

BRIERCREST

BLST 606 New Testament Survey Spring 2020 (Online)

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Course Dates: April 20 - July 10, 2020

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The New Testament consists of numerous types of literature, and reflects the activities, beliefs and teachings of Jesus and his followers. This course explores the historical context, literary styles and theological themes of each of the books of the New Testament, and of the New Testament as a whole, with the goal of applying these texts to our Christian discipleship and ministry. The course also introduces students to select critical methods of New Testament study, observing the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

COURSE FORMAT

This is an online course featuring interaction and discussion. We will meet “live” via Zoom on **Tuesdays from 7 pm –10 pm SK time**. Instructions for how to log into Zoom will be posted to Canvas.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course is concerned with equipping disciples of Jesus who serve in God’s kingdom, grounded in Scripture and guided by the Spirit. An in-depth understanding of the New Testament is key because the New Testament tells us who Jesus is and the good news of his reign, challenging us to follow as cross-bearing disciples (Mark 8:34). The aim of this course is not merely to introduce students to the content of the New Testament, its original historical context, and some of the critical issues surrounding its interpretation, but to encourage and challenge students as disciples of Jesus who seek God’s kingdom in every aspect of their lives.

COURSE TEXTS

Required:

The Bible (Recommended translations include NIV, NRSV, ESV)

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

Recommended Resource:

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students should expect:

- to have a basic understanding of the theology, structure, genre and themes of each New Testament book.
- to have a growing comprehension of the overall themes and narrative of the New Testament, appreciating it as the continuing story of the Old Testament.
- to have been introduced to the first-century context in which Jesus lived and the church arose.
- to read the New Testament with increasing understanding and interest, relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in confidence and humility.
- to have an awareness of the critical issues and methods of New Testament study.
- to grow as a disciple of Jesus with an excitement for the good news of God's reign.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Date	Topic, Readings & Assignments
Week 1 April 20—24	1. Introducing the New Testament: What is it? Where did it come from? And how do we get from the Old Testament to the New? <i>Pre-Reading:</i> Wright & Bird, chapters 1–5, 35–36
Week 2 April 27—May 1	2. 1st Century Contexts: Palestine in the Roman Empire Jesus's Message and Mission <i>Pre-Reading:</i> Wright & Bird, chapters 6–11
Week 3 May 4—8	3. Gospels: Genre & Critical Issues The Gospel of Mark <i>Pre-Reading:</i> Gospel of Mark Wright & Bird, chapters 24 and 28
Week 4 May 11—15	4. Gospels: Matthew & John Gospel of Matthew Gospel of John Wright & Bird, chapters 25 and 27

Week 5 May 18–22	<p>5. Luke-Acts: Jesus's continuing story in the church</p> <p><i>Pre-Reading:</i> Gospel of Luke Acts Wright & Bird, chapter 26</p>
Week 6 May 25–29	<p>Online presentations: <i>Mark in Context</i></p>
Week 7 June 1–5	<p>6. Epistles: Genre & Critical Issues</p> <p>Who is Paul?</p> <p>Pauline Epistles: Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians</p> <p><i>Pre-Reading:</i> Galatians 1 & 2 Thessalonians Wright & Bird, chapters 15–18</p>
Week 8 June 8–12	<p>7. Pauline Epistles: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Corinthians</p> <p><i>Pre-Reading:</i> Philippians Colossians Philemon Ephesians 1 & 2 Corinthians Wright & Bird, chapters 19–21</p>
Week 9 June 15–19	<p>8. Pauline Epistles: Romans and the Pastoral Epistles</p> <p><i>Pre-Reading:</i> Romans 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Wright & Bird, chapters 22–23</p>
Week 10 June 20–27	<p>9. General Epistles: Hebrews, James, Jude, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John</p> <p><i>Pre-Reading:</i> Hebrews James Jude 1 & 2 Peter 1, 2, & 3 John Wright & Bird, chapters 29–34</p>
Week 11 June 29–July 3	<p>10. Revelation & Resurrection: Reasons for Hope</p> <p>Wrap-Up: Hearing the New Testament Today</p> <p><i>Pre-Reading:</i> Revelation Wright & Bird, chapters 12–14, 34, 37</p>

Week 12 July 6–10	No Online Instruction Final Exam
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ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading: Textbook and New Testament 10%

- In this course, you get to read through the whole New Testament as well as the informative volume by Wright and Bird.
- There is a significant amount of reading in this course so students are strongly encouraged to begin their reading as soon as possible.
- It is expected that students will complete the assigned reading before each week's online instruction. Classroom and online discussion as well as all the assignments below presuppose that the students have completed the required reading.
- A reading log is provided at the end of this syllabus to help students keep track of their reading.

Due: as per schedule; reading log to be submitted by July 11 @ 5 pm on Canvas

2. Online Discussion 20%

- Each week, students must contribute at least **2–3 posts** (amounting to at least 200 words) to the online discussion on Canvas, either responding to the instructor's original post or interacting with the posts of other students.
- Posts may involve asking questions, drawing out practical implications, raising issues, making connections, debating a topic, etc. This may involve respectful disagreement with peers and synthesizing the content from all parts of the course.
- Posts will be assessed by two criteria:
 - clarity and charity of communication
 - critical thinking and comprehension of course content

Due: weekly by 5 pm on Saturdays (weeks 1–5; 7–11) (each week at 2% each) on Canvas

3. Online Presentation: Mark in Context 10%

- Each student will be emailed a PDF of a chapter from the volume *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism* which considers a text from Mark alongside a passage from Second Temple Jewish literature.
- Prepare a 5–7 minute presentation on your assigned chapter which provides context for the passage from Second Temple Judaism, explicates the connection with the Markan text, and assesses the continuities and discontinuities between the two. Essentially, you are to show how the Second Temple text increases our understanding or appreciation of the Gospel of Mark.
- More guidance will be provided during online instruction time.

