

# McMaster Divinity College

NT 1A03: New Testament Literature and History

Cynthia Long Westfall, Ph.D.  
Phone: 905-525-9140 x23605  
Email: westfal@mcmaster.ca

Fall 2009 (Term 1)  
Mondays 3:30-5:20 p.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, each student will submit a reading report, stating a percentage of the reading completed on time.
- C. Project & Written Assignment
  - 1. Research and Project (30%)
    - a. Each student will write a paper on the *DaVinci Code*'s presentation of the historical Jesus (reading the entire novel is not a requirement). It is due **October 26, 3:30 p.m.** in electronic form. 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 Mac Style Guide. Consult at least 6 academic sources and the primary Gnostic sources (Gospel of Mary, Gospel of Thomas available online).  
*An optional workshop for researching and writing a paper may be offered TBA.*
  - c. Approach: The paper consists 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. The project involves how to utilize the interest in the *DaVinci Code* for ministry, focusing on your particular area or interest of 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. Project: Based on your research, briefly outline (1 pg) a study or presentation that you can use in your ministry.
  - e. *Alternative:* With permission, you may choose another current hot topic on the historical Jesus such as the Gospel of Judas, or the Jesus Seminar.
  - f. See attachment for criteria for grading.
2. Research Paper (30%)
- a. Each student will write a research paper. **It will be due November 23, 3:30 p.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.  
*An optional workshop for researching and writing a paper will be offered on Wednesday, September 24, 12:00-1:20.*
  - c. Approach: Choose a topic in New Testament studies from the list below or in consultation with the professor.  
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  
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 7** 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%                         |

#### 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. McDonald, Lee Martin and Stanley E. Porter. *Early Christianity and its Sacred Literature*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000.
2. Throckmorton, Jr., Burton H. *Gospel Parallels. A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. 5th ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992.
3. Porter, Stanley E and Lee Martin McDonald. *New Testament Introduction*. IBR Bibliographies. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
4. Evans, Craig A. and Stanley E. Porter. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
5. Frank, H. T. *Hammond's Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Rev. ed. Maplewood, NJ: Hammond, 1997.

##### 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 WORKSHOPS:** Writing a research paper, TBA

## 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.

**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:

Mon 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Wed 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Thurs 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Also available by appointment

## NT1A03 Daily Schedule

| <b>DATE</b> | <b>CLASS SESSION</b>                                                                           | <b>deSilva</b>     | <b>New Testament</b>                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sept 14     | Introduction to course and the study of the NT                                                 |                    |                                                                           |
| Sept 21     | Context of the Gospels                                                                         | 37-143             |                                                                           |
| Sept 28     | The 4 Gospels & The Historical Jesus<br>Critical methods for the study of the Gospels          | 145-193            | <i>McLean's</i> , March 31, 2008, pp. 38-                                 |
| Oct 5       | Narrative, Mark & Matthew                                                                      | 194-297            | Mark, Matthew                                                             |
| Oct 12      | <b>Thanksgiving</b>                                                                            |                    |                                                                           |
| Oct 19      | Synoptic Issues, Luke-Acts                                                                     | 298-390            | Luke-Acts                                                                 |
| Oct 26      | John<br><b>DaVinci project due 3:30 p.m.</b>                                                   | 391-448            | John                                                                      |
| Nov 2       | The Pauline mission begins<br>Genre of letter/epistle<br>Introduction to Paul<br>Issues emerge | 475-554            | Galatians vs. James<br>1 & 2 Thess                                        |
| Nov 9       | Pauline controversy and issues clarified                                                       | 555-639            | 1 & 2 Corinthians<br>Romans                                               |
| Nov 16      | The Pauline mission operated from prison                                                       | 640-775 (skim)     | Philippians<br>Colossians & Ephesians<br>Philemon<br>1& 2 Timothy & Titus |
| Nov 23      | <b>Research paper due at 3:30 p.m.</b><br>The early church in crisis                           | 776-884            | Hebrews. James<br>1 & 2 Peter & Jude                                      |
| Nov 30      | Ultimate Perspectives on early church problems                                                 | 449-474<br>885-931 | 1,2,3 John<br>Revelation                                                  |
| Dec 4       | Classes end                                                                                    |                    |                                                                           |
| Dec 7       | <b>Final Examination</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                        |
| Eutychus            | 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                    |
| Salome              | Syria                       | Col 1:15-20                        |
| Sapphira            | Tarsus                      | 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18            |
| Silas               | Thessalonica                | 1 Timothy 2:11-15                  |
| Simeon              | Troas                       | 1 Timothy 3:1-12                   |
| Simon Magus         | Tyre                        | 2 Timothy 2:2                      |
| Simon of Cyrene     |                             | 2 Timothy 3:16                     |
| Simon the leper     |                             | Hebrews 6:4-8                      |
| Simon the Pharisee  |                             | Hebrews 5-10                       |
| Stephen             |                             | Hebrews 11                         |
| Theophilus          |                             | James 1:2-8                        |
| Timothy             |                             | James 2:14-26                      |
| Titus               |                             | 1 Peter 4:12-19                    |
| Zaccheus            |                             | 1 John 2:16                        |
| Zebedee             |                             | 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<br>85–89<br>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<br>73–76<br>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<br>63–66<br>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<br>53–56<br>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                                                                            |