

# McMaster Divinity College

NT1A03: New Testament Literature and History

Cynthia Long Westfall, Ph.D.

Phone: Ext. 23605

Email: westfal@mcmaster.ca

Fall 2010 (Term 1)

Wednesdays 8:30-10:20 a.m.

---

## I. Course Description

An introduction to the basic features of New Testament study. This involves acquaintance with the background, nature and content of New Testament documents; the concept of historicity; and an introduction to the central issues in contemporary New Testament scholarship.

## II. Course Objectives— Through reading, lectures, discussion and assignments the following goals are set for the student:

- A. **Knowing**— Grasp the content of the New Testament as a whole within its first century context and in terms of its component parts including its growth and development, major themes and genres
- B. **Being**—The formation of the identity of the ministry and the minister by the study of, meditation on and imaginative participation in the literature of the New Testament
- C. **Doing**—Apply the text to personal discipleship, community and ministry formation and consider strategies for its re-presentation in contemporary contexts

## III. Course Requirements

- A. Class Participation: Student participation in interactive lectures and class and group discussions is expected, based on your readings for the week.
- B. Reading (10%)  
See the Daily Schedule at the end for the precise dates and pages.
  - 1. Read the pages for the required reading prior to class on the due dates, omitting the Exegetical skills and special articles—these are excellent resources but not required (see Daily Schedule at the end). Be prepared to interact with the main issues in group discussions. During class time, reading groups will compose peer evaluation for each individual in the group
  - 2. Reading the entire New Testament and the course text will comprise 10% of your grade, however only a maximum of 85% (value of an A) for 100% of the reading will be possible.
  - 3. At the time of the final (**December 16**), each student will submit a reading report by e-mail, stating the combined percentage of the reading completed on time. Each student needs to do their own math.
- C. Project & Written Assignment
  - 1. Research and Project on the historical Jesus (30%)
    - a. Each student will write a paper on the historical Jesus. You may choose any topic on the historical Jesus to research in order to design a project for a ministry context. It is due **October 27, 8:30**

**a.m.** by e-mail. Late papers lose 2% each day.

- b. Length & style: The research section should be no more than 1,500 words (about 6 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, see the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses: <http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>  
Consult at least 6 academic sources (not including the course text).
- c. Project: Based on your research, briefly outline (1 pg) a study or presentation that you can use in your ministry. This is your opportunity to show how the study of the Bible informs your philosophy and practice of your ministry—whether counseling, youth, pastoral, cross-cultural, academic, etc.
- d. Recommended: Research the *DaVinci Code*'s presentation of the historical Jesus (reading the entire novel would not be a requirement). Approach: The paper would consist of an examination of the book's representation of the historical Jesus, particularly in terms of the sources utilized and the interpretation of the sources. Be sure that you consult the primary Gnostic sources (Gospel of Mary, Gospel of Thomas available online). Utilize the continued interest in the *DaVinci Code* in ministry.
- f. See attachment for criteria for grading.

Optional: Attend the optional *Workshop on research and writing a paper*, Wednesday, Sept 22, 12:30-1:20

## 2. Research Paper (30%)

- a. Each student will write a research paper. **It will be due November 24, 8:30 a.m.** in electronic form. Late papers lose 2% each day.
- b. Length & style: It should approximately 3000 words (about 12 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses: <http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>  
There should be a minimum of 15 sources used in the footnotes and bibliography.
- c. Approach: Choose a topic in New Testament studies from the list below or in consultation with the professor (however, do not overlap material with your paper on the historical Jesus).  
Some aspect of New Testament era (Roman, Greek, Jewish) culture or customs (e.g. marriage, Slavery, Roman law, dress)  
Josephus, the Jewish historian  
Formation of the NT Canon\*\* (but consult with the professor first before proceeding)  
Pseudonymity and the NT Writings  
Synoptic Problem and Source Criticism  
Textual Criticism  
Parables and Preaching of Jesus  
Meaning of the Kingdom of God in the Gospels  
The Formation and Care of Congregations in Acts or Paul  
The Delay of the Parousia in Paul or the General Epistles  
Typology & Symbolism  
Structure of an NT book  
Exegesis of an NT problem passage

