

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

New Testament Theology

NT-720 (3 units)

Fall 2006 @ MBBS: Fresno

Tuesday 6:00-9:00 PM

Aug. 29 to Dec. 12, 2006

No class on Oct. 10 (Module week)

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Note: *This course is offered in two formats: “credit with grade” or “credit without grade” (see below for details). Students opting for the “credit without grade” option must make application and be approved by the Registrar’s deadline (seven weeks from the start of the semester); otherwise the regular “credit with grade” format will be assumed.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the major theologies and themes of the New Testament. The goal is not primarily to master a theological system. It is rather to learn how to think biblically and theologically about crucial issues addressed within the New Testament and relevant for the church in mission today. *Prerequisite: 21 units of seminary studies including BI-505 and OT-720, or permission of instructor.*

COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

Traditionally, *NT Theology* has been organized in one of three ways: topically (e.g., Guthrie), historically (e.g., Wrede, Bultmann), or under one over-arching theme, like *Heilsgeschichte* or salvation-history (e.g., Ladd, Morris). To optimize the benefits of these three (and avoid some of their pitfalls), we will experiment with G.B. Caird’s “conference table” model. In this model, the writers of the NT are each invited to speak to the issues that they themselves raise. As the “mic” is passed from one NT writer to the next, our aim is to hear the unity that reverberates through their different theologies, as well as the “symphonic effect” produced by the diversity of their theological expressions. In the back-and-forth dialogue between the members of the NT conference, “space” is created within which successive faith communities are empowered by the Spirit of the risen Christ to do their own theological thinking and appropriation, embodying the subject matter to which the NT gives witness. While the risks of misappropriation are ever present in such an enterprise, the promise of God’s presence continues to propel each Christian community forward, equipping them with the discernment skills needed to faithfully represent the Kingdom of God before the “watching world” and thereby to invite its participation in God’s mission.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through a variety of activities (i.e., textbook readings, written assignments, and class discussions), students are invited to engage personally and critically the New Testament witness to God’s activity in our world. At the completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Articulate and explain the central message of the New Testament writings, both in their diversity and in their unity (*Knowledge Objective*).
2. Identify and navigate the methodological issues involved in constructing a New Testament theology—historical development, philosophical presuppositions, symbolic world, Christian experience, theological framework, etc. (*Skills Objective*).
3. Confess and appropriate the New Testament witness, in its assigned role within the Christian Bible, as the living guide for the faith and life of the Christian community—as opposed to a timeless “catalogue” of theological propositions (*Values Objective*).
4. Interact with the various theological proposals on specific issues and then formulate personal convictions regarding the theological reflection that best *extends* the New Testament witness into the life of the church in our contemporary context. While personal resolution may be achieved on many issues, the aim is to establish useful strategies for the ongoing challenge of working toward clarity on those that are currently unclear (*Skills Objective*).

MBBS PROGRAM GOALS

This course contributes to the larger goals of the Seminary program in that it will help the student to:

1. Discern with greater precision the subject matter to which the biblical text gives witness, both its foreignness as well as its power to draw, to claim, and to transform life (*Biblical Formation*).
2. Engage in the theological task of exploring ways that the symbolic world out of which the biblical text emerged can inform, form, and reform the cultural norms which shape our present faith community (*Ecclesial Formation*).
3. Nurture interpersonal and personal formation by interacting with those (scholars, instructors, and fellow classmates) who represent viewpoints that differ from one’s own, and by integrating those insights that are useful (*Character Formation*).
4. Develop skills in sound biblical exegesis and theological interpretation for preaching, teaching, social advocacy, personal enrichment, and our life together (*Ministry/Mission Formation*).

TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCES

A contemporary translation of the Bible that aims at “dynamic equivalence” (e.g., *NRSV*, *TNIV*, *NIV*) is required. For comparison, it is often useful to consult more literal translations (e.g., *NASB*) as well as the single-translator versions that are more paraphrastic (e.g., Peterson’s *Message*). This kind of comparative study can be facilitated by the use of either a “parallel” Bible (e.g., *The Precise Parallel New Testament* [Oxford, 1995], *The Contemporary Parallel New Testament* [Oxford, 1998]) or a Bible software program (e.g., *Bible Works*, *WordSearch*, *Logos*, *Quick Verse*, *PC Study Bible*, *Accordance*).

