



NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Course Syllabus for **SS 102** **Introduction to the New Testament**

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Semester: **Spring 2015**
Time: **Tuesday, 8:30 – 10:20 AM**
Place: **Classroom # 4**

I. Course Description

This course offers students an introductory look into the New Testament—its history, theology, and literature. With particular focus on the life of Jesus of Nazareth, we will delve into the teachings of the Gospels, the beginning of the Church, and the mystery of the Book of Revelation.

II. Course Rationale

“For the Sacred Scriptures contain the word of God and since they are inspired, really are the word of God; and so the study of the sacred page is, as it were, the **soul** of sacred theology.” -*Dei Verbum*, 24

Sacred Scripture forms the bedrock of everything we believe, and provides a litmus test for everything we learn and do. Furthermore, deep study of Scripture is neither easy, nor particularly available to the average layperson. They will look to their pastors for help in revealing the complex beauty and Truth of the Bible. It is therefore absolutely imperative that we have a deeper understanding of the Bible.

III. Course Goals/Intended Outcomes

1. By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate a firm grasp of the following topics:
 - a. The place of the New Testament and New Testament exegesis in the context of Divine Revelation.
 - b. The various literary genres contained within the New Testament.
 - c. The ability to use basic research tools to further your understanding and appreciation of Scripture.
 - d. The central figures and themes of the Gospels & Acts.
 - e. The significance of the letters of the Epistles.
 - f. The Catholic interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

2. Students will grow in their appreciation for the critical study that is demanded by a reverence for the Bible as God's inspired Word.
3. Ultimate goal... that students develop a new found appreciation for, devotion to, understanding of, and excitement about the study of Sacred Scripture.

IV. Instructional Methods

- 1) **Lecture**
- 2) **Discussion**
- 3) **Question and Answer**
- 4) **Student Research**

V. Texts (Required and/or Recommended)

REQUIRED:

Johnson, Luke T., *The New Testament: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2010, ISBN: 978-0199735709

Paul VI, *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church). Vatican Website, November 18, 1965.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html

Choice of:

The New American Bible (with the Revised Book of Psalms and the Revised New Testament), World Bible Publishing, 2011, ISBN: 978-0529064844

The Revised Standard Version – Catholic Edition Bible (Quality Paperbound): Standard Print Size, St Benedict Press, 2009, ISBN: 978-1935302100

Benedict XVI, "Pope Benedict XVI Addresses the Synod – On Biblical Exegesis and Theology," Vol. XIV, No. 8. Vatican Website, November, 2008.

<http://www.adoremus.org/1108Benedict.html>

Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* (Apostolic Exhortation). Vatican Website, November, 2008.

RECOMMENDED:

These titles will be used, but not enough in my class to justify your purchase of them. I will provide a copy in class. However, I believe that they will prove very useful in your continuing academic and spiritual life, and therefor recommend that you purchase your own copies at some point.

Aland, Kurt, ed., *The Synopsis of the Four Gospels, 2nd Ed., RSV*. New York: American Bible Society, 1985.

-This book is updated fairly regularly as new translations are published (some are the NRSV version, which is very good). They are all good, though more recent is better. Make sure you don't accidentally buy the Greek version!

VI. Bibliography

- **This list will be added as the year goes on, but I will announce the necessary texts in class. I will either make them available to you or they will be on reserve in the library (so fret not!).**

Benedict XVI, "Pope Benedict XVI Addresses the Synod – On Biblical Exegesis and Theology," Vol. XIV, No. 8. Vatican Website, November, 2008.

<http://www.adoremus.org/1108Benedict.html>

Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* (Apostolic Exhortation). Vatican Website, November, 2008.

Lambrecht, Jan. *Once More Astonished: The Parables of Jesus*. New York: Crossroads, 1981, ch. 1.

Lambrecht, Jan. 'The Seven Last Words of Christ' presented at Good Friday Service, St. James Cathedral, Seattle, Good Friday, 2006.

Paul VI, *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church). Vatican Website, November 18, 1965.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html

The Bible Experience (New Testament Audiobook), Zondervan Publishing, 2007.

VII. Professional Vocabulary

-All of these terms will be discussed in greater detail in class.

Commentary:

Exegesis: The critical study of scriptural text, from the Greek, 'to read *out* of the text.'

Historical Criticism: The seeking of a greater understanding of Scripture through a study of the historical and social context in which they were written.

Literary Criticism: The seeking of a greater understanding of Scripture through a study of the Scripture as a written work; not limited to linguistics, writing styles, ect.

Oral Transmission: Generally refers to the transmission of Scripture before (or at least without) writing it down.

Aural Transmission: A mix of oral and written transmission in which a text is composed to be read aloud to an audience.

Redaction [Criticism]: Changes in a written text. Redaction criticism is the study of the same.

Synoptic Gospels: The three Gospels that share the most common style and origins: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Pauline Correspondence: The entirety of the letters written by Paul. This includes those hypothetical letters that we do not possess.

Canon: Those books that we have in the Bible today.

Non-Canonical Works: Books that may have been considered by some to be Scripture at some point, but did not make the cut into the Bible we have today.

