

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

# New Testament Theology

NT-720 (3 units)

Fall 2007 @ MBBS: Fresno

Thursday 1:00-4:00 PM

Aug. 30 to Dec. 13, 2007

No class on Oct. 11 (Module week)

No class on Nov. 22 (Thanksgiving)

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## 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: Old Testament Theology (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 "microphone" 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, an "interpretive 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. The Johnson and Kraus texts are available for purchase @ Pacific Bookshop (or through Amazon.com, new or used) and on two-hour reserve @ Hiebert Library.

- Isaak, Jon. *New Testament Theology: Extending the Table*. Draft of manuscript to be distributed to students electronically week by week.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. Revised edition. Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1986, 1999.
- Kraus, C. Norman. *God our Savior: Theology in a Christological Mode*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006.

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. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951, 1955.
- Caird, George B. *New Testament Theology*. Compiled and edited by L.D. Hurst. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- 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.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *New Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
- 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: Walter de Gruyter, 2000.
- Thielman, Frank. *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.

Theological Dictionaries are a useful place to begin when researching a topic. Not only do they give concise information, the bibliographies at the end of each article often point to the significant literature on that topic. See the *Reference Section* of the *Hiebert Library*.

- Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Ed. D.N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992 [REF BS 440.A54].
- Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Ed. Kevin Vanhoozer. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005 [REF BS 440.D495].
- The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. Ed. G. Buttrick. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962 [REF BS 440.I63].
- The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Ed. T.D. Alexander. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000 [REF BS 440.N437].
- The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. Ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006.

## 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.

## COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision)

### **Aug. 30--Meeting #1--*Introduction to Biblical Theology***

- introduce aims, objectives, methods, format, and expectations for the course
- compare and contrast Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology
- discuss opportunities and challenges of Biblical Theology

#### -post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 1-22 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Johnson pp. 1-91 (66 pages) and write Reading Report #1; email it to me by Wednesday, Sept. 5 @ 2 PM

### **Sept. 6--Meeting #2--*Introduction to New Testament Theology (NTT)***

- review the status of NTT to date
- assess the three main models for doing NTT
- outline parameters for establishing a viable NTT--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 NTT
- discuss questions emerging from Johnson reading

#### -post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 23-47 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Johnson pp. 93-153 (48 pages) and write Reading Report #2; email it to me by Wednesday, Sept. 12 @ 2 PM

### **Sept. 13--Meeting #3--*NTT as a Historical and Theological 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 *NTT*
- discuss questions emerging from Johnson reading

#### -post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 48-88 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Johnson pp. 259-452 (142 pages) and write Reading Report #3; email it to me by Wednesday, Sept. 19 @ 2 PM

### **Sept. 20--Meeting #4--*The Theological Contribution of 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 letters in the Pauline corpus
- trace Paul’s modification of traditional apocalyptic theology
- explore the christological implications of Paul’s apocalyptic/eschatological center
- discuss questions emerging from Johnson reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 89-125 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Johnson pp. 155-257 (83 pages) and write Reading Report #4; email it to me by Wednesday, Sept. 26 @ 2 PM

**Sept. 27--Meeting #5--*The Contribution of the First Three Evangelists***

- trace the theological vision of the Synoptic Gospel writers (Mark, Matthew, and Luke)
- sketch the theological themes emerging from these vision statements
- discuss questions emerging from Johnson reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 126-161 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Johnson pp. 521-592 (58 pages) and write Reading Report #5; email it to me by Wednesday, Oct. 3 @ 2 PM

**Oct. 4--Meeting #6--*The Contribution of the Johannine Traditions***

- trace the theological vision of the writings in the Johannine Traditions (Gospel of John, 1, 2, & 3 John, and Revelation)
- sketch the theological themes emerging from these vision statements
- discuss questions emerging from Johnson reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 162-194 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Johnson pp. 455-518; 595-619 (64 pages) and write Reading Report #6; email it to me by Wednesday, Oct. 17 @ 2 PM

**Oct. 11--No class--Module week**

**Oct. 18--Meeting #7--*The Contribution of the Remaining Canonical Witnesses***

- trace the theological vision of the remaining canonical witnesses (Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter)
- sketch the theological themes emerging from these vision statements
- discuss questions emerging from Johnson reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 195-213 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Kraus pp. 13-40 and write Reading Report #7; email it to me by Wednesday, Oct. 24 @ 2 PM

**Oct. 19--Position Paper due**

**Oct. 25--Meeting #8--Christology: The Person and Work of Messiah Jesus**

- sketch the issues in Christology--the person and the work of Jesus of Nazareth
- discuss questions emerging from Kraus reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 214-226 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Kraus pp. 41-67 and write Reading Report #8; email it to me by Wednesday, Oct. 31 @ 2 PM

**Nov. 1--Meeting #9--Revelation: God's Self-Disclosure**

- sketch the issues involved in Revelation--the church's use of scripture
- discuss questions emerging from Kraus reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 227-240 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Kraus pp. 68-101 and write Reading Report #9; email it to me by Wednesday, Nov. 7 @ 2 PM

**Nov. 8--Meeting #10--Theology: God-Talk and Imagination**

- sketch a biblical theology of God
- discuss questions emerging from Kraus reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 241-248 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Kraus pp. 102-130 and write Reading Report #10; email it to me by Wednesday, Nov. 14 @ 2 PM

**Nov. 15--Meeting #11--Anthropology: What it Means to be Human**

- sketch some of the issues in developing a biblical anthropology
- discuss questions emerging from Kraus reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 249-255 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Kraus pp. 131-160 and write Reading Report #11; email it to me by Wednesday, Nov. 28 @ 2 PM

**Nov. 22--No class--Thanksgiving**

**Nov. 29--Meeting #12--Pneumatology: God's Living Presence**

- identify the NT characterization of the Holy Spirit and instruction on spiritual gifts
- discuss questions emerging from Kraus reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 256-326 and prepare summary, comments, and questions

\*read Kraus pp. 161-186 and write Reading Report #12; email it to me by Wednesday, Dec. 5 @ 2 PM

**Dec. 6--Meeting #13--Ecclesiology: *The Gathered Messianic Community of God***

- explore NT metaphors for the church
- test a missional model for the church--the church as “Outpost of God’s Kingdom”
- discuss questions emerging from Kraus reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Isaak pp. 266-280 and prepare summary, comments, and questions
- \*read Kraus pp. 187-223 and write Reading Report #13; email it to me by Wednesday, Dec. 12 @ 2 PM

**Dec. 13--Meeting #14--Eschatology: *Picturing the Completion of Creation***

- review the development of afterlife in Judaism
- outline three basic views of biblical eschatology
- reflect on the issues remaining regarding “the end” and “final judgment”
- discuss questions emerging from Kraus reading

-post-meeting assignment:

- \*complete research paper (due Dec. 14)
- \*complete course evaluation

**Dec. 14--Research Paper due**

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXPECTATIONS**

The assignments are designed to promote the course and degree objectives listed above. Satisfactory completion of the four learning activities--class participation, reading reports, position paper, and research paper--is required in order to earn 3 units of credit. 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. I will call on you to summarize and reflect on the readings. You will be evaluated on your preparation, analysis, articulation, participation, and leadership. This is an important part of the learning experience and a large part of your grade.

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

Textbook Readings time = 951 pp × 2 min/p = 32 hrs

Value of the final grade = 40%

2. Complete ten of thirteen Reading Reports. The **first part** of each Reading Report is for noting the insights derived from the reading (½ page). Here you identify the features, themes, or ideas that “struck a chord” with you or disturbed you. 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 Reading Report is for interacting with the reading (½ page). 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 Reading Reports are **due at 2 PM on Wednesday, before our Thursday meeting.** Please email your report to me using the assignment address <nt720@mbseminary.edu>.

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 Wednesday 2PM deadline and will not be graded, if submitted after our meeting begins on Thursday.

The Reading Reports will be returned to you just after the break and will form the agenda for our in-class discussion. I will call on you or a classmate to present one or more of your questions.

Reading Report writing time = 10 pp × 1 hr/p = 10 hrs  
Value of final grade = 10 × 10 × 1/5 = 20%

3. Write a position paper (5 pages, double spaced, 1500 words) exploring a topic that interests you. See *Appendix A* for a sampling of possible topics.

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 (see list in *Textbooks and Resources*). Then check other resources, if needed. 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 about those points that remain uncertain?).
- ✓ A list of “Works Cited.” Include dictionaries, articles, monographs, and websites that you consult and cite.

To earn 10 points for this assignment (i.e., meet the benchmark expectations), each of the above criteria must be met satisfactorily and you must submit your paper on time. Late submissions will be penalized ½ a point per day (or part thereof). Unsatisfactory papers will be returned for revision and resubmission. See *Appendix C* for evaluation rubric.

Position Paper writing time = 5 pp × 1.5 hrs/p = 8 hrs

Position Paper additional reading time = 90 pp × 2 min/p = 3 hrs

Date due: Oct. 19

Value of final grade = 10%

4. Write a research paper (20 pages, double spaced, 6000 words) exploring a NTT topic that interests you. 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 a topic about which you could get excited. See *Appendix A* for more ideas. Explore texts and themes that could supplement (though not the same as) your work on your Senior Seminar or Thesis. 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 B* for a review of key exegetical considerations). Research the 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 judgment skills. What is the most viable view on the topic? Give your rationale.

Note: To earn a grade in the "A" range, (among other things) papers will give evidence of three things: 1) a well-conceived project with a tight line of argumentation, 2) extensive research with citations from Dictionaries (see list in *Textbooks and Resources*), monographs, commentaries, NT Theologies, and academic journals (use ATLA to locate these resources), and 3) a well-formatted paper using appropriate academic form with sources correctly cited. See *Appendix D* for evaluation rubric. A sample research guide will be distributed to help organize your thinking and writing.

Late Research Papers will be graded down 2% for each day (or part thereof) after the due date.

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

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

Date due = Dec. 14

Value of final grade = 30%

Total activity/assignment load = 132 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 *NTT*. 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	Oct. 19	Position Paper due
Friday	Dec. 14	Research Paper due

### SUMMARY OF GRADING SCHEME

Class participation.....	40%
Reading Reports..... $10 \times 10 \times 1/5 =$	20%
Position paper.....	10%
Research paper..... $100 \times 3/10 =$	30%
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	100%

### 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 me or consult the Registrar.

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

All written 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. This course is not available on a pass/fail basis.

4. Due dates. Students are expected to submit assignments on time. Late Reading Reports, Position Papers, and Research Papers will be penalized as outlined above in the description of the assignment. 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.

5. Attendance. Students are expected to attend and participate in class. Each class is important and each one’s contribution is needed to optimize the learning experience of the class. Absences will be noted and each one will result in a 3% drop in your overall Participation grade.

6. Extra credit. Up to 6 % can be earned and added to your final grade by doing extra work related to NTT. You could do a book review, write another paper, etc. If this interests you, draft a proposal and talk with me about your potential extra-credit project.

7. 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](http://www.sbl-site.org/Publications/Publications_PublishingWithSBL.aspx) (click on *Student Supplement for SBL Handbook of Style* under the “Resources” section).

8. Submitting assignments. If you would like to receive handwritten comments on your written assignments, submit a hard-copy version of your paper. You may send me an electronic version of your paper (i.e., an email attachment), however, I will not print your paper. I will read your work online and complete the evaluation rubric only (*Appendix C or D*), placing it in your mailbox at school.

9. Course evaluations. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.

## Appendix A: Sample Paper 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.

## Appendix B: 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.*

### A Literary-Historical-Canonical Method

#### 1. THE DESCRIPTIVE TASK: READING THE TEXT CAREFULLY

- a) *Define the parameters of the textual unit or pericope (i.e., the text) under consideration.*
- \*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 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) *Restate the message of 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 Bible dictionaries, commentaries, monographs, journal articles, etc.).

\*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 C: Evaluation Rubric for Position Paper

EVALUATION of *Position Paper* for \_\_\_\_\_ (student)

1. Flow of argument:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
2. Theological engagement:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
3. Formatting skills:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
4. Citation conventions:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____

\_\_\_\_\_ You meet the benchmark expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_ You must revise your paper giving attention to:

- Flow of argument: \_