-six minor grade items.

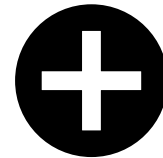
While these assignments are labeled "minor," they are not minor in importance. Learning best occurs in small increments, and these minor items are meant to facilitate this. Moreover, the course community assignments serve as the basis for establishing course community, which is also imperative for learning.



## "Major" Items

There is the opportunity to complete five different major grade items throughout the course of the semester: two exams, the Synoptic Marking Assignment, a book report, and a presentation on a New Testament book.

These major items are intentionally of various types and are meant to engage different learning styles at different points in the semester.



## Minor Items

**Lecture Pauses:** Each week a document will be made available for lecture pauses. Most course lectures will have one or more "pauses" built into them that ask you to engage the video in some way. Active participation facilitates learning better than does passive reception. That is, by doing something you are more likely to remember the content from a video than if you simply watch it. I ask that you turn in your lecture pauses for two reasons: (1) so that I have a sense as to how you are engaging the videos and (2) to keep you accountable for completing the lecture pauses.

**Community Engagement:** Learning happens in community. For residential students, community engagement primarily comes in the form of attending weekly classes. For distance students, community engagement primarily comes in the form of forum participation or synchronous "Book Club" meetings. On many occasions there will be short assignments to be completed before offering your forum post or attending Book Club (for distance students) or coming to class (for residential students).

## Major Items

**Exams (x2):** There are two possible exams for this class. The first covers materials from the beginning of the course through Acts. The second covers material from Paul to the end of the semester. To pass either, a student must receive an 80% on it. Both exams consist of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay sections.

**Synoptic Marking Assignment:** This assignment involves analyzing a passage from the Synoptic Gospels and producing a color-coded synopsis of it. Students will analyze the relationship between the texts, articulate how various answers to the Synoptic problem explain the relationship, and address how the differences between the texts reflect the concerns of each evangelist.



**Book Report:** This assignment asks you to read and evaluate one book related to the New Testament. Students will identify and restate the book's central argument, its strengths and weaknesses, and how it relates to other content introduced in the course.

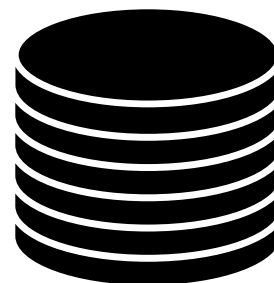
**Presentation on a New Testament Book:** In the second half of the semester, students will have the opportunity to teach one New Testament book to their peers. This introduction will be to one of the following books that are not explicitly addressed by the professor during the semester: 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, Jude, 1–3 John.



## Final Grade Requirements

To earn a specific letter grade, you must complete the minimum number of items in each of the categories. The minimum number you complete in any category will ultimately determine your final grade. For example, if you complete the 24 minor items required for an “A” but only complete 4 major items, which is the requirement for an “B+”, then your final grade would be an “B+” not an “A.”

Letter Grade	Minor Items (26 Total) 	Major Items (5 Total) 
A	23	5
A-	22	5
B+	21	4
B	20	4
B-	19	4
C+	18	3
C	17	3
C-	16	3
D+	15	2
D	14	2
D-	13	1
F	0–12	0



**Grace Tokens:** Every student receives two “grace tokens” that can be used at any time during the course. These “grace tokens” can be redeemed for any of the following with no explanation needed:

- Credit for a minor item that was not completed
- A 48-hour extension on a major grade item
- The opportunity to resubmit a major grade item that did not pass specifications



# Course Policies, Fine Print, Etc.

## Teaching Philosophy

As a student, it can be helpful for your learning to know why your professors teach the way that they do. For this reason I am providing you with my teaching philosophy. If you ever have questions about why content is being taught in a certain way, I encourage you to ask me.

As a theological educator, I aim to foster active learning environments that support and motivate students in their engagement with biblical, historical, and theological content.

This vision depends on three principles that guide my teaching:

- (1) Learning is fundamentally a communal enterprise.
- (2) Learning is an active endeavor.
- (3) Learning requires consistent motivation, assessment, and feedback.



## Late Work

Late work is accepted with the use of a grace token (as detailed above). Assignments and exams are set to close at the date and time indicated on the schedule and Moodle. If you have utilized all of your grace tokens and wish to turn in late work, reach out to me and we can discuss that possibility.



## Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are the basis for our course community. I don't require that you respond to a certain number of posts to get credit for a week's discussion forum. This is because, in my experience, when responding to another student's thoughts is simply an item to check off of a list, the substance of the response is not as rich. Instead, I ask that you thoughtfully engage your peers' posts in a manner that is substantive. This might entail a thorough back-and-forth with one discussion forum post or it might mean engaging several different posts in a more-abbreviated manner. At the end of the day, I ask you to judge for yourself whether or not your engagement is substantive, recognizing that the forums are the primary spaces where course community is formed.



## Digital Office Hours

I hold digital office hours on Thursdays from 1-3 PM. These are hours that I specifically dedicate to engaging students through various media: discussion forums, e-mail, phone calls, and Teams. There is a link on the course Moodle page to meet synchronously—no appointment is necessary! These time frames are the most ideal for us to communicate synchronously. If you would like to communicate synchronously but these times don't work for your schedule, send me an e-mail and we can set up a different day and/or time to do so.



## Lecture Pauses

I ask that you take **lecture notes** in this class in a certain way: by engaging “lecture pauses.” These are places in the lecture where I ask you to pause the video and complete some task. Of course, you can also take notes on videos as you see fit and as works for you and your learning style. However, I encourage you not to worry about getting all of the content presented in the lectures written down in your notes. The videos for this course are primarily meant to guide and stimulate your thinking and not necessarily to present you with “raw data.” Readings serve the latter purpose (i.e. presenting data) better than videos do. As such, the lecture pauses are intended to concentrate your mental effort on what I consider to be the most important aspect of a particular video.



## Accessibility and Accommodations

Accessibility is good for everyone, regardless of ability. I deeply desire this course (and all courses) to be accessible to persons of every ability and have attempted to craft it as such. I am **more than happy** to make accommodations, especially for students with disabilities. If you need or desire specific accommodations for the course and its grade items, please let me know. Ideally I would like to set up accommodations in the first week or two of class, but will receive requests throughout the entire semester. Confidentiality of all requests is always maintained. Technically, all accommodations should be officially approved through the Academic Success Center, which is on the 2nd floor of Myers Library (563-589-3262 or [ASC@dbq.edu](mailto:ASC@dbq.edu)), and I encourage students with disabilities to work through the Academic Success Center, but I am also happy to work out accommodations directly.



## Please Don't Cheat

The exams for this class are closed-book and closed-note. Every other assignment is open-book and open-note. For this class I have attempted to strike a balance between learning some information via memorization and engaging other information critically with a variety of sources at your disposal.

The purpose of closed-note and closed-book exams is to encourage you deeply to learn important concepts and facts. These functions as the building blocks for critically engaging other material.

When critically engaging materials in an open-book, open-note format, it is important that you cite instances when thoughts and a particular way of expressing an idea are not your own. Responsible intellectual engagement involves giving due respect to the thoughts and writings on which we are dependent. Doing otherwise is plagiarism—a serious breach of intellectual trust.

All of this is to state: please do not cheat by referencing materials in an improper way, either by using them on grade items I have asked you not to or by presenting someone else's thoughts and words as your own.

These policies are not meant to police you. Rather, they are meant to encourage deep learning and to foster responsible intellectual engagement.

I do not anticipate that we will have any issues of plagiarism or cheating. But should such serious issues arise, they will be handled in accordance with the seminary's policy on plagiarism, which can be found in the UDTS handbook.





## Title IX and Jeanne Clery Act

**Title IX:** The University of Dubuque is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex; which includes all forms of sexual misconduct. More information may be found [here](#).

**Jeanne Clery Act:** The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act requires the distribution of an Annual Security Report and Annual Fire Safety Report to all current faculty, staff, and students and notice of its availability to prospective students, faculty, and staff no later than October 1st of each year. More information may be found [here](#).

While the above is “boilerplate” information that is required to be included in all syllabi, it is not unimportant. If you observe or experience any form of discrimination at UDTs, I strongly encourage you to file a Title IX report. As to the Jeanne Clery Act, you should feel physically safe when you are on campus and this act makes campus safety more transparent.



