

# BRIERCREST

BLST 606 New Testament Survey  
Spring 2024

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Course Dates: April 25<sup>th</sup> – July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Course Delivery Method: Online

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 weakness of each approach.

### **COURSE FORMAT**

This is an online course comprised of synchronous and asynchronous elements including weekly videos, readings, and discussion as well as weekly Zoom meetings. We will meet via Zoom on Thursdays, beginning April 25, 2024, from 7:00-9:30pm SK time (with breaks). Instructions for how to log onto Zoom will be posted to Canvas. Students are expected to prepare for the Zoom sessions by completing the assigned reading, watching the video-lectures uploaded to Canvas (approx. 1h of video per week), and occasionally completing a worksheet.

### **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**

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

Wright, N.T. *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels*. NY: HarperOne, 2012.

Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.

*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 class, students should expect:

- To have been introduced to the first-century context that gave rise to early Christianity
- To have become familiar with the principal literary genres found in the New Testament
- To have begun to cultivate the skills necessary for close reading of texts (including those emerging from contexts dramatically different than their own)
- To have developed an informed and critical humility in the face of the challenges posed by such texts
- To have been introduced to some critical issues in New Testament Studies
- To understand and be able to discuss critically the primary interpretive options in selected New Testament texts

- To be able to discuss thoughtfully the relationship between what Christians call the Old and New Testaments
- To be able to discuss important theological themes that appear frequently in the New Testament texts

### COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Date	Topic, Readings, & Assignments Due
Week One April 25	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #1: "The World of the New Testament: The Roman Empire" Read Powell, pages 17-37</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> The Genre of the Gospels; How to 'Hear' a Story; Luke 1-2</p>
Week Two May 2	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #2: "The World of the New Testament: Second Temple Judaism" Read Powell, pages 39-75</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> Who is Jesus? (Luke 4-9); Jesus's Teaching and the Kingdom of God (Luke 10-19; Matthew 5-7; 13)</p> <p><b>Quiz 1</b></p>
Week Three May 9	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #3: "The Synoptic Problem" Prepare Worksheet #1</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (esp. Luke 22-24)</p> <p><b>Quiz 2</b></p>
Week Four May 16	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #4: "Deuteronomistic Theology, Sectarianism, and Early Christianity" Read Powell, pages 205-239 Prepare Worksheet #2</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> The Beginning of the Church (Acts 1-15)</p> <p><b>Quiz 3</b></p>
Week Five May 23	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #5: "New Testament Cannon Formation" Read Powell, pages 183-203</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> Four Gospels, One Jesus: The Contribution of John</p> <p><b>Assignment due: Book Review of <i>How God Became King</i> by N.T. Wright</b></p>
Week Six May 30	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #6: "Paul's Life, Travels, and Letters" Read Powell, pages 231-245</p>

	<p><b>Class Topic:</b> How to Read a Letter: Structure, Historical Situation, Theology, Instruction (Colossians 1-4)</p> <p><b>Quiz 4</b></p>
Week Seven June 6	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #7: "The Spirit, the New Covenant, and the People of God" Read Powell, pages 247-269 Prepare Worksheet #3</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> The Accomplishment of the Christ-Event in Paul</p> <p><b>Quiz 5</b></p>
Week Eight June 13	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #8: "New Testament Textual Criticism" Prepare Worksheet #4</p> <p><b>Class topic:</b> Issues in Pauline Studies: Paul's Use of Scripture, Paul and the Law, Women in Paul</p> <p><b>Quiz 6</b></p>
Week Nine June 20	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #9: "Persecution of Christians in the First Century" Read Powell, pages 479-495</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> 1 Peter</p> <p><b>Quiz 7</b></p>
Week Ten June 27	<p><b>Pre-class work:</b> Listen to Lecture #10: "Jewish Apocalypse and the Genre of Revelation" Read Powell, pages 431-551</p> <p><b>Class Topic:</b> Revelation</p> <p><b>Assignment Due: (1) Thematic Essay (2) NT Reading Log</b></p>
Final Exam July 4	

## ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

### 1. New Testament Reading

5%

Each student is required to read the whole New Testament and submit a reading log (see Appendix One) *at any time* between January 1, 2024 and the conclusion of the course on June 27, 2024. A good way to get a 'head start' on the course is to begin this reading early (you can make this a part of your 'devotional' routine for the spring!).

**2. Quizzes****15%**

There will be seven short quizzes throughout the term, which will take place online via Canvas at the beginning of class (see 'Course Outline' above). These quizzes are the primary way of testing whether students have completed the assigned reading and listened to the online lectures. The quizzes will be comprised of one question from the reading, one question from the online lecture, and one personal response question. They are not intended to be difficult: students who have completed the pre-class work should easily answer each of the questions.

**3. Class Participation****10%**

Engagement in class discussion is essential for learning, especially with the online mode of delivery. Students will be expected to participate in open discussion, contribute to group exercises, and raise questions from their reading and the recorded lectures.

**4. Worksheets****15%**

Throughout the term, students will be asked to complete four short worksheets to practice some of the exegetical skills we discuss in class. These worksheets are intended to take between 60 and 90 minutes to complete. The worksheets will be posted to Canvas at the end of class the week before they are to be completed, and specific instructions will be given both in class and on Canvas.

**5. Book Review****15%**

Students will write a review of N.T. Wright's *How God Became King* (900-1200 words in length). For instructions see Appendix Two below. This assignment is due at the beginning of class on May 23<sup>rd</sup> (Week Five).

**6. Thematic Essay****20%**

Each student will write an essay of 1500-1800 words on one of four major NT topics supplied by the instructor. Detailed instructions for the essay and preliminary bibliographies will be posted to Canvas. This essay is due at the beginning of class on June 27, 2024 (Week Ten).