Reading the following three textbooks is required. They are available for purchase @ Pacific Bookshop (or through Amazon.com, new or used) and on two-hour reserve @ *Hiebert Library*. Each textbook has a particular genre: *NT Introduction* (Johnson), *NT Theology* (Caird), and *Systematic Theology* (Kraus).

Caird, George B, compiled and edited by L.D. Hurst. *New Testament Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* revised edition (with CD ROM). Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1986, 1999, 2002.

Kraus, C. Norman. *God our Savior: Theology in a Christological Mode*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991.

In addition to the above textbooks, the literature on *NT Theology* is extensive ranging from “conservative” to “liberal” and all points in between. A partial list of significant works available in English follows below. Each is on two-hour reserve @ *Hiebert library*.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. K. Grobel, vol.1 & 2. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951, 1955.

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981.

Kümmel, Werner Georg. *The Theology of the New Testament*, trans. J.E. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1973.

Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised by D. Hagner. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974, 1993.

Morris, Leon. *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.

Neill, Stephen. *Jesus Through Many Eyes: Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.

Strecker, Georg. *Theology of the New Testament*, completed by F.W. Horn, trans. M.E. Boring. New York: W. de Gruyter, 2000.

Theological Dictionaries and Encyclopedias are a useful place to begin when researching a topic. Not only do they give concise information, they often point to the significant literature on that topic. All of the following are housed in the *Reference Section* of the *Hiebert Library*.

Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. D.N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992 [REF BS 440.A54].

Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, ed. W.A. Elwell. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996 [REF BS 440.E78].

New Dictionary of Theology, eds. S.B. Ferguson, et. al. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988 [REF BR 95.N38].

The Encyclopedia of Christianity, eds. E. Fahlbusch, et. al. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999 [REF BR 95.E8913].

The New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary, ed. L. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994 [REF BS 491.2.N484]

The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology, eds. T.D. Alexander, et. al. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000 [REF BS 440.N437].

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, eds. F.L. Cross, et. al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997 [REF BR 95.08].

COURSE DESIGN

NT Theology is designed to be a course taken near the end of the student's program. The idea is to provide a space for students to do summative work integrating the wide variety of formational experiences that have been part of their seminary study program. Of special interest, is to build on the biblical foundation that students have established in *OT Theology*. In order to promote these aims, the format of the course will follow a "seminar style" with a combination of lecture and discussion.

Students in both formats, "credit with grade" and "credit without grade," participate in all the same weekly activities, reading and writing. **The difference between the two formats is in the final project.** The "credit with grade" students complete a traditional research paper exploring a particular topic (explained below), while the "credit without grade" students complete a shorter theological reflection paper on a particular topic (also explained below).

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision)

Aug. 29 (Meeting #1) *Introduction to New Testament Theology*

- introduce course aims, objectives, methods, and expectations
- review status of *NT Theology* to date
- assess the three main models for doing *NT Theology*
- outline parameters for establishing a viable *NT Theology*—one that deals with the diversity (i.e., the theologies of the NT writings) *and* the unity (i.e., the theological themes driving the NT witnesses)
- present the "Conference Table Model" of *NT Theology*

-post-meeting assignment:

- *review study questions at the end of section and then read Johnson pp. 1-105 (80 pages)
- *read Fuller, Reginald, "New Testament Theology," in *The New Testament and its Modern Interpreters*, Scholars Press, 1989, pp. 565-579 (to be distributed in class)
- *prepare Johnson Reading #1 and email it to me by Tuesday, Sept. 5 @ 9 AM

Sept. 5 (Meeting #2) *New Testament Theology as a Historical Discipline*

- differentiate between a historical model and historical method
- reconstruct the symbolic world out of which the NT writings emerged
- review the early Christian experience and confession and interpretation
- propose a "center" for *NT Theology*

-post-meeting assignment:

- *review study questions at the end of section and then read Johnson pp. 107-153; 259-340 (96 pages)
- *prepare Johnson Reading #2 and email it to me by Tuesday, Sept. 12 @ 9 AM

Sept. 12 (Meeting #3) *Part One—The Theologies of the NT—Paul*

- review the debate about the "center" of Paul's theology
- reconstruct the early Christian proclamation