## FAQ

### Who are you?

I'm glad you asked. I am Dr. Elder. I am originally from Kansas City, but also consider Denver, Milwaukee, and Dubuque home. I am the Associate Professor of New Testament here at UDTs. I did my PhD at Marquette University (Catholic, Jesuit), my MA at the Iliff School of Theology (United Methodist), and my BA at Colorado Christian University (evangelical). I'm married to my better half, Beth, and we have four children: Brooks, Kit James, and Lucy and Nettie (identical twins).

### How much time do you expect me to spend on this class?

Per the Department of Education's guidelines for credit hours, you should spend approximately 152 hours total on a three-credit UDTs course. This works out to just over 10 hours per week (including our “reading weeks” and finals week.) I have attempted to set the schedule in such a way that you will usually be doing about 7-10 hours of work per week on the class. Of course, some weeks will be heavier and some will be lighter. But about 10 hours a week on average is a good rule of thumb.

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### **How should I contact you if I have a question about class?**

The first thing that you should do is consider the type of question that you have. If it is about course content then you should post it in the “Questions and Curiosities” forum for the week. That way, if another student has the same question, they will also acquire the answer to it. Also, if another student has an answer to the question, they can offer it. This provides further opportunity to build community within the class. Even if another student answers the question (rightly or wrongly) I will answer your question in that public forum so that others can see the information.

If the question is of a more private or personal nature, you are free to e-mail me at [nelder@dbq.edu](mailto:nelder@dbq.edu), or we can talk digitally in another format.

### **What should I call you?**

I prefer to be called Doctor Elder or Professor Elder.

### **Are the exams difficult?**

Not if you have completed all of the readings and watched all of the lectures. You should find no surprises on the exams, especially if you regularly engage the “Study Questions and Content” document provided for each week.

### **What is the “course thesis”?**

This class is an introduction to the New Testament. Thus the central question that it seeks to answer is “What is the New Testament?” The answer to this question is the course’s thesis. Throughout the course we will engage the various parts of this thesis. By the end of this semester you will be able to explain and defend this thesis yourself and will be asked to do so.



# Course Schedule

Dates	Topic(s)	Primary Text(s)	Smith and Kim, <i>Toward Decentering the New Testament</i>	Essays from <i>The Jewish Annotated New Testament</i>	Additional Readings
<p>Week One: January 16–22</p>	<p>What is the New Testament?</p> <p>How is the New Testament Studied?</p> <p>Alexander the Great and Hellenism</p>		<p>Chapters 1–4 (pp. 1–44)</p>	<p>Marc Zvi Brettler and Amy-Jill Levine, “The Editors’ Preface to the First Edition” (pp. xii–xv) and “The Editors’ Preface to the Second Editions” (pp. xv–xvi)</p> <p>Marc Zvi Brettler and Amy-Jill Levine, “Introduction to the Essays” (pg. 579)</p> <p>Erich S. Gruen, “The Greco-Roman Background of the New Testament” (pp.580–83)</p> <p>Martin Goodman, “Jewish History, 331 BCE–135 CE” (pp. 583–89)</p>	<p>Timothy Beal, “What is the Bible?” (video)</p> <p>Optional: Chapters on “Greco-Roman Context” in your Optional Textbook</p>

Dates	Topic(s)	Primary Text(s)	Smith and Kim, <i>Toward Decentering the New Testament</i>	Essays from <i>The Jewish Annotated New Testament</i>	Additional Readings
<p>Week Two: January 23–29</p>	<p>Septuagint The Temple Judaisms in the Time of Jesus</p>		<p>Chapters 6–8 (pp. 52–72)</p>	<p>Amy-Jill Levine, “Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made About Early Judaism” (pp. 759–63)</p> <p>Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Judaism and Jewishness” (pp. 592–96)</p> <p>Daniel R. Schwartz, “Jewish Movements of the New Testament Period” (614–19)</p> <p>Leonard Greenspoon, “The Septuagint” (703–07)</p> <p>Naphtali Meschel, “Sacrifice and the Temple” (658–662)</p> <p>Lee I Levine, “The Synagogue” (pp. 662–66)</p>	<p>Amy-Jill Levine, <u>“The Jewish Context of Jesus”</u></p> <p><u>Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Second Temple”</u></p> <p>Optional: Chapters on “Jewish Context” in your Optional Textbook</p>
<p>Week Three: January 30–February 5</p>	<p>Jesus Gospel Genre Mark</p>	<p>Read the Gospel of Mark in One Sitting</p> <p>Watch the Gospel of Mark</p>	<p>Chapter 10 (pp.84–104)</p>	<p>Eric M. Orlin, “Revolts Against Rome” (pp. 589–92)</p> <p>David B. Levenson, “Messianic Movements” (pp. 622–27)</p> <p>Rebecca Lesses, “Supernatural Beings” (pp. 682–88)</p>	<p>Chapter on Mark in your optional textbook</p>