Apocalyptic Literature: A literary genre common in Palestine during the era of the early Church. Revelation is a good example of this genre.

OTHER TERMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS (KNOW FOR EXAMS)

- Two-Source Theory/Theory of Markan Priority
- *Quelle* (Q)
- *Sondergut*
- Deutero-Pauline

VIII. Lecture, Presentation, and Reading Schedule

January 13th: 1) Syllabus 2) The challenge and purpose of exegesis 3) Tools: Synopsis of the Four Gospels 4) Tools: basic criticism

- Read: "Pope Benedict Addresses the Synod,"
- Read Ch. 1 & 2 of Johnson, *Intro*.

January 20th: 1) Intro to the New Testament world & The Easter experience 2) Intro to Synoptics, synoptic transmission 3) Tools: basic criticism

- Journal
- Read: Selections of *Dei Verbum* and *Verbum Domini* (specifics announced Jan 13)
- Read: Ch. 3, 4, 10 of Johnson, *Intro*.

January 27th: 1) Gospel 'genre' 2) Mark

- Journal
- Ch. 5 & 6 of Johnson, *Intro*.
- *Mark*

February 3rd: 1) Matthew

- Journal
- *Matthew*

February 10th: 1) Luke 2) Parables

- **First paper: Synoptics**
- *Luke*

February 17th: **Mardi Gras, no classes.**

February 24th: 1) John 2) Acts (?)

- Journal
- *John* passages
- Ch. 9 of Johnson, *Intro*.

MID-TERM: TBD

March 3rd: 1) Acts (?) 2) The world of Paul 3) Paul: the man, the mission, the purpose 4) Philemon

- Journal
- Ch. 7 of Johnson, *Intro*.

March 10th: 1) Corinthian Correspondence

- Journal

March 17th: 1) Romans 2) Galatians

- Journal

March 24th: 1) 1 Thessalonians 2) Philippians 3) Last Supper, Easter

- Journal
- Passion narratives

April 7th: 1) Hebrews 2) Letter of James 3) Revelations

- Journal
- Ch. 8 of Johnson, *Intro*.

April 14th: 1) EXTRA TIME FOR OVERFLOW 2) NT in Liturgy

- **Second Paper: Paul**

April 21st: Special Topics (topics picked by students, NT in liturgy, ect.)

- **NO JOURNAL**

April 28th: 1) Exam review

- **NO JOURNAL**

IX. Course Requirements

- Ask any question you might have of me – this is the right place to ask it, no matter how crazy it may sound. No one ever claimed the study of Scripture was easy and without challenges. I would be very worried if there were not questions and concerns. Always remember, this is why we are called to study – there are no heretical questions!
- Read all assignments. I will try to keep material to a manageable level, but that requires your help! Reading scripture includes reading the introduction in your study bible.
- Participate in class. If you are unable to attend, please let me know ahead of time.
- Submit work on a timely basis.

EXAMS (50% of final grade):

- All exams will be oral. There will be a midterm exam (15%) and a final (35%).
- We are using the oral format because I believe it is the best and most efficient way to find out how much you know. I want to make sure that you can discuss these topics intelligently – not judge you on your ability (or inability) to write.
- Before each exam, the class will be given a list of questions to expect on the exam. The exam will consist of two questions, one from the lit, one not from the list. Be aware that I expect more from the answers to the questions that are on the list. Each student will arrive at their scheduled time and randomly select two questions. He will then have twenty minutes to prepare (no notes). The student will then have a twenty-minute conversation with me on the subject of the questions.

EXEGESIS (20% of final grade):

- There will be two papers due – one on the Gospels and one on the Epistles. Specific topics will be of the students choice, though I will make a list of potential topics available if students prefer.
- These will be short researcher papers of roughly 4-5 pages, plus bibliography. I say roughly because I want them to be as long as they need to be. Make and defend your point – one substantial enough to merit 4-5 pages – but please no fluff. I would rather your paper be concise and inadequate than too fluffy and inadequate.
- We will learn how to use commentaries and other basic research tools early on in the class.
- Each paper should address the following:
 - Date, Authorship, and Redaction History
 - Social, Cultural or Religious context at the time of writing
 - Intended Audience

JOURNAL REFLECTION (20% of final grade):

- Every week (except for those when a research paper is due), students will submit a one page paper discussing a topic from class the week prior. I want to see your thoughts, insights (spiritual or otherwise), and hear your questions.
- I'm keeping the rules on this deliberately loose, but I do want to see that you have thought about the material and can defend your opinions intelligently.

PARTICIPATION (10% of final grade):

- Participation is not only attendance and attention, it is active engagement. I know that this is an unusually large proportion of your total grade, but I also know that in a lecture format – no matter how knowledgeable an instructor – things will be overlooked, underemphasized, and forgotten. So, in an effort for you to get the most out of me, I need your participation.
- This means questions, concerns, objections, as well as discussion with me and your classmates.