- propose a “center” for Paul’s theology
- sketch the theology that drives the early letters in the Pauline corpus (Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Galatians)

-post-meeting assignment:

- *review study questions at the end of section and then read Johnson pp. 343-452 (83 pages)
- *prepare Johnson Reading #3 and email it to me by Tuesday, Sept. 19 @ 9 AM

Sept. 19 (Meeting #4) Part One—The Theologies of the NT—Paul (continued)

- trace Paul’s modification of traditional apocalyptic theology
- explore the christological implications of Paul’s apocalyptic/eschatological center
- continue sketching the theological themes developed in the later letters of the Pauline corpus (Romans, Captivity letters, and Pastoral letters)

-post-meeting assignment:

- *review study questions at the end of section and then read Johnson pp. 155-257 (83 pages)
- *prepare Johnson Reading #4 and email it to me by Tuesday, Sept. 26 @ 9 AM

Sept. 22 General topic area for research paper due (“credit with grade” students)

Sept. 26 (Meeting #5) Part One—The Theologies of the NT—The Synoptic Tradition

- sketch the theological themes in Mark, Matthew, and Luke-Acts

-post-meeting assignment:

- *review study questions at the end of section and then read Johnson pp. 455-518 (46 pages)
- *prepare Johnson Reading #5 and email it to me by Tuesday, Oct. 3 @ 9 AM

Oct. 3 (Meeting #6) Part One—The Theologies of NT—The other Canonical Witnesses

- sketch the theological themes in Hebrews, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude, and James

-post-meeting assignment:

- *review study questions at the end of section and then read Johnson pp. 521-632 (82 pages)
- *prepare Johnson Reading #6 and email it to me by Tuesday, Oct. 17 @ 9 AM

Oct. 10 (No class—Module week)

Oct. 17 (Meeting #7) Part One—The Theologies of the NT—The Johannine Tradition

- sketch the theology of the Gospel of John, 1, 2, & 3 John, and Revelation
- discuss the subject of NT canon and its implications for the community that accepts the NT writings as authoritative for faith and practice (i.e., an introduction to Part Two of our course)

-post-meeting assignment:

*read Caird pp. 1-73 (2½ hrs) and Kraus pp. 13-40 (1 hr)

Note: Students are asked to read both Caird and Kraus carefully, spending at least the time indicated on each reading, but then choose one author to engage in their written assignments with highlights and questions (see explanation below).

*prepare and email Reading #7 by Tuesday, Oct. 24 @ 9 AM

Oct. 24 (Meeting #8) Part Two—Theological Themes—Christology

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Caird, pp. 1-73

-sketch the issues in Christology—the person and the work of Jesus of Nazareth

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Kraus, pp. 13-40

-post-meeting assignment:

*read Caird pp. 74-135 (2 hrs) and Kraus pp. 41-67 (1 hr)

*prepare and email Reading #8 by Tuesday, Oct. 31 @ 9 AM

Oct. 27 Bibliography and outline for research paper due (“credit with grade” students)

Area of interest for theological reflection paper due (“credit without grade” students)

Oct. 31 (Meeting #9) Part Two—Theological Themes—Revelation

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Caird, pp. 74-135

-sketch the issues involved in Revelation—the church’s use of scripture

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Kraus, pp. 41-67

-post-meeting assignment:

*read Caird pp. 136-178 (1½ hrs) and Kraus pp. 68-101 (1 hr)

*prepare and email Reading #9 by Tuesday, Nov. 7 @ 9 AM

Nov. 7 (Meeting #10) Part Two—Theological Themes—Theology

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Caird, pp. 136-178

-sketch a biblical theology of God

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Kraus, pp. 68-101

-post-meeting assignment:

*read Caird pp. 179-237 (2 hrs) and Kraus pp. 102-130 (1 hr)

*prepare and email Reading #10 by Tuesday, Nov. 14 @ 9 AM

Nov. 14 (Meeting #11) Part Two—Theological Themes—Anthropology

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Caird, pp. 179-237

-sketch some of the issues in developing a biblical anthropology

-process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Kraus, pp. 102-130

-post-meeting assignment:

*read Caird pp. 238-278 (1½ hrs) and Kraus pp. 131-160 (1 hr)

