



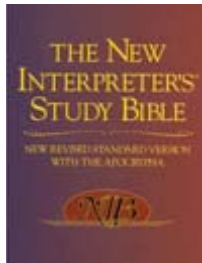
Course of Study

Experiential and Collaborative Learning

COS_311: New Testament I COURSE SYLLABUS

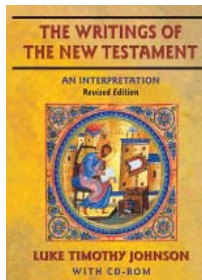
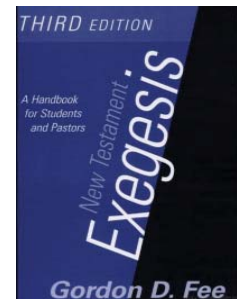
Required Texts

Books can be ordered through Cokesbury online at cokesbury.com, by telephone at 800-672-1789 or through Amazon online at amazon.com. Other major booksellers, like Barnes and Noble (bn.com) and Borders (bordersstores.com), may also carry these books in stores and online.



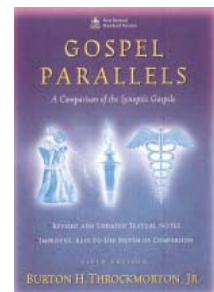
The New Interpreter's Study Bible. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Walter J. Harrelson, General Editor. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003. ISBN: 978-0-68727-832-9. Recommended.

New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors. Third Edition. Gordon D Fee. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-0-66422-316-8.



The Writings of the New Testament: An Introduction. Luke Timothy Johnson. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1999. ISBN: 978-0-80063-439-1.

Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels. Fifth Edition. Burton Throckmorton, Jr. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992. ISBN: 978-0-84077-484-2.





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Introduction

This course presents a panoramic view of the content, main characteristics, and message of the books of the New Testament in light of their historical, political, socioeconomic, cultural, and religious environment, as well as their importance as literary expressions of the faith and history of the early church. The practice of exegesis is again emphasized, with special focus on Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Galatians.

Objectives:

- Review of the nature, scope, and purpose of the New Testament.
- Review of the origin and formation of the New Testament canon.
- Description of the historical and social background out of which the New Testament emerged.
- Development and practice of an exegetical methodology that is appropriate and helpful to the study of the New Testament.
- Articulation of an introductory explanation of the origin, formation, development, and expansion of the Christian faith during the first century.
- Examination of some of the ways in which the early church interpreted the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and how this interpretation informed how its members lived out their faith in various social circumstances.
- Reflection on the meaning and significance of the message of the New Testament for the faith and mission of the church in its contemporary context.

Module 1: Introduction to the New Testament and Exegetical Methodology

- ***The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*** (Johnson)
 - "The Greco-Roman World" (pp. 23–41).
 - "Judaism in Palestine" (pp. 43–70).
 - "Diaspora Judaism" (pp. 73–91).
- ***New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*** (Fee)

Assignment 1.1: Read Johnson, Chapter 1, "The Greco-Roman World," then write a five-page paper in which you answer the five questions that Johnson asks on pages 38–39:

1. What were the main tools of Hellenization used by Alexander and his successors?
2. What impact did empire have on Greek culture?
3. What is meant by the statement that Hellenistic philosophy turned "from theory to therapy"?
4. What were the importance and roles of prophecy and healing in Hellenistic religion?



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5. What was the significance of the “network of communication” (roads and letter-writing) in the Roman empire for the earliest churches?

Total Value: 4 points

Assignment 1.2: Read Johnson, Chapter 2, “Judaism in Palestine,” then write a seven-page paper in which you answer the five questions that Johnson asks on pages 65–66:

1. What did all Jews have in common during the Hellenistic period?
2. What were the political and religious convictions of the Pharisees?
3. What functions did the synagogue serve? What was the importance of the synagogue for Judaism and the earliest churches?
4. What are the characteristics of “apocalyptic” literature, and how does it defend God’s control of history?
5. What was the importance of meals in ancient Judaism?

Total Value: 6 points

Assignment 1.3: Read Johnson, Chapter 3, “Diaspora Judaism,” then write a seven-page paper in which you answer the four questions that Johnson asks on page 88:

1. What is the significance of distinguishing between Palestinian Judaism and Diaspora Judaism?
2. How do the dates of Philo of Alexandria comport with the writings of the New Testament? What was his importance as a Diaspora Jewish author?
3. Why did Jews in the Diaspora encounter hostility? What forms did it take?
4. What does it mean to call Hellenistic Jewish literature “apologetic”?