- d. See attachment for criteria for grading

E. Final Examination (30%)

- a. The examination is scheduled for **December 16** during class time. The main purpose of the final examination is to help the students master basic knowledge of the Bible, identify major themes, and see the big picture.
- b. The final will consist of 105 points:  
Short essays (40), short answer and objective questions (60), and the books of Bible (5)
- c. See below for people and places that you will be expected to know for the final
  - (1) You will be asked to identify certain people by filling in the blanks
  - (2) You will be asked to identify certain places on a map
  - (3) You will be asked to identify the book and chapter of key passages
  - (4) You will be asked to list the New Testament books in order

F. Grading Summary

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Reading            | 10% (value of 85 % maximum) |
| 2. Research & Project | 30%                         |
| 3. Research Paper     | 30%                         |
| 4. Final exam         | 30%                         |

All assignments must be completed by the scheduled final to pass the course.

#### IV. Textbooks and Materials

A. **Required**

- 1. deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).
- 2. The New Testament (modern version such as NRSV or TNIV)
- 3. The Greek New Testament (for those with Greek competence). Students with facility in Greek or who are beginning Greek are encouraged to use their Greek Bible.

B. **Recommended**

- 1. The *IVP Bible Dictionary Series* (4 vols.)
- 2. Keener, Craig. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994.
- 3. Access to good maps online or a Bible Atlas including first century Palestine and Jerusalem and the three missionary journeys of Paul.

C. **Textbook Purchase**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

D. **Additional Materials**

- 1. Handouts for lectures and class discussion will be made available during class and/or online at the instructor course link: <http://www.macdiv.ca/students/resources.php> —further information will be provided in class.

2. Procedures and guidelines for assignments will be given in class and/or online.
3. **OPTIONAL WORKSHOP:** Writing a research paper, September 22, 12:30-1:20

## V. Classroom Behavior

### A. Attendance

1. Students should be on time to class or be prepared to offer an explanation to the professor.
2. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.
3. Except in extreme circumstances, more than two absences from class will result in grade penalties; four or more absences from class will result in failure of the course.

### B. Participation

1. Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
2. Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except that which is appropriate in the course outline.
3. Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class.
4. Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class with consequences.

### C. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ [www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php](http://www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php).

### D. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

**\*\*\*\* Disclaimer on Syllabi posted on the web and at the bottom of each syllabus:**

**Please Note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.**

Appointments:

Contact me if I can assist you in any way via E-mail: [westfal@mcmaster.ca](mailto:westfal@mcmaster.ca)

Office hours: TBA

Also available by appointment

## NT1A03 Daily Schedule

DATE	CLASS SESSION	deSilva	New Testament
Sept 15	Introduction to course and the study of the NT		
Sept 22	Context of the Gospels  <i>Workshop on research and writing a paper</i> 12:30-1:20	37-143	
Sept 29	The 4 Gospels & The Historical Jesus Critical methods for the study of the Gospels	145-193	<i>MacClean's</i> , March 31, 2008, pp. 38ff
Oct 6	Narrative, Mark & Matthew	194-297	Mark, Matthew
Oct 13	Synoptic Issues, Luke-Acts	298-390	Luke-Acts
Oct 20	John	391-448	John
Oct 27	The Pauline mission begins Genre of letter/epistle Introduction to Paul Issues emerge <b>Historical Jesus project due 8:30 a.m.</b>	475-554	Galatians vs. James 1 & 2 Thess
Nov 3	Pauline controversy and issues clarified	555-639	1 & 2 Corinthians Romans
Nov 10	The Pauline mission operated from prison	640-732	Philippians Colossians & Ephesians Philemon
Nov 17	Research and Review day		
Nov 24	The torch passes from Paul <b>Research paper due at 8:30 a.m.</b>	733-775	1 & 2 Timothy & Titus
Dec 1	The early church in crisis	776-884	Hebrews. James 1 & 2 Peter & Jude
Dec 8	Ultimate Perspectives on early church problems	449-474 885-931	1,2,3 John Revelation
Dec 16	<b>Final Examination</b> <b>Submit reading report by e-mail</b>		

## **PEOPLE, PLACES AND PASSAGES TO KNOW/LOCATE FOR THE FINAL**

<b>People</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Key Passages</b>
Ananias (1)	Antioch (of Syria)	Matthew 1:18-2:23
Ananias (2)	Antioch (of Pisidia)	Matthew 5-7
Anna	Asia (minor)	Matthew 13
Annas	Athens	Matthew 16:13-20
Apollos	Capernaum	Matthew 24-25
Aquila	Bethlehem	Mark 9:14-32
Barabbas	Bethany	Mark 16:9-20
Barnabas	Caesarea (Maritima)	Luke 1-2
Caiaphas	Colossae	Luke 4:14-30
Cornelius	Corinth	Luke 10
Elizabeth	Crete	John 1:1-18
Eutyclus	Cyprus	John 3
Felix	Damascus	John 11
Festus	Dead Sea	John 13
Gallio	Decapolis	John 14-16 (general content)
Gamaliel	Emmaus	Acts 2
Herodias	Ephesus	Acts 9
Jairus	Galatia	Acts 15
Junia	Galilee	Romans 1:16 & 17; 18-32
John Mark	Italy	Romans 5:12-20
Joseph of Arimathea	Jericho	Romans 8
Judas Iscariot	Jerusalem	1 Corinthians 7
Lazarus	Jordan River	1 Corinthians 12-14 (esp. chap 13)
Levi	Judea	1 Corinthians 15
Lydia	Macedonia	2 Corinthians 4:7-12
Martha	Mediterranean Sea	2 Corinthians 12:1-10
Mary Magdalene	Nazareth	Galatians 3:28
Mary of Bethany	Perea	Galatians 5:22-26
Nathanael	Philippi	Ephesians 5:15-6:9
Nicodemus	Rome	Ephesians 6:1-10
Philip	Samaria	Philippians 2:5-11
Priscilla	Sea of Galilee (Genessaret)	Philippians 4:4
Sapphira	Syria	Col 1:15-20
Silas	Tarsus	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Simeon	Thessalonica	1 Timothy 2:11-15
Simon Magus	Troas	1 Timothy 3:1-12
Simon of Cyrene	Tyre	2 Timothy 2:2
Simon the leper		2 Timothy 3:16
Simon the Pharisee		Hebrews 6:4-8
Stephen		Hebrews 5-10
Theophilus		Hebrews 11
Timothy		James 1:2-8
Titus		James 2:14-26
Zaccheus		1 Peter 4:12-19
Zebedee		1 John 2:16 1 John 3:11-15

Revelation 2-3  
Revelation 17-18  
Revelation 20

10 people and 10 places and 10 passages will be chosen for the exam. For character names and passages, the question will involve a one-phrase description and you will supply the correct name. For places, on blank maps of Israel (for the Gospels list) and the Roman Empire (for the Acts list) you will write in the names at the correct locations.

## CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading of written materials will be based on the following general criteria

Grade Range	Content	Argument	Presentation
90–100 85–89 80–84	Mastery of subject matter; creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationships; exceeds required elements	Clear, logical structure; with comprehensive introduction, persuasive argumentation, and innovative conclusions	Detailed adherence to relevant style for formatting of text, notes, and bibliography; no errors of grammar or syntax; elegant presentation
77–79 73–76 70–72	Above-average grasp of principles and concepts, and their inter-relationship; completion of all required elements	Coherent structure and consistent argumentation; well-stated introduction and conclusion	General adherence to relevant style and format; few errors of grammar or syntax
67–69 63–66 60–62	Adequate understanding of theoretical foundations; minimal completion of required elements	Rudimentary structure; minimal introductory and concluding statements	Significant errors of grammar, syntax, or style
57–59 53–56 50–52	Low level of comprehension; required elements incomplete or missing	Lack of coherence or structure in argumentation; no introduction or conclusion	Abundant grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors
0–49%	Inability to grasp basic concepts; required elements missing	Incomprehensible or illogical structure and argumentation	Failure to follow stylistic guidelines; incomprehensible syntax