*prepare and email Reading #11 by Tuesday, Nov. 21 @ 9 AM

Nov. 21 (Meeting #12) Part Two—Theological Themes—Pneumatology

- process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Caird, pp. 238-278
- list the NT characterization of the Holy Spirit and instruction on spiritual gifts
- process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Kraus, pp. 131-160

-post-meeting assignment:

- *read Caird pp. 279-344 (2¼ hrs) and Kraus pp. 161-186 (1 hr)
- *prepare and email Reading #12 by Tuesday, Nov. 28 @ 9 AM

Nov. 28 (Meeting #13) Part Two—Theological Themes—Ecclesiology

- process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Caird, pp. 279-344
- explore NT metaphors for the church
- test a missional model for the church—the church as “Outpost of God’s Kingdom”
- process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Kraus, pp. 161-186

-post-meeting assignment:

- *read Caird pp. 345-425 (2⅔ hrs) and Kraus pp. 187-223 (1¼ hrs)
- *prepare and email Reading #13 by Tuesday, Dec. 5 @ 9 AM

Dec. 5 (Meeting #14) Part Two—Theological Themes—Eschatology

- process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Caird, pp. 345-425
- review the three basic definitions of eschatology
- list the issues remaining regarding “the end” and “final judgment”
- process and discuss questions emerging from the reading of Kraus, pp. 187-223

-post-meeting assignment:

- *work on final project (due Dec. 19)

Dec. 12 (Meeting #15) Invitation to Ongoing Theological Reflection

- our last meeting takes place @ 6130 E. Butler and begins at 7:00 PM (map provided).
- note: we are meeting one hour later than usual.
- we’ll have dessert together and continue with our discussion and reflection.
- share how your Theological Vision of NT has grown over the semester and the questions that remain.
- complete Course Evaluations.

Dec. 19 Final project due

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXPECTATIONS

The assignments are designed to promote the course and degree objectives listed above. There are three learning activities for 3 units (weekly readings/classes, weekly writing, and a final project). The expectations, minimum time requirements and the percentages of the final grade for each activity are listed below. First, I list my expectations of students and then, second, I list what students can expect from me.

I expect that students will:

1. Prepare for, attend, and participate in class discussions. Consult the *Course Schedule* (above) for the texts to be read and the assignments to be completed. Be prepared to contribute to the class discussion with your discoveries, evaluation, and reflection. This is an important part of the learning experience. After all the assignments have been graded, your final score will be adjusted down 3% for each “un-made-up” absence.

Class participation time requirement = 14 mtgs × 3 hrs/mtg = 42 hrs

Textbook Readings time requirement = 1,099 pp × 2 min/p = 37 hrs

2. Complete thirteen Weekly Reading assignments. During the first seven weeks you will interact with Johnson (readings #1 through #6). Then during the last seven weeks you will read both Caird and Kraus each week, but you will write your Weekly Reading assignment on one (your choice) of the two authors (i.e., Readings #7 through #13).

The **first part** of each Weekly Reading assignment is to list (½ page) the insights derived from the author. Here you identify the features, themes, or ideas that “struck a chord” with you and that you would like to process further. Explain why this is so. Pay careful attention to how the author’s presentation interacts with the “place” you are currently occupying (i.e., ministry, personal formation, community development, church, etc.).

The **second part** of each Weekly Reading assignment (½ page) is to interact with the author. Identify at least **two issues** on which you would like further clarification or about which you would like to challenge the author. Put each issue in the form of a question. Include a several-sentence paragraph of rationale for each question, explaining why it is significant to you.

The **third part** of the Weekly Reading assignment (only for Readings #7 through #13) is to include at the bottom of the page a one-line report of your reading. Tell me whether you invested the amount of time indicated in the post-meeting assignment, reading *both* of the assigned sections, yes or no.

The Weekly Reading assignments are **due at 9 AM on the morning of our Tuesday evening meeting.** You may email or fax your assignment to me.

Each assignment will be graded at one of four levels: “excellent” (≥ 9 pts), “good” (≥ 8 pts), “passable” (≥ 7 pts), or “unsatisfactory” (< 7 pts). Assignments rated “good” or better will give evidence of careful and thorough reading (with personal engagement) and of thoughtful and engaging questions—this is my “baseline” expectation. Assignments will lose a point, if submitted after the Tuesday 9 AM deadline and be worth a maximum of 4 pts regardless of assessment, if submitted after our weekly meeting begins on Tuesday evening.