Dates	Topic(s)	Primary Text(s)	Smith and Kim, <i>Toward Decentering the New Testament</i>	Essays from <i>The Jewish Annotated New Testament</i>	Additional Readings
Week Four: February 6–12	The Synoptic Problem	Matthew	Chapter 9 (pp. 75–83)	Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Pharisees” (pp. 22)  Jonathan Klawans, “The Law” (pp. 655–58)	Sarah Rollens, “ <u>Did the Authors of the Canonical Gospels Know Each other?</u> ”  Mark Goodacre, “ <u>The Synoptic Problem</u> ”  Mark Goodacre, “Entering the Maze”  Optional: Chapter/section on The Synoptic Gospels in your optional textbook
Week Five: February 13–19	Matthew and Luke	Luke	Chapters 11 and 12 (pp. 105–60)	Michael Fagenblat, “The Concept of Neighbor in Jewish and Christian Ethics” (pp. 645–50)  David M. Freidenreich, “Food and Table Fellowship” (pp. 650–53)  Steven Fine, “The Burial of Jesus: Between Texts and Archaeology” (pp. 677–80)	Chapters on Matthew and Luke in your optional textbook
February 19	Synoptic Marking Assignment Due				
Week Six: February 20–26	Study Days				

Dates	Topic(s)	Primary Text(s)	Smith and Kim, <i>Toward Decentering the New Testament</i>	Essays from <i>The Jewish Annotated New Testament</i>	Additional Readings
<p>Week Seven: February 27–March 5</p>	<p>John</p>	<p>John</p>	<p>Chapter 13 (pp.161–175)</p>	<p>Sacha Stern, “Time, Calendars, and Festivals” (pp. 669–73)</p> <p>Gideon Bohak, “Jewish Miracle Workers and Magic in the Later Second Temple Period” (pp. 680–82)</p> <p>Daniel Boyarin, “Logos, A Jewish Word: John’s Prologue as Midrash” (pp. 688–91)</p> <p>Claudia Setzer, “Jewish Responses to Believers in Jesus” (pp. 730–33)</p>	<p><u>Christopher W. Skinner</u>, “Who was the Beloved Disciple?”</p> <p><u>James F. McGrath</u>, “Which John?”</p> <p>Chapter on John in your optional textbook</p>
<p>March 5</p>	<p>Exam One Due</p>				
<p>Week Eight March 6–12</p>	<p>Acts Introducing Paul</p>	<p>Acts</p>	<p>Chapter 14 and 15 (pp. 176–200)</p>	<p>Paula Fredricksen, “Paul and Judaism,” (pp. 633–37)</p> <p>Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, “Judaizers, Jewish Christians, and Others” (pp. 637–40)</p>	<p>Chapter on Acts in your optional textbook</p> <p>Optional: introductory chapter on Paul in your optional textbook</p>

Dates	Topic(s)	Primary Text(s)	Smith and Kim, <i>Toward Decentering the New Testament</i>	Essays from <i>The Jewish Annotated New Testament</i>	Additional Readings
Week Nine: March 13–18	Letter Writing Slavery Philemon	Philemon	Chapter 5 (pp. 45–51)  Chapter 24 (pp. 272–78)		Katy E. Valentine, <u>“Slavery in the New Testament”</u>  Dale Martin, <u>“Slavery and the New Testament”</u>  Roetzi, “The Anatomy of the Letters”  Chapter/section on Philemon in your optional textbook
March 18	<b>Book Reports Due</b>				
Week Ten: March 19–25	Perspectives on Paul  Galatians  Romans	Galatians  Romans	Chapter 17 (205–20)  Chapter 20 (pp. 246–53)	Lawrence Hoffman, “Circumcision” (pp. 673–74)	Davina C. Lopez, <u>“The New Perspective on Paul”</u>  <u>James D. G. Dunn, “Origins of the New Perspective on Paul”</u>  Krister Stendahl, Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West  Optional: chapters on Galatians and Romans in your optional textbook
March 25	<b>Presentations on 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, and 2 Thessalonians Due</b>				
Week Eleven: March 26–April 1	<b>Research and Easter Break</b>				

