

Northern Texas Northern Louisiana Synod
Parish Lay Mission Academy
Instituto Académico de Laicos
Course Syllabus
Spring 1

Course: New Testament

Instructor: Rev. Kendra Mohn, PhD

Spring 1 Semester

Instructor Contact Information:

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Course Descriptions: This course is a (very) broad overview of the diverse texts that make up the New Testament. Students will be introduced to issues and concepts that surround the composition and interpretation of these texts, and then engage with selected sections to deepen the application of those concepts.

Course Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with the literary forms, theological perspectives, and historical (Roman imperial) contexts that characterize the New Testament Texts.
- Students will be exposed to different methodological tools available, and begin to develop their own skills, for spoken and written theological interpretation.
- Students will identify and utilize Lutheran hermeneutical perspectives in the interpretation of Scripture, particularly Law/Gospel dialectic.
- Students will engage one particular text in a focused manner, incorporating the learning from this course.

Course Texts:

1. Bible. Your choice. Preferably a NRSV Study Bible (can be used alongside whatever you personally use). A good option is the Harper Collins Study Bible. ISBN: 0060786841 (\$29 on Amazon)
2. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. 2nd Edition. Mark Allan Powell. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018. ISBN: 978-0801099601 (\$30 for hardcover on Amazon; electronic versions available)
3. *Seven Events That Shaped The New Testament World*. Warren Carter. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN: 978-0801039164 (on Amazon)

Session I:

- introduction to key concepts and themes of the study of the New Testament
- dates, order, and historical context for books
- brief overview of the Greco-Roman context of the New Testament (covering Chapters 1-2 in Carter)
- Introduce Paul and Pauline letters (covering Chapters 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19 in Powell)

Session II:

- for class, please read Powell, Chapters 4-8, and Carter, Chapters 4-5.
- discussion of readings for class
- presentation on biblical studies: Methods (I)

Session III:

- for class, please read Powell Chapters 9, 16, 21, 27, 29 and Carter, 6-7.
- discussion of readings for class
- presentation on biblical studies: Methods (II)

Writing Assignments:

1. On the first day of class, we will do a “free write” where you consider your perspective on the New Testament. No particular format or content is expected or intended. The point is to get a sense of where you come from and where you are in your engagement with the NT.
2. For our second meeting in April, please bring a 1 to 2-page essay comparing the Christmas stories in Matthew and Luke. (Matthew 1:18-2:23 and Luke 2:1-20) Reflect on the differences between them. Do you have a preference? Which story has shaped you more? What does the other story contribute that would be missing if you didn't know it?
3. For our third meeting in May, please bring a 1 to 2-page essay reflecting on Chapters 6 and 7 in Carter, about the composition of NT texts and the “closing” of the canon. What questions do these chapters raise? Does this information change your thinking about the Bible? If so, how? Consider what opportunities (potentially positive) and challenges (potentially negative) this knowledge provides for you.
4. Choose a text we have discussed in class. Talk about your original understanding of the text (from Sunday School, sermons, or Bible studies). What did it mean to you? Now reflect on this text in light of your experience in this class. Has your interpretation changed? How? What tools or concepts learned in this class will you use going forward to enhance your understanding of other NT texts? This essay will be 3-5 pages, due one month after the end of class (June). These papers can be submitted via email to the instructor or mailed to the instructor's church, postmarked by the due date. If feedback is desired, a return address must be included.