In addition, Weekly Reading assignments #7 through #13 will earn an additional point, if both Kraus and Caird readings are satisfactorily completed. To earn the point, the time invested must meet the minimum time allotment for reading (2 min/p) and be completed as per course

schedule. This reading is a course expectation and must be completed, even if the additional points are not earned.

The Weekly Reading assignments will be returned to you at the start of each meeting and will form a major part of our in-class discussion. I may call on you during our meeting time to restate the major points of the texts under discussion (to be sure there is good understanding) and to present one or more of your questions (to launch a constructive discussion).

Weekly Reading Assignments time requirement = 13 pp × 1 hr/p = 13 hrs
 Value of final grade (Weekly Reading Assignment) = $13 \times 10 \times 6/13$ points = 60%
 Value of final grade (Reading time for Kraus and Caird) = 7×1 point = 7%

3. Write a final project paper exploring a topic that interests you. Choose a topic (see below) and then complete the assignment in the format that you have selected, “credit with grade” or “credit without grade” (criteria follow the list of topics).

- a) Are there other ways to God? How is the particularity and universality of Christ conceptualized? (Christology).
- b) How does the Cross/Resurrection deal with sin? How do the NT metaphors for atonement function (Christology).
- c) Who is Jesus? How can a Jewish male be the world’s savior? How can I relate to him? (Christology).
- d) What is the nature and function of Scripture? What is its relation to Truth? (Revelation).
- e) What is the relation between OT and NT? Does the NT “trump” the OT? How is this collection of “voices” and “theological visions” read as Scripture? (Revelation).
- f) What is the significance of a four-fold Gospel? Can (should) they be harmonized? (Revelation).
- g) What is the “center” of Paul’s theology? How does it relate to Jesus’ theology? (Revelation).
- h) How much of God is known in creation? What is the role of creation? What is the future of creation? (Revelation).
- i) What is the gender of God? How does our image (or the Bible’s image) of God shape our thinking and behavior? (Theology proper).
- j) What is unchanging about God? Does God need human beings? How is God in control? What is the relationship between God’s Sovereignty and human freedom (Theology proper).
- k) What does it mean to be human? Male? Female? How does Jesus reshape what it means to be human? (Anthropology).
- l) What is the purpose and character of the church? What is its relation to the world and to God’s reign? (Ecclesiology).
- m) What is spiritual warfare? What is the nature/reality of demons and spirits (Pneumatology).
- n) What are the “last days”? When do they begin? How long do they last? (Eschatology).
- o) What is God’s wrath? What is God’s judgment? Is there eternal punishment? (Eschatology).
- p) Other issues may be selected, if they are first cleared with the instructor.

*****Option one: credit with grade***

Write a traditional research paper (20 pages, double-spaced, 6000 words) on the topic selected.
 The project could be conceptualized in several ways: by theme/book, as in exploring a topic in a

particular NT book (e.g., The Christology of Colossians, Salvation in Hebrews, or the Church in Ephesians, Luke's theology of family). Alternatively, you may want to explore a particular issue from the perspective of several NT books or the NT as a whole (e.g., Final Judgment in the NT, Atonement Metaphors in the NT, Images of the Church in the NT, Principalities and Powers in Paul's letters). The key thing is to choose something about which you could get excited. Explore texts and themes that could supplement (though not the same as) your work on your Senior Seminar, Thesis, or other class. Check with me if you have any concerns about your proposed topic.

Once you have a topic that interests you, explore the NT writer's understanding of the concept selected. Compare the theologies of different writers, if others also address this theme. Exegete the key texts involved in the writer's development of the theme (see *Appendix A* for a review of key exegetical considerations). Survey the possible assessments or interpretations that scholars have advocated. What are their relative strengths and weaknesses? Be sure to move up the "taxonomy of thinking" by exercising your critical and evaluative assessment skills. What is the most viable view on the topic? Give your rationale. Also, be sure to identify those areas that remain uncertain for you about the topic and what you intend to do about them.