Dates	Topic(s)	Primary Text(s)	Smith and Kim, <i>Toward Decentering the New Testament</i>	Essays from <i>The Jewish Annotated New Testament</i>	Additional Readings
Week Twelve: April 2–8	Paul's Legacy Pseudepigraphy James	1 Timothy James	Chapters 26 and 27 (pp. 285–301)		Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Paul's Letter to American Christians"  Chapters on 1 Timothy and James in your optional textbook
April 8	Presentations on Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians Due				
Week Thirteen: April 9–15	Petrine Letters	1 Peter 2 Peter	Chapters 30–31: (pp. 311–28)	Ross S. Kraemer, "Jewish Family Life in the First Century CE" (pp. 604–08)	Caryn Reeder, "1 Peter 3:1–6: Biblical Authority and Battered Wives"  <u>Paul Dilley, "Peter"</u>  <u>Joel B. Green, "1 Peter"</u>  <u>Jeremy F. Hultin "2 Peter"</u>  Optional: chapters on 1–2 Peter in your optional textbook
April 15	Presentations on Jude Hebrews, 1–3 John Due Synchronous Zoom Meeting Tuesday, April 12, 2–4 PM				
Week Fourteen: April 16–22	Apocalyptic Revelation	Revelation	Chapters 33 and 34 (pp. 329–52)	Martha Himmelfarb, "Afterlife and Resurrection," (pp. 691–95)	John J. Collins, "Apocalypse Then"  Schedtler and Murphy, "From Before the Bible to Beyond the Bible"  Chapter on Revelation in your optional textbook



<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Primary Text(s)</b>	<b>Smith and Kim, <i>Toward Decentering the New Testament</i></b>	<b>Essays from <i>The Jewish Annotated New Testament</i></b>	<b>Additional Readings</b>
April 26	Exam Two Due				



# Appendix: Major Assignment Instructions

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## (Formal) Synoptic Problem Assignment Introduction to the New Testament

### Instructions:

Last week we introduced the so-called Synoptic Problem and solutions to it. In one of the videos I outlined a color-coding method for comparing Synoptic passages in the double and triple traditions, and I asked you to color code a passage from each on your own for the forums.

This assignment is a more formalized reading of your choice of a Synoptic passage from either the double tradition or the triple tradition. You can choose any passage you wish from the *Gospel Parallels* book so long as it is not one of the passages you color-coded for the forums last week. If you feel overwhelmed choosing a passage on your own, these are ones that might work particularly well:

From the triple tradition:

- Call of Levi (§53)
- The Question about Fasting (§54)
- Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (§69)
- The Stilling of the Storm (§105)
- Question about Taxes (§206)
- Triumphal Entry (§196)

From the double tradition:

- The Beatitudes (§19)
- On Love of One's Enemies (§27 or §75)
- The Parable of the Great Dinner (§170) / The Parable of the Wedding Banquet (§205)
- The Lord's Prayer (§30 or §146)

For this assignment, you are to color code the account that you choose and then write a short paper (2–4 pages) that addresses the following:

- What the most significant similarities and differences are between the texts.
- How the Farrer Theory or the Two Document hypothesis might would account for these similarities and differences.
- Whether or not the passages have different purposes on the basis of the differences between the passages and what comes before and after them in each respective gospel.
- What themes or particular concerns of each gospel you see reflected in the differences between the passages.

**You must attach an image or PDF of your color coding to the paper for it to pass specifications.**

### **Specifications to pass assignment:**

- Image or PDF of color coding is included with the paper.
- The paper identifies at least two significant similarities and two significant differences between the passage in the different Synoptics.
- The paper articulates how either the Two-Source Theory or the Farrer Theory accounts for the similarities and/or differences between the gospels in the passage.
- The paper addresses the purpose of the passage in one or more of the gospels, identifying how major themes or concerns of that gospel are reflected in it.