Due: Week 6

4. Engaging with Critical Issues: The Authorship and Dating of John's Gospel 15%

- Who wrote the Gospel of John? And when? In this assignment, students will write a **3–4 page** (800–1000 word) essay which briefly explains the major positions on these questions and offers an argument for which options of authorship and dating are most plausible.

- The keys to this assignment are critical thinking and biblical thinking. It is imperative that you support your argument by making reference to Scripture.
- In addition to your textbook, the instructor will provide three PDFs on Canvas of scholarly work with which to interact in your essay. You must make use of all the resources provided.
- This assignment should be in proper essay format with introduction (including **thesis statement**), body, and conclusion.
- Please include footnotes and a bibliography.

Due: May 29 @ 5 pm on Canvas

5. Bible Study Preparation: Ephesians

15%

- For this assignment, you are to prepare a Bible study on **Eph 2:11–22** that would be appropriate for the context of your church community or a ministry in which you are involved.
- Prepare for yourself a minimum of **4 pages** of material.
- This assignment should be organized under four headings:
 - **Participants**— a paragraph describing your imagined participants. Who is this study for? What is the context for this Bible study?
 - **Introducing Ephesians** — What do they need to know about Ephesians in terms of historical context, themes, and overall argument? Write 2–3 paragraphs that will introduce Ephesians to your group.
 - **Discussion Questions on Eph 2:11–22** — Through 5–7 questions, lead your participants through a careful reading of the text. These questions should encourage participants to read the text closely, follow the train of thought, and connect the passage with the larger argument and emphases of Ephesians. In bullet points under each of your questions, sketch out the observations and connections you think are important. Lead your participants on a journey through the text. Include cross-references to connected passages in Ephesians.
 - **So What?** — How does this text speak to the needs of your church or your community? How are these words from Paul in Ephesians God's word to us today? (2–3 paragraphs)
- The key to this assignment is your own careful reading of Ephesians. Read it and reread it.
- Your instructor will provide PDFs of relevant sections from a few commentaries to supplement the material in your textbook and course notes.

Due: July 11 @ 5 pm on Canvas

6. Letter to a Friend: Revelation as a reason for hope

10%

- Imagine you have a friend who is afraid of the book of Revelation. They have never read it in entirety — those end times movies they were shown in youth group years ago still haunt them.
- Drawing on what you have learned about Revelation in this course, write a **2–3 page** (600–800 word) letter sharing how Revelation is a book of hope and worship.
- Be gentle and biblical in your letter, being mindful not to be belittling towards your friend's fears and current understanding of Revelation.

Due: July 11 @ 5 pm on Canvas

7. Final Exam

20%

- The 2h comprehensive final exam will largely consist of objective questions (multiple choice, true/false, short answer), but will also include two essay questions.

- This exam draws on all of the content from the course: online instruction and readings (both New Testament and Wright & Bird).
- More information will be provided during the course.

Due: Week 12 (No later than July 11 @ 5 pm)

SUMMARY

Assignment	Due	Value	Estimated Hours
Online Instruction			30h
Reading Log	July 11 @ 5 pm on Canvas	10%	55h
Online Discussion	Each Saturday by 5 pm on Canvas	20%	10h
Online Presentation: Mark in Context	Week 6	10%	5h
Engaging with Critical Issues: The Authorship and Dating of John's Gospel	May 29 @ 5 pm on Canvas	15%	16h
Bible Study Preparation: Ephesians	July 11 @ 5 pm on Canvas	15%	16h
Letter to a Friend: Revelation as a reason for hope	July 11 @ 5 pm on Canvas	10%	6h
Final Exam	Week 12 (No later than July 11 @ 5 pm)	20%	2h
	Totals	100%	140h

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Course Schedules

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the

syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Dunn, James D. G. *Jesus Remembered*. Christianity in the Making, vol 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

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- Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.
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- Watson, France. *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*. London: T&T Clark, 2004.

Wright, N.T. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 2. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

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Appendix: Reading Log

Date	Assigned Reading
Week 1 April 20—24	Wright & Bird, chapters 1 2 3 4 5 35 36
Week 2 April 27—May 1	Wright & Bird, chapters 6 7 8 9 10 11
Week 3 May 4—8	Mark Wright & Bird, chapters 24 28
Week 4 May 11—15	Matthew John Wright & Bird, chapters 25 27
Week 5 May 18—22	Luke Acts Wright & Bird, chapter 26
Week 6 May 25—29	
Week 7 June 1—5	Galatians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians Wright & Bird, chapters 15 16 17 18
Week 8 June 8—12	Philippians Colossians Philemon Ephesians 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Wright & Bird, chapters 19 20 21
Week 9 June 15—19	Romans 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Wright & Bird, chapters 22 23
Week 10 June 20—27	Hebrews James Jude 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Wright & Bird, chapters 29 30 31 32 33 34
Week 11 June 29—July 3	Revelation Wright & Bird, chapters 12 13 14 34 37
Week 12 July 6—10	