Note: To earn a grade in the "A" range, (among other things) papers will give evidence of additional readings in Dictionaries (e.g., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, InterVarsity's NT Dictionary Series), Encyclopedias (see list in the Textbook and Resources section), monographs, and academic journals (use ATLA to locate these resources). Format your paper using the appropriate academic form and cite your sources correctly. See *Appendix B* for grading criteria. A sample research guide will be distributed to help organize your thinking and writing.

Submission of general topic area is **due on Friday, Sept. 22.**

Submit a bibliography that lists resources (dictionaries, journal articles, theologies, monographs, etc.) that you have consulted (or plan to) during your research. Include an outline sketching how you plan to develop your paper. I will either give you the "green light" to carry on or suggest needed revisions. The Bibliography and Outline is **due on Friday, Oct. 27.**

The Research Paper is **due on Tuesday, Dec. 19.** You may email or fax your paper to me.

Research Paper writing time requirement = 20 pp × 1.5 hrs/p = 30 hrs

Research Paper reading time requirement = 200 pp × 2 min/p = 7 hrs

Value of final grade = 33%

Total activity/assignment load = 129 hrs

*****Option two: credit without grade***

Write a theological reflection paper (8 pages, double spaced, 2400 words) on the topic selected.

Your paper must include each of the following sections:

- ✓ A statement of the question and/or issue which you are addressing.
- ✓ A discussion of the "alternative viewpoints" (i.e., Which are the positions defended by Christians? How are the various options defended biblically?). Consult Theological Dictionaries

and Encyclopedias (see list in *Textbooks and Resources*). Then move to other resources like monographs, journal articles, and websites. Cite correctly the sources that you use.

✓ A statement concerning what is at stake (i.e., Why does it matter which position is held? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the various options?).

✓ A defense of the position you hold on this issue at this time, indicating *what* you believe and *why* you hold this position (biblical support, theological reflections, etc.).

✓ A statement of what still remains uncertain for you with regard to this topic and your follow-up intentions (i.e., What do you plan to do? Will you simply “live with unsettledness”? Why? Will you work toward further clarity on these remaining issues? How?).

✓ A list of “works cited.” Include dictionaries, articles, monographs, and websites that you consult and cite.

To earn “credit” for this assignment each of the above criteria must be met satisfactorily. At least ten sources must be consulted and cited in your paper, including two dictionary articles, two journal articles, two monographs, and two websites. Unsatisfactory papers will be returned for revision and resubmission. If the project is not completed satisfactorily by the time grades are due the Registrar, a final grade of “no credit” will be assigned.

Submission of general topic area is **due on Friday, Oct. 27.**

The Theological Reflection Paper is **due on Tuesday, Dec. 19.** You may email or fax your paper to me.

Research Paper writing time requirement = 8 pp × 1.5 hrs/p = 12 hrs

Research Paper reading time requirement = 90 pp × 2 min/p = 3 hrs

Value of final grade = 33%

Total activity/assignment load = 107 hrs

It is only fair and right that you have equally high expectations of me as well. My commitment to you is that I will endeavor to:

1. Join you in our mutual aim of encountering more deeply the disturbing and inspiring presence of God to which Scripture gives witness. While I function as “supervisor” in guiding your reading and writing, I am committed to participate with you as a “co-journeyer” in our common quest to bring/nourish life and healing in a broken world—which is the mission of God.

2. Foster a learning community atmosphere during our sessions where ideas can be discussed and explored freely without fear of ridicule or attack. Many people have thought deeply on the subject of *NT Theology*. While each of these “visions” or “constructions” is not equally valid or defensible, each deserves to be heard and explored within the evaluative process.

3. Provide careful and helpful feedback. I believe that it is pedagogically most helpful to have constructive criticism throughout the learning process. Therefore, I am open to visiting with you about your writing projects while you are working on them so that you can test, clarify, and

expand your ideas. Stop by my office and let's talk. I also aim to give useful feedback on the papers that you turn in and to do so in a timely fashion.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

Friday	Sept. 22	General Topic due ("credit with grade")
Friday	Oct. 27	Bibliography and Outline due ("credit with grade")
Friday	Oct. 27	General topic due ("credit without grade")
Tuesday	Dec. 19	Final project due ("credit with grade" and "credit without grade")

SUMMARY OF GRADING SCHEME

Weekly reading assignments.....	13 × 10 × 6/13 →	60%
Final project Paper.....	→	33%
Reading reports for Kraus and Caird (#7 through #13).....	7 × 1 →	7%
Deduction for un-made-up classes (see "notes" below).....	→	

		100%

To earn 3 units of "credit" for this course, all of the assigned work must be completed as described above and the student's overall average must be ≥ 70%.