### *Assignment Objectives:*

- Articulate one solution to the Synoptic Problem with respect to a specific passage from the triple tradition.
- Practice redaction criticism.
- Observe how the evangelists emphasize (or do not emphasize) various theological themes in their respective gospels.

## **Book Report**

### **Introduction to the New Testament**

#### **Instructions:**

For this assignment you are to choose a book related to New Testament studies and report on it. Your chief tasks in the report are to identify the author's central argument (thesis), articulate how that argument is made, and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the book. The "report" need not be a classical written book report. It can be a recorded presentation or some other mode of engagement, so long as the specifications below are met. I have provided a list of possible books in the course syllabus and below. You may choose a book from this list or you may choose a book that is not on this list. If you do the latter you should confirm with the professor that your choice is suitable for the purposes of the assignment.

#### **Specifications to pass assignment:**

- Assignment articulates the central argument/thesis of the book
- Assignment reviews how the book's argument is made
- Assignment notes both strengths and weaknesses of the book
- Assignment demonstrates engagement with and understanding of the book.

#### *Assignment Objectives:*

- Engage a particular topic related to New Testament studies in depth.
- Identify the central argument in a written work.
- Assess the mode of argumentation of a written work.

#### **Possible Books for Review:**

- Jonathan Bernier, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: The Evidence for Early Composition*, Grand Rapids, Baker, 2022. ISBN: 1540961808.
- Jeannine K. Brown, *The Gospels as Stories*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020. ISBN: 0801049849.
- Bruce Chilton, *The Herods: Murder, Politics, and the Art of Succession*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2021. ISBN: 1506474284.
- Paula Fredricksen, *When Christians Were Jews: The First Generation*, New Haven: Yale University Press. ISBN: 0300248407.
- Matthias Henze, *Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017. ISBN: 1506406424
- Love Lazarus Sechrest, *Race and Rhyme: Rereading the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022. ISBN: 0802867138.
- Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, New York: Crossroad, 1983. ISBN: 0824506677.
- Joseph Sievers and Amy-Jill Levine, editors. *The Pharisees*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021. ISBN: 0802879292.

## **New Testament Text Presentation Introduction to the New Testament**

### **Instructions:**

For this assignment, you are responsible for providing your peers the most important information for one of the following New Testament texts:

- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1–2 Thessalonians
- Hebrews
- 1–3 John
- Jude

These texts are not lectured on in the course and the the secondary reading (from Smith and Kim’s textbook) *has not* been assigned for them. Therefore, your presentation is the primary information that your peers will receive about this text. This being the case, you ought to consider how to present the most important information in an introductory manner. I advise using both *Decentering the New Testament* and your optional textbook as your main sources for your presentation.

### **Guidelines:**

Your project must be a “presentation” of some sort, not simply written information on the text. That is, we should hear your voice and/or see your face. Utilizing additional audio-visual media is highly encouraged.

There will be three synchronous meeting times offered via Zoom, if you wish to offer your presentation “live.” Otherwise the presentation should be recorded and submitted to the professor for sharing with the class.

Presentations should be about 15 minutes.

### **Grade:**

Successful completion fulfills one “major assignment” requirement for specifications grading.

### **Specifications:**

To pass specifications, a presentation must do the following:

- Present the most important information and debates about the specific New Testament text and address them in a balanced manner.
- Engage the audience, commanding their attention, and make effective use of media.
- Present the information in a memorable and creative manner.
- Demonstrate thorough preparation and practice. If recorded or presented digitally, the project is finished and well edited.

**Assessment Rubric:**

Presentation feedback will be offered in this rubric:

<b>Areas for Improvement</b>	<b>Criteria/Standards</b>	<b>Areas Exceeding Standards</b>
	<b>Content:</b> The most important information and debates about the specific New Testament text are addressed in a balanced manner.	
	<b>Presentation/Delivery:</b> The presentation engages the audience, commanding their attention, and makes effective use of media.	
	<b>Creativity/Memorability:</b> The information is presented in a memorable and creative manner.	
	<b>Preparedness/Polish:</b> The presentation demonstrates thorough preparation and practice. If recorded or presented digitally, the project is finished and well edited.	