



GRACE COMMUNION
SEMINARY

BI520 New Testament Survey

Short Syllabus

Instructor: Michael Morrison, PhD

Course description

This course gives students an overview of the New Testament documents: the authors, dates, places, genre, structure, and themes. Attention is given to individual documents, and how the documents work together for canonical unity.

To do well in this course, we expect that you will need to spend about 11-12 hours each week, for 12 weeks.

Required textbooks

Burge, Gary M., Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green. *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament Within Its Cultural Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009. ISBN [0310244951](#). 480 pages. Approximate price for a new book: [Amazon](#), \$38. [Third party sellers](#) on Amazon, \$28.

DeSilva, David A. *New Testament Themes*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2001. ISBN [0827225113](#). 160 pages. Very good copies available for \$10.

Marshall, I. Howard. *A Concise New Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008. ISBN [0830828788](#). 304 pages. Amazon, \$26. Very good copies on [bookfinder.com](#) sell for less than \$10.

The New Testament. About 300 pages. Use a modern translation, such as the NRSV, NIV, ESV, or NET. Do not use a paraphrase (e.g., *The Message*, *The New Living Translation*, *The Voice*, etc.).

Please obtain the required textbooks before the class begins – you may need to order them before you register. To find the lowest prices, you may find it helpful to use www.bookfinder.com. ISBN numbers above are linked to bookfinder.

Recommended resources

We recommend a series of introductory paperbacks:

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014. 304 pages. Previous editions are also good.

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002. 448 pages.

Fee, Gordon D., and Mark L. Strauss. *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007. 170 pages.

Student learning outcomes

This course serves to support to first GCS student learning objective: Explain the revelation of the Bible in its historical and cultural setting as it relates to God, Jesus Christ, and salvation, and its application for faithful living today. Through this course, students will be able to...

1. describe the circumstances in which each New Testament document was written, as far as is known.
2. trace major themes through the Gospels, epistles, and other writings.
3. describe how the documents are different, yet form a coherent whole.

For more details, see Appendix C.

Requirements and assignments

1. **Read the lectures.** Lectures will be posted each Monday (or Tuesday, when Monday is a holiday) for the first ten weeks. See the *Academic Catalog* for study suggestions. You should look up any scripture references in the lectures.

2. **Participate.** In most courses, part of the learning comes through discussion and interaction with other students. In an online class, this is done through comments posted on a discussion forum. This counts for 10 percent of the final grade. When there is a forum, you should post at least one comment by the end of Thursday, and reply to at least one other student by the end of Sunday.
3. **Read the textbooks.** They total about 1100 pages, or about 95 pages each week. Most students find that it is best to read 20 or so pages each day, rather than trying to read all 95 pages in one day.
4. **Papers.** These count for 60 percent of the final grade. We estimate that you will need about 70 hours to work on these papers – an average of 6 hours per week – some weeks more, some weeks less. Much of this work can be done at the same time as you read the New Testament. For a guide to formatting your papers, see “How to Format a GCS Paper,” posted at <http://www.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23>. Also on that page is a Word template document that contains correct page and paragraph settings.
 - 1) For the first paper, trace a theme through the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, such as the kingdom of God, discipleship, or eating together. This paper is not a string of quotes¹ – it will require some analysis, commentary and synthesis from you. Pick a topic in the first week, and work on your paper each week, as you read Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. Seven pages.
 - 2) The second paper involves tracing a theme through the writings of Paul, John, Hebrews and the General Epistles. This may be the same topic as you used for the first paper, or it may be another, such as the divinity of Jesus, redemption, grace, hope for the future, etc. Seven pages.
5. **One final exam.** This counts for 30 percent of the final grade.

¹ Quotes should not comprise more than 20 percent of the paper. Quotes are rarely self-explanatory – they need some introduction from you to describe their purpose. All quoted material must be marked with quotes and the source must be noted.

Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

Assignment	Hours	Percentage of grade
Reading the syllabus and lectures. 200 pages	20	
Reading discussions and making responses	10	10
Taking the final exam	2	30
Reading the textbooks, 25 pages per hour	30	
Studying for the final exam	6	
Writing research papers, 5 hours per page	70	60
Total – about 12 hours each week	138	100

* This is an estimate for the “average” student. A student who reads quickly may be slow in writing papers, and vice versa. Some students will complete the course requirements in less total time, and some will take more time.

Weekly topics and assignments (tentative)

Week	Topic	Assignments to be done during the week
1	Introduction Intertestamental history and Jewish theology	Introductory forum Burge et al., chapters 1-4 (106 pages)
2	What is a Gospel? The Synoptic Problem Mark	Forum Burge et al., chapters 5-7, 9 (74) Marshall, chapters 1-2 (22)
3	Matthew Interpreting parables The kingdom of God	Forum Burge et al., chapter 8 (14) Marshall, chapter 3 (12) deSilva, chapters 1-2 (62)

4	Luke The historical accuracy of the Gospels	Forum Burge et al., chapter 10 (18) Marshall, chapter 4 (10) de Silva, chapter 3 (36)
5	Acts The narrative genre Introduction to Paul	Paper 1 is due at the end of week 5 Burge et al., chapters 12-13 (38) Marshall, chapters 5-6 (27)
6	Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians The epistolary genre	Forum Burge et al., chapters 13, 16-18 (44) Marshall, chapters 9-11 (34)
7	Galatians - Philemon Pseudepigraphy	Forum Burge et al., chapters 14-15, 19-21 (63) Marshall, chapters (70)
8	Hebrews General Epistles	Forum Burge et al., chapters 22-24 (36) Marshall, chapters 22-26 (41)
9	The Gospel of John The epistles of John	Forum Burge et al., chapters 11, 25 (30) Marshall, chapters 18-19 (25) de Silva, chapter 4 (30)
10	Revelation The apocalyptic genre	Forum Burge et al., chapters 26-27 (34) Marshall, chapters 20-21, 27 (40)
11	study week	Proctored final exam must be taken before noon on Thursday. Send a message for an appointment, or arrange for a third-party proctor.
	Paper 2 is due by the end of week 12.	