****Papers and Journals that, after their initial grading, are revised and returned to me can receive up to half of the points unearned in the first instance. For example, if you receive an 80% on a paper, revise it, and return it for a 100%, you will receive an overall grade of a 90% on that assignment.****

X. Important Dates

FOR EXAMPLE

Midterm – To Be Scheduled
Paper I – February 10th
Paper II – April 14th
Final Exam– To Be Scheduled
Journals – Beginning of Class, Weekly

All dates are subject to change if circumstances warrant them.

XI. Evaluation Criteria

Final Exam – 35%
Midterm Exam – 15%
Journals – 20%
Research papers – 20%
Participation – 10%

XII. Attendance Policy

Notre Dame Seminary observes the following policy regarding class attendance: Regular class attendance is expected and required of all students who intend to receive credit for course work in the graduate school. Inevitably, extraordinary circumstances will arise that make class attendance impossible on occasion; therefore, a formula for determining regular attendance has been established as policy for the convenience of both seminarians and instructors. A student is

permitted to be absent from class no more than twice the number of times the class meets per week. (You are considered absent if you are not present when attendance is taken). Thus, if a student is absent for seven classes from a course that meets three times a week, the student is in violation of school policy in this regard. The normal penalty for such a violation is the grade FA (failure due to absence).

The number of absences includes those due to illness, late registration, or any other cause. Absence from class immediately before or after holidays and free weekends is considered a double cut. Only the Academic Dean may waive penalties for absence. In absences due to illness, you must inform the instructor and your formation advisor prior to the class.

XIII. Academic Integrity

Seminarians of Notre Dame Seminary are required to commit themselves to responsible scholarship in every aspect of priestly formation, including academics. It is expected that every seminarian works and studies to the best of his ability for every course.

Seminarians also accept responsibilities and obligations as students, which include commitments to honesty, disciplined study, and integrity in their academic work. They will be expected to respect academic scholarship by giving proper credit to other people's work, while at the same time preparing well for assigned materials and examinations in such a way that their academic integrity will never be questioned.

Those needing assistance with writing papers, or who would like tutoring, should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) for assistance. All students are encouraged to seek the direct assistance of their instructor whenever any questions arise regarding assignments, grading, course expectations, etc.

XIV. Disability Accommodation Policy

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Notre Dame Seminary provides disability accommodations for students with identified and/or diagnosed disabilities. Students with disabilities need not inform their instructors about the nature of their disabilities, but they are responsible for contacting and providing appropriate documentation to the Academic Resources Center. Requests for accommodations must be made each semester for which the student wishes to receive service; the Academic Resources Center will then distribute a letter of accommodation to the faculty. It is the student's responsibility to meet with each faculty member to discuss how his/her accommodation(s) may be met within each course. Notre Dame Seminary will attempt to meet reasonable accommodations requested. A reasonable accommodation is a modification to a non-essential aspect of a course, program, or facility which does not pose an undue burden and which enables a qualified student with a disability to have adequate opportunity to participate and to demonstrate his or her ability. Such accommodations are determined on an individual basis depending upon the nature and extent of the disability. For more information, contact the Academic Dean's Office.

XV. Extension Policy

Instructors are never obligated to grant a student's request for a due-date extension on a paper/project if they judge the request to be without sufficient merit or not in keeping with the fair requirements articulated in the course syllabus.

XVI. Audit Policy

For academic course audits at Notre Dame Seminary, the amount of work required of seminarians will be decided on a case by case basis by the instructor, the Academic Dean and the seminarian's Formation Advisor.

XVII. Probation and Grading Policy

Passing grades for seminarians are A, B and C. A seminarian is put on academic probation for the following:

A seminarian who obtains a D+ or lower in any course is automatically placed on probationary status and must repeat the course in order to get credit for the course. Seminarians will be allowed to repeat a course only once and the course must be repeated at NDS. Seminarian status is then subject to review by the Dean.

A seminarian whose semester grade point average (GPA) in coursework is below a 2.30 at any time is placed on academic probation. Two or more consecutive semesters may subject the seminarian to be dismissed from academic formation at Notre Dame Seminary. To be removed from probationary status, the seminarian must complete a semester with a GPA of 2.30 or higher.

After each semester, the seminarian's Bishop will receive a copy of his transcript and a review of the seminarians' status.

If a seminarian fails to meet the passing grade point average requirement then he forfeits his eligibility for financial aid under Title IV Federal Regulations.

Letter Grade Number	Quality Points	Grade Scale
A	4.00	100 – 94
A-	3.70	93 – 90
B+	3.30	89 – 88
B	3.00	87 – 84
B-	2.70	83 – 80
C+	2.30	79 – 78

C	2.00	77 – 74
C-	1.70	73 – 70
D+	1.30	69 – 68
D	1.00	67 – 64
D-	.70	63 – 60
F	0.00	59 – 0

See Academic Catalog for Grading Guidelines Policy Narrative.

XVIII. Syllabus Contract

This syllabus *obliges* the student to adhere to all policy requirements and to fulfill all academic expectations herein stated; it also *entitles* the student to a reasonable opportunity to learn the material specified in the course description in order to accomplish for himself the educational goals of the course. In order to optimize the learning process the course instructor reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to the syllabus requirements during the semester, in response to unforeseen developments or circumstances. All adjustments made must be communicated clearly to students.