

STMM 527-01 & 02 Christian Scriptures

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

(Syllabus subject to change)

This course is designed to equip students with a fundamental knowledge of the Christian Scriptures within a context of ministerial work.

We will study the New Testament-texts:

- Historically, as ancient records that reflect aspects of their complex socio-cultural context of production.
- Rhetorically, as documents that respond to the literary conventions of their time, addressed to a particular audience with particular purposes, not always explicit.
- Theologically/Hermeneutically as authoritative discourses of faith within Christian communities.

This course will also survey some of the major interpretive methods in biblical criticism to provide both a framework for the study of the NT and some hermeneutical tools for preaching and teaching its messages.

This course operates under a policy of inclusivity, diversity and respect: EVERYONE has a voice in this class and all opinions are welcome. From a postmodern perspective, all interpretations of the New Testament, whether historical, theological, literary or of any other sort -presented by the facilitator or the students-- are partial, non-universal interpretations. All readers and readings are subjective.

Our approach to the NT will be both academic and ministerial. Overall, from the academic standpoint, we will use cultural studies' perspectives in the analysis of biblical texts (such as feminists, postcolonial, ideological criticisms, among others). From the ministerial standpoint, we will read the NT with an insistent interest on its prevalent message of inclusivity and diversity.

REQUIREMENTS

A. Class attendance and participation – 25%: To make the most of your class experience and participation prepare in advance the assignments for each session following the instructions from the class calendar.

B. Written assignments – 75%:

1. Two short papers on Paul's letters.¹ (20% - 700-850 words):

a) On 1 Thessalonians. Read 1 Thessalonians and compare the eschatological ideas you find there with those in Q (Mt 24:26-28, 37, 39-41; Lk 17:22-24, 26-30, 34-35, 37). To what extent are they saying the same thing? Are there significant differences? Read 2 Thessalonians 2 and compare the ideas there to those in 1 Thessalonians. Would you conclude Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians? **Due on January 17 (M) / 20 (Th)**

d) On Galatians 3:1-18. Read the text very carefully paying attention to Paul's arguments that repeatedly refer to the Hebrew Scriptures. Look up each reference and determine how Paul uses the passages given below to construct his argument. **Due on January 30(M) / 27 (Th)**

Galatians 3:6 Genesis 15:6
Galatians 3:8 Genesis 12:3 and 18:1
Galatians 3:10 Deuteronomy 27:26
Galatians 3:11 Habbakuk 2:4

Galatians 3:12 Leviticus 18:5
Galatians 3:13 Deuteronomy 21:23
Galatians 3:16 Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 17:7; 24:7
Galatians 3:17 Exodus 12:40

¹ Exercises on Paul's letters taken from, Stevan L. Davies, *New Testament Fundamentals* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1994), 232.

3. Three short papers on the Gospels. (30% - 700-850 words):

a) On Mark: Read Mark 12:13-17. From your own social location, how do you interpret this text? What is the meaning of this text from the perspective of those living under the oppressive rule of the Roman Empire? What were the theological implications then and what do you see for today? **Due on February 7(M) / 3 (Th)**

b) On Matthew and Luke: Read Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:17-26. Compare and contrast the details of these two passages and, making intelligent guesses, write a short essay discussing the evangelists' motivations for writing the beatitudes from such different perspectives. Consider the overall perspective of Matthew and Luke, as well as the setting of the passages when writing your observations. **Due on February 21 (M) / 17 (Th)**

c) On John: Read Proverbs 8 and 9 in light of John 1:1-18. Write a short essay comparing and contrasting the concepts of Wisdom and Logos, and discuss the implications of the feminine Wisdom as the forerunner of the masculine Logos. What important messages do we get from there for the church/world today? **Due on February 28 (M) / 24 (Th)**

4. A Reading Journal – as you complete the readings of the material assigned from the textbooks and the New Testament keep in mind the study questions included in the syllabus for each class session and write a response following the instructions from the class calendar. The main purpose of this journal is to be a practical source of ideas/thoughts for your ministry so, be yourself, write for your own sake and not as a requirement. The journal will be collected for review twice during the quarter: **February 7th (M) / 3rd (Th)**, and the day of the final class **March 14 (M) / 10 (Th) (25%)**

BIBLIOGRAPHY (required)

1. *The New Testament*. New Revised Standard Version. **NT**
2. Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009. **MAP**
3. C. DeYoung, W. Gafney, L. Guardiola-Sáenz, G. Tinker, F. Yamada, eds., *The Peoples' Companion to the Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010. **PCB**
4. Lamott, Anne. *Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2006. (read it by February 5th)

| Grading Scale | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Superior performance: | |
| A | 96.36 – 100 |
| A- | 92.72 – 96.35 |
| B+ | 89.08 – 92.71 |
| Good performance: | |
| B | 85.44 – 89.07 |
| B- | 81.80 – 85.43 |
| C+ | 78.16 – 81.79 |
| Minimal performance: | |
| C | 74.52 – 78.15 |
| C- | 70.88 – 74.51 |
| D+ | 67.24 – 70.87 |
| Poor performance: | |
| D | 63.60 – 67.23 |
| D- | 60.00 – 63.59 |
| Failing: | |
| F | 00.00 – 59.99 |

| Grading rubric for short papers: | vg = very good g = good s = satisfactory un = unsatisfactory | | | | Comments |
|--|---|---|---|----|----------|
| | vg | g | s | un | |
| Programmatic introduction: start your paper with a brief and well organized introduction paragraph. Set up a clear course of action for the development of your paper. | | | | | |
| As part of the PI , clearly establish the thesis, purpose, or aim that you will be pursuing in your short paper. | | | | | |
| 1. Develop your ideas in full: make sure you say what you want to say. Do not assume the reader will fill the gaps according to your thoughts. 2. Sequence of topics: clearly follow the line of thought you have established for your paper. | | | | | |
| Evaluation of content of paper: 1. Understanding of the topic 2. Clear voice of the author (you) 3. Interaction with the biblical texts | | | | | |
| Conclusion: Political ramifications and /or Ministerial implications | | | | | |

STMM 527-01 & 02 Christian Scriptures CALENDAR OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

CLASS SESSION # 1

January 3 / 6

Introduction: The New Testament - Context of production and ways of reading it

- Presentation of syllabus: Course description, purpose, requirements and presuppositions

READ:

MAP - Chapter 1: The New Testament World; Chapter 2: The New Testament Writings

PCB - Culture and Identity; The Bible as a Text of Cultures; The New Testament as a Text of Cultures; A Self-Inventory for Bible Readers

CLASS SESSION # 2

January 10 / 13

Paul and his early letters

READ:

MAP – Chapter 10: New Testament Letters; Chapter 11: Paul; Chapter 19: 1 Thessalonians; Chapter 13: 1 Corinthians; Chapter 14: 2 Corinthians; Chapter 17: Philippians; Chapter 22: Philemon

PCB - Introduction to the Pauline Letters; 1 Thessalonians; 1 & 2 Corinthians; Philippians; Philemon

NT – 1 Thessalonians – 1 & 2 Corinthians – Philippians – Philemon

When is the end going to happen and how according to 1 Thess? Why is the Corinthian congregation confused? Why is Paul so friendly with the Philippians? Who is Onesimus and to whom is Philemon's letter addressed?

JOURNAL:

A 150-word paragraph for each of the 5 undisputed letters of Paul succinctly stating: its core message, in your own words (do not write what the textbooks say!), and one theme, idea or concept

that could be used for future preaching or teaching.

Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks readings: what was new or what did you find interesting, challenging, exciting in your readings for today? What was irritating, upsetting, and/or problematic? How can you use this material in your ministry or to make this world better?

CLASS SESSION # 3

January 24 / 20

The gospel according to Paul

READ:

MAP – Chapter 15: Galatians; Chapter 12: Romans

PCB – The Bible and Empire; Galatians; Romans

NT – Galatians – Romans

What is the main issue at stake in Galatians? Why is Paul so angry in this letter and how does he solve the crisis with the Galatians? What are Paul's views about sin and salvation; Adam and Christ; Justification by faith; and Women's roles in the church in the letter to the Romans?

JOURNAL:

- A 200-word description each for Galatians and Romans stating its core message, and one theme, idea or concept that could be used for future preaching or teaching
- Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks readings

CLASS SESSION # 4

January 31 / 27

Mark

READ:

MAP – Chapter 6: Mark; Chapter 3: Jesus; Chapter 4: The Gospels

PCB – Jesus and Cultures; The Bible as a Text in Cultures: an introduction & Native Americans; Introduction to the Gospels; Mark

NT – the Gospel of Mark

JOURNAL:

- * A 200-word reflection paragraph on what you think is the core message of the Jesus in Mark.
- * Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks-readings

CLASS SESSION # 5

February 7 / 3

Matthew

READ:

MAP – Chapter 5: Matthew

PCB – The Bible as a Text in Cultures: introduction and Latinas/os; Matthew

NT – the Gospel of Matthew

JOURNAL:

- * A 200-word reflection paragraph on what you think is the core message of the Jesus in Matthew.
- * Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks-readings

CLASS SESSION # 6

February 14 / 10

Luke / Acts

READ:

MAP – Chapter 7 & 9: Luke and Acts

PCB – The Bible as a Text in Cultures: African Americans; Luke; The Acts of the Apostles

NT – the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles

JOURNAL:

- * A 200-word reflection paragraph on what you think is the core message of the Jesus in Luke.
- * Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks-readings

CLASS SESSION # 7

February 18 / 17

John

READ:

MAP – Chapter 8: John

PCB – John; Women, Culture, and the Bible

NT – the Gospel of John

JOURNAL:

- * A 200-word reflection paragraph on what you think is the core message of the Jesus in John.
- * Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks-readings

CLASS SESSION # 8

March 7 / 3

Standing on Paul's shoulders

READ:

MAP – Chapters 16, 18, 20, 21 (Deutero-Pauline Letters)

PCB – 2 Thessalonians; Colossians; Ephesians; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; The Bible as a Text in Cultures: Asian Americans

NT – 2 Thessalonians – Colossians – Ephesians – 1 & 2 Timothy – Titus

What is the major problem in 2 Thessalonians and what is the author's advice about it? Who are the opponents in Colossians? What are the similarities between Colossians and Ephesians?

JOURNAL:

- * Write a 300-word-reaction-paragraph to the content of the deutero-Pauline letters
- * Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks-readings

CLASS SESSION # 9

March 14 / 10

Revelation and the beginning of the end

READ:

MAP – Chapter 29: Revelation; Chapters 23: Hebrews; Chapter 24: James; Chapter 25: 1 Peter; Chapter 26: 2 Peter; Chapter 27: 1-3 John; Chapter 28: Jude

PCB – Introduction to the General Letters and Revelation; Hebrews; James; 1 & 2 Peter; 1-3 John; Jude; Revelation; The Bible as a Text in Cultures: Euro-Americans

NT – Revelation, 1 Peter, James, Hebrews, 1-3 John; Jude & 2 Peter

JOURNAL: Write a reflection paragraph on the textbooks-readings