NOTES

1. Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to the professor or consult the Registrar or Academic Dean.

2. Evaluation. Each of the assignments has specific grading criteria (see descriptions above).

All assignments must be completed to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.

Please note that "student work will be evaluated by two standards: a) by what is considered the appropriate level of graduate performance, and b) by comparison with work submitted in a given class" (see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

The letter grade conversions follow the MBBS Grading Template: A (100-94%), A- (93-90%), B+ (89-87%), B (86-83%), B- (82-80%), C+ (79-77%), C (76-73%), C- (72-70%), and F (69-0%) (see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

The performance expectations are as follows: "A 'B' grade is the baseline. A 'B' grade means the student is doing satisfactory work. The 'B+' or higher grade indicates that the student has exceeded the baseline performance standard. The 'C' grade indicates that the student has not achieved the baseline level" (see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

3. Credit/No Credit. Only students who apply and are approved to take the course on a “Credit/No Credit” basis may choose the “credit without grade” track with its particular option for the final project. To earn a “pass” or “credit” these students must complete each assignment as described above, earn an overall average of $\geq 70\%$, and have no un-made-up absences (see notes below on Attendance).

4. Due dates. Students are expected to submit assignments on time. Late Weekly Reading Assignments will be penalized as outlined above in the description of the assignment. Late research papers will be graded down 2% for each day (or part thereof) after the due date on Dec. 19, 2006 (see *Appendix B*). However, penalties may not apply to students who have a documented emergency that prevents them from submitting the assignment on the due date. Check with me to see if alternative arrangements can be made. You may send your assignments to me by fax or email.

5. Attendance. Students are expected to attend and participate in class. Each class is important. Each absence will result in a 3% deduction from the final grade. However, students may propose various ways to “make up” an absence and cancel the deduction (taping, viewing, and reporting on missed lecture, doing extra reading and writing, etc.). Please see me for approval regarding your proposal for how to “make up” an absence. No “un-made-up” absences are permitted in order to earn a passing grade for those approved to take the course on a Credit/No Credit basis.

6. Formatting specifications. Any of the three standard citation styles is acceptable (Chicago, APA, MLA). Choose one and follow it consistently. Consult *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Hendrickson, 1999) which is in the Reference section of the *Hiebert Library* (Ref PN 147.S26) for examples of how to cite dictionary articles, journal articles, monographs, commentaries, books in series, websites, etc. An online version of the *SBL Handbook* is available at http://www.sbl-site.org/Publications/Publications_PublishingWithSBL.aspx (click on *Student Supplement for SBL Handbook of Style* under the “Resources” section). Slade’s, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses*, 11th ed. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000) is also a useful guide.

APPENDIX A: EXEGETICAL/HERMENEUTICAL TEMPLATE

Note: The following guidelines are an adaptation of those I learned from my mentors, Elmer Martens, Allen Guenther, Tim Geddert, Brevard Childs, and Richard Hays.

1. THE DESCRIPTIVE TASK: READING THE TEXT CAREFULLY

a) *Define the text.*

- *Read the text in its larger context (this may mean reading several chapters or the whole book).
- *Identify the type(s)/genre(s) of literature represented in the text (e.g., narrative, discourse, exhortation, poetry, apocalyptic, gospel, law, wisdom, etc.).
- *Identify the beginning and end of the text (i.e., textual unit or *pericope*) to be exegeted (clues: shifts in grammar, genre, scene, and theme; certain literary conventions; etc.).

b) *Establish the text.*

- *Read the text in multiple translations or translate from the original language (parse key words

and analyze syntax).

*If possible, assess manuscript variants (if any) and decide on the “best” reading (give rationale).

*Decide on a “working translation” that best coheres with the meaning of the text as it is emerging in your interpretation (give rationale).

c) *Analyze the structure of the text.*

*Identify and label the major subdivisions using literary and grammatical clues in the text (i.e., use functional labels like: introduction, rationale, assertion, illustration, instruction, warning, conclusion, etc.).