Total Value: 6 points

Assignment 1.4: In COS 111, you began to develop a methodology for interpreting the Bible. In COS 211, your understanding of the methods of biblical analysis and interpretation continued to mature and you had the opportunity to think more about methodology and to interpret some biblical passages.

Now, in COS 311, you take a dramatic step forward methodologically by reading, studying, and putting into practice the process for doing New Testament exegesis that is laid out by Gordon Fee. Fee’s ***New Testament Exegesis*** is a widely-used methodological guide for busy students and pastors. Its focus is practical exegesis. Douglas Stuart has written a widely-used companion volume: ***Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*** (Third Edition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

Read and study Fee’s ***New Testament Exegesis***, then outline Fee’s process for doing exegesis in a way that will be helpful for you in your own practice of New Testament exegesis. List the main steps and sub-steps in Fee’s exegetical process, annotating or commenting on the various steps and sub-steps as you



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see fit. Your outline of how to do New Testament exegesis should be about two pages long. (Do not just copy Fee's table of contents! Create your own outline for doing New Testament exegesis.) **Total Value: 2 points**

Module 2: Synoptic Gospel Parallels

- ***The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*** (Johnson)
"The Synoptic Tradition" (pp. 155–158).
- ***Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*** (Throckmorton),
Paragraph 1 (pp. 11–12), John the Baptist.
Paragraph 6 (p. 14), The Baptism of Jesus.
Paragraph 122 (pp. 99–100), The Confession at Caesarea Philippi and the First Prediction of the Passion.
Paragraph 123 (pp. 100–101), The Conditions of Discipleship.

Assignment 2.1: Read Johnson, pages 155–158, the introductory section to Part Three entitled "The Synoptic Tradition," then write a three-page paper in which you answer questions 2 and 4 on Johnson, page 158:

1. What factors prompted the writing of the Gospels?
2. What is the literary relationship among the Synoptic Gospels? (Be sure to include in your answer to this question a definition of the hypothetical document "Q" and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the Q hypothesis.)

Total Value: 2 points

Assignment 2.2: Read Throckmorton, ***Gospel Parallels***, Paragraph 1 (pages 11–12), John the Baptist. Write a one-to-two-page paper discussing the similarities and differences between the three Gospel accounts of the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist, and any thoughts that you have, or that you have obtained from resources that you consulted, regarding the possible significance of any of these similarities and differences. Note where each Gospel writer begins and ends the quotation from Isaiah 40 (and any other quotations from the Old Testament). Did the Gospel writers quote the Old Testament passage(s) accurately? **Total Value: 2 points**

Assignment 2.3: Read Throckmorton, ***Gospel Parallels***, Paragraph 6 (page 14), The Baptism of Jesus. Write a one-to-two-page paper discussing the similarities and differences between the three Gospel accounts of the baptism of Jesus, and any thoughts that you have, or that you have obtained from resources that you consulted, regarding the possible significance of any of these similarities and differences. Pay particular attention to the narrative about the heavens opening and the Spirit descending. **Total Value: 2 points**



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Assignment 2.4: Read Throckmorton, *Gospel Parallels*, Paragraph 122 (pages 99–100), The Confession at Caesarea Philippi and the First Prediction of the Passion. Write a one-to-two-page paper discussing the similarities and differences between the three Gospel accounts of this turning point passage, and any thoughts that you have, or that you obtained from resources that you consulted, regarding the possible significance of any of these similarities and differences. How does the emphasis in Matthew's version of the story differ from the emphasis in Mark and Luke? How does the emphasis in Matthew and Mark differ from the emphasis in Luke? **Total Value: 2 points**

Assignment 2.5: Read Throckmorton, *Gospel Parallels*, Paragraph 123 (pages 100–101), The Conditions of Discipleship. Write a one-to-two-page paper discussing the similarities and differences between the three Gospel accounts of Jesus' teaching on the conditions of discipleship, and any thoughts that you have, or that you obtained from resources that you consulted, regarding the possible significance of any of these similarities and differences. Consider the message of this text in light of the fact that, in all three Gospels, Jesus' teachings on taking up the cross of discipleship immediately follow the first prediction of his own passion. Would you preach Matthew's version any differently than Mark's or Luke's? Why or why not? **Total Value: 2 points**

Module 3: Luke–Acts

- **New Revised Standard Version of the Bible** (preferably *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*)
The Gospel According to Luke.
The Acts of the Apostles.
- **The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation** (Johnson)
"Luke–Acts" (pp. 213–257).