**7. Online Final Exam****20%**

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, we will have an online exam using Canvas. The exam will consist of two essay questions, which synthesize core themes from the course. Students will have two hours to complete the exam. Preparation instructions, including possible essay questions, will be discussed in class and posted to Canvas on June 27<sup>th</sup>.

**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***

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

***Online Courses***

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make

every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. 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.

### ***Late Submissions***

Assignments submitted within a week after the due date as stated in the syllabus (see 'Course Outline' and 'Assignments' above) 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***

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) without instructor authorization in the preparation and/or submission of their assignments violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately. Students are responsible to ensure they are using their sources with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#). In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email ([arc@briercrest.ca](mailto:arc@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

## **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias**

Achtemeier, Paul, ed. *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

Bromiley, G. W., ed. *International Standard Bible encyclopedia*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988.

Doob Sakenfeld, Katharine. *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006-9.

- Evans, Craig A., and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Green, Joel B., Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. 2d ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.
- Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Marshall, I. Howard, ed. *New Bible Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.

### The World of the New Testament

- Barnett, Paul. *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity: A History of New Testament Times*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999.
- Barrett, C. K. *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.
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- Freyne, Séan. *The World of the New Testament*. Wilmington: Glazier, 1980.
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- Hanson, K. C., and Douglas E. Oakman. *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.
- Hengel, M. *Judaism and Hellenism*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974.
- Horsley, Richard A. *Galilee: History, Politics, People*. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995.
- Jeremias, J. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969.
- Martinez, Florentino García. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Rowland, Christopher. *Christian Origins*. London: SPCK, 1985.
- Sanders, E. P. *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE*. London: SCM, 1992.
- Schürer, E. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, 175 B.C.-A.D. 135*. Revised and edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar. 4 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973.
- Skarsaune, Oskar. *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.
- 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: Zondervan Academic, 2019.

### The Death of Jesus

- Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah. From Gethsemane to the Grave: a Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

- Carroll, John T., and Joel B. Green, with Robert E. Van Voorst, Joel Marcus, and Donald Senior. *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.
- Hooker, Morna D. *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Jesus*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1994.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991.

### Selected New Testament Introductions

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### Selected New Testament Theologies

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- Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Thielman, Frank S. *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J., Daniel J. Treier, and N. T. Wright, eds. *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*. Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2008.



**APPENDIX ONE**  
**NT Reading Log**

NT Book	Date Completed
Matthew	
Mark	
Luke	
John	
Acts	
Romans	
1-2 Corinthians	
Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians	
1-2 Thessalonians; 1-2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon	
Hebrews; James	
1-2 Peter; Jude (it is interesting to read Jude alongside 2 Peter)	
1-3 John	
Revelation	
	I _____ affirm that I have read everything as indicated above. SIGNATURE: DATE:

**APPENDIX TWO**  
**Guidelines for Book Review**  
**Due Date: May 23, 2024**

*Definition of a critical book review: A paper that describes what the author of a book has attempted to do and an evaluation of how well the author succeeded in his or her attempt. The assessment component of the review requires evidence to support its conclusions.*

Instructions for preparing the book review are as follows:

1. Read N. T. Wright's *How God Became King* carefully, and record notes on the main ideas of each chapter and the overall purpose of the book.

*(Note: A close reading of the book usually means reading it more than once.)*

2. As you read, think about and note the following elements:

- the author's main purpose or thesis – This information will usually be stated near the beginning of the book, especially in the introduction. Determining the author's thesis is key to understanding the aims, overall structure, and argument of the book as a whole.
- the author's perspective and methodology – What method or approach does he take? Why does the author value or use the particular perspective or approach that he does?
- the primary audience of the book as a whole and how this relates to the purpose of the book
- the content, main themes, style, organization, and presentation of the book as a whole – How effective are these elements and how do they contribute to the author's purpose?

- the particularly strong *and* weak parts of the book, especially those related to the cogency of the author's argument(s)
- an assessment of the quality of the evidence and method that the author uses – Do his conclusions follow logically from the method and evidence provided? Do you view them as useful?

*(At this stage, gather your evidence by taking thorough notes and collecting key citations that will furnish you with evidence for evaluating the author's purpose.)*

3. Once you complete steps one and two, attempt to draw up an outline of your review that includes two parts: description of the book and evaluation of the author's purpose.

*Part 1 – Describe the Book and Summarize its Content (2 - 2 ½ pages of the final book review)*

- Begin with a sentence that indicates the author's name and the full title of the book. Subsequently offer a very brief introduction (1-2 sentences) and then launch directly into your summary of the content of the book.
- Provide a brief summary of the content of each chapter. This should fill approximately one page.
- Describe the book by answering the following questions: What type of book is it? What is the purpose of the book? Who is the main intended audience of the book? What is the particular perspective of the author?

*Part 2 – Evaluate the book (1 - 1 ½ pages of the final book review)*

Discuss the extent to which the author succeeds in fulfilling the purpose of the book. Along the way, note the particular strengths and weaknesses of his argument as you see it.

- Evaluate the quality of the evidence that the author uses to support his thesis. Were you convinced by his argument? Why or why not?
- Is the method of the author logically sound? Does he handle the evidence in a manner that adequately supports his argument? Why or why not?
- Comment on the overall structure and organization of the book. Was this effective? Why or why not?
- Indicate how the author's perspective and method influences his purpose, argument, and conclusions.
- Explain how the author's intended audience influences his purpose and choice of topics.

4. Using the outline you have created, write a 3-4 page review. Make sure to include your name on the first page of the review. A title page and outline is not necessary.