*Outline the text, using indentation and spacing (etc.) to graphically show relationships at the “paragraph level” and, if possible, at the “sentence level” (i.e., grammatical and semantic diagramming).

d) *Exegete the text.*

*Determine the meanings of key words and phrases (use Strong’s numbers, if necessary, along with concordances, lexicons, and theological wordbooks to find the meaning of the underlying Hebrew or Greek word in your text).

*Determine the relationship of the parts to the whole (outline the flow of the argument or narrative).

*Locate the text in its historical, literary, and social context (use a Bible dictionary).

*State the central issue, message, or thrust of the text, in a sentence.

2. THE SYNTHETIC TASK: PLACING THE TEXT IN CANONICAL CONTEXT

a) *Explore the theology of the text.*

*Compare with parallel canonical texts (i.e., other related texts in the Christian Bible) and note differences and similarities.

*Discern the coherent theological message that holds together, but does not reduce, the canonical tensions.

*State the underlying theological vision that drives the text, in a sentence.

b) *Test your theological interpretation with others.*

*Consult commentaries, monographs, journal articles, dictionary articles, etc. (use ATLA’s “scripture search” feature to find publications on your text).

*Discuss your findings and interpretation with others in your faith community.

*Examine alternative interpretations and make revisions and modifications, as needed.

3. THE HERMENEUTICAL TASK: RELATING THE TEXT TO THE PRESENT

a) *Evaluate the temporal/cultural gap between the textual world and the contemporary world.*

*Research the effect the text has had in other Christian communities over time and across cultures.

*Explore ways to “bridge the gap” so that the text’s contemporary effect, while differing, could still bear a “familial resemblance” to its effect in other faith communities.

b) *Articulate the on-going message of the text.*

*Decide on the text’s “mode of discourse” (e.g., rule, principle, paradigm, or symbolic world)

and how it will function for contemporary appropriation. Give rationale.

*Discern the role (if any) of other sources of authority (e.g., tradition, reason, experience, etc.) and how they will contribute to “building a bridge that spans the gap.”

*Construct imaginative analogies and metaphors that could place your contemporary faith community within the theological vision expressed by the text. (Note: The aim here is not to make the text relevant to us, but to be “drawn into” the text so that it reshapes the norms of our present faith community.)

4. THE PRAGMATIC TASK: LIVING THE TEXT

a) *Appropriate the message of text in ways that resonate with its theological vision (i.e., “walk over the bridge that spans the gap between the textual world and our own”).*

b) *Identify spheres of life and particular circumstances where the theological truth(s) of the text (i.e., its subject matter) could be embodied and actualized. (Note: While advocating for changed “actions” is good, these may be a sham or at most superficial, unless transformation is rooted at a deeper level—in a changed “way of seeing” ourselves, others, and God.)*

c) *Develop and test pragmatic applications in your life and in your faith community so that the theological message of the text is proclaimed in an invitational and clear way.*

d) *Surround the whole process, from reading the text to its application, in prayer.*

APPENDIX B: EVALUATION TEMPLATE

EVALUATION of Research Paper for _____ (student)

_____ APPROPRIATENESS (re: compliance with assignment criteria)

irrelevant/unrelated/improper [1 <-----> 20] suitable/fitting/apropos

_____ ARGUMENTATION (re: development of topic/arrangement of critique)

rambles/disjointed/illogical [1 <-----> 20] reasonable/coherent/sequential

_____ CLARITY (re: style of writing)

broken/obscure/repetitive [1 <-----> 20] flowing/lucid/succinct

_____ COMPREHENSIVENESS (re: coverage of topic or depth of analysis)

superficial/sketchy/shallow [1 <-----> 10] thorough/extensive/deep

_____ CREATIVITY (re: reader reception)

ordinary/average/routine [1 <-----> 10] novel/fresh/innovative

_____ FORM (re: spelling, grammar, diction, and citation conventions)

incorrect/sloppy/inappropriate [1 <-----> 10] correct/accurate/appropriate

_____ CARE (re: quality of presentation)

untidy/illegible/distracting [1 <-----> 10] tidy/legible/impressive

_____ /100 = _____ (reader)

Note: Late assignments will be penalized 2% for each day (or part thereof) after due date.