Assignment 3.1: Read the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Read Johnson, Chapter 9, "Luke-Acts." Then write a ten-page paper in which you answer the ten questions that Johnson asks on page 252:

1. What does it mean to say, "Acts is the first and most important interpretation of Luke's Gospel"?
2. How would you describe the geographical structure of Luke-Acts?
3. Why is the retelling of the Moses story in Acts 7:17-44 important for grasping the structure of Luke-Acts as a whole?
4. What are the elements of Luke's portrayal of his leading characters as prophets?
5. How does Luke describe the disciples of Jesus differently from Mark?
6. How and why are the infancy narratives in Luke different from those in Matthew?
7. In Luke's passion narrative, is the Judean responsibility for Jesus' death expanded or minimized when compared to Matthew's version?
8. Why is the choice of Matthias in Acts 1:15 (and following) so important to Luke's story?



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9. Why does Luke retell the "call" of Saul/Paul three times in the narrative of Acts? Are different aspects emphasized in each?

Total Value: 8 points

Assignment 3.2: In 1935, British New Testament scholar C. H. Dodd presented a series of lectures in which he outlined the contents of early Christian preaching. Dodd's lectures were eventually published under the title *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*.¹ In his first lecture, "The Primitive Preaching," Dodd sketched out a six-part pattern that can be identified (to greater or lesser degrees) in the sermons in the early chapters of Acts. Dodd referred to this six-part pattern as the *kerygma*, the Greek word for "proclamation" or "preaching." The six-part pattern of preaching that Dodd identified in the sermons in the early chapters of Acts includes the following themes:

- "First, the age of fulfillment has dawned." The Messianic age, the time when the prophecies are fulfilled, has come.²
- "Secondly, this has taken place through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, of which a brief account is given, with proof from the Scriptures that all took place through 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.'"³
- "Thirdly, by virtue of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God, as Messianic head of the new Israel."⁴
- "Fourthly, the Holy Spirit in the Church is the sign of Christ's present power and glory."⁵
- "Fifthly, the Messianic Age will shortly reach its consummation in the return of Christ."⁶
- "Finally...an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit, and the promise of 'salvation,' that is, of 'the life of the Age to Come,' to those who enter the elect community."⁷

With the above six themes in mind, read the early Christian sermons that are recorded in Acts 2:14-36; 3:11-26; 10:34-43; 13:16-41. Then write a five-page paper in which you show how the six themes appear, or do not appear, in the sermons that you read in the Acts of the Apostles. Be sure to cite the specific verse references for each theme in each sermon.

¹C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments: Three Lectures* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1964).

²Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, page 21.

³Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, page 21.

⁴Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, page 22.

⁵Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, page 22.

⁶Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, page 23.

⁷Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, page 23.

Total Value: 4 points



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Assignment 3.3: Read Paul's sermon to the Greeks in Athens in Acts 17:22-31 and his sermon to the Jews in Antioch in Acts 13:16-41, then write a three-to-five-page paper in which you compare and contrast the two sermons. Be sure to answer the following questions in your paper: Do you think Paul could have preached either sermon to the other audience and had a positive result? Why or why not? To what degree do you think the contents of any sermon that is preached by anyone need to change depending on the audience/congregation? **Total Value: 4 points**

Assignment 3.4: Read Acts 18:1–17, then write a two-to-three-page paper in which you:

1. Outline the ministry of Paul at Corinth as recorded in Acts 18:1–17 and discuss the significant aspects of Paul's stay in that city.
2. Indicate which individuals mentioned in Acts 18:1–17 are also named by Paul in 1 Corinthians and where they are named by Paul in that letter.
3. Discuss the significance of the ruling by Proconsul Gallio in 18:14–15. (For the importance of Gallio's ruling, see Johnson, page 218.)

Total Value 2 points

Assignment 3.5: Now that you have done some background reading and writing on methodology and on the interpretation of Luke and Acts, it is time to begin practicing a sound exegetical methodology. Using Fee's process for doing New Testament exegesis as a guide in writing your paper, following your outline of the steps and sub-steps of Fee's exegetical process, write a ten-to-fifteen-page exegetical paper on either Luke 15 or Acts 10. When writing your exegetical paper, use whatever print and electronic resources that are helpful for you, and be sure to cite your sources. **Total Value: 13 points**

Module 4: The Pauline Letters

- **The United Methodist Hymnal**
"The Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper, Service of Word and Table"
- **New Revised Standard Version of the Bible** (preferably **The New Interpreter's Study Bible**)
The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians
The Letter of Paul to the Galatians.
The Letter of Paul to the Romans.
- **The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation** (Johnson)
"Paul's Ministry and Letters" (pp. 261–278).
"The Corinthian Correspondence" (pp. 295–312).
"The Letter to the Galatians" (pp. 327–340).
"The Letter to the Romans" (pp. 343–366).



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Assignment 4.1: Read Johnson, Chapter 10, "Paul's Ministry and Letters," then write a five-page paper in which you discuss the background for letter writing in the ancient world, the reasons that people wrote letters in the ancient world, the structure of typical ancient letters, how Paul's letters compare with typical ancient letters, and the various elements of composition of the Pauline letters. **Total Value: 4 points**

Assignment 4.2: Read The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Read pages 295–312 of Johnson, Chapter 12, "The Corinthian Correspondence." Then write a seven-page paper in which you answer the first five Study Questions that Johnson asks on page 320:

1. What factors created divisions in the church at Corinth?
2. What was the perspective of those Paul calls "the strong"?
3. What point does Paul make with his metaphor of "the body of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 12?
4. In 1 Corinthians 8–12, what is the issue Paul addresses, and how does he resolve it?
5. How does Paul correct the abuses of the Lord's Supper in the Corinthian church?

Total Value: 6 points

Assignment 4.3: Write a one-to-two-page paper in which you compare and contrast the words of institution of the Lord's Supper as they appear in 1 Corinthians 11:23–26, Luke 22:14–20, and *The United Methodist Hymnal*. **Total Value: 2 points**

Assignment 4.4: Read The Letter of Paul to the Galatians and The Letter of Paul to the Romans. Read Johnson, Chapter 13 (pages 327–340) and Chapter 14 (pages 343–366). Then write a ten-page paper in which you answer the questions that Johnson asks on page 363:

1. What issues do Romans and Galatians share? What is the difference in how they are handled in the two letters?
2. How do Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar figure in Paul's argumentation in Romans and Galatians? Why would Paul have chosen these three figures in dealing with the issues he addresses?
3. What does Paul mean by "faith" and "the faith of the Messiah"? What difference is made by translating the Greek phrase *pistis christou* as "the faith of the messiah"?
4. How has the issue of "Christ and Torah" affected all of Christian history?
5. What do Romans share with the classical rhetorical style of "diatribe"? How does that affect the interpretation of the letter?
6. What conclusions can you draw from the names mentioned in Romans 16? Which of these names appear in other letters of Paul and Acts?

Total Value: 8 points

Assignment 4.5: Read Galatians 5:16–26 then write a seven-to-ten-page paper in which you discuss what it means to "live by the Spirit," or more literally translated from Greek, "walk by the Spirit." Reflect on each component of "the works of the flesh" and "the fruit of the Spirit." Discuss the significance of each of the



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“works” and “fruit” for life in the church today. When writing your paper, use whatever print and electronic resources that are helpful for you, and be sure to cite your sources. (Remember to follow the guidelines for Citing Your Sources.)

Notice that “works” in “the works of the flesh” is plural but “fruit” in “fruit of the Spirit” is singular. “In contrast to the many works of the flesh, the Spirit produces its singular fruit in the justified person, manifested in 9 ways.”¹

¹The New Interpreter's Study Bible. Walter J. Harrelson, General Editor. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003. Page 2088, note on 5:22–23.

Total Value: 8 points

Assignment 4.6: Now that you have done some background reading and writing on methodology and on the interpretation of the Pauline letters, it is time to begin practicing a sound exegetical methodology. Using Fee's process for doing New Testament exegesis as a guide in writing your paper, following your outline of the steps and sub-steps of Fee's exegetical process, write a ten-to-fifteen-page exegetical paper on either Romans 5 or 1 Corinthians 15. When writing your exegetical paper, use whatever print and electronic resources that are helpful for you. **Total Value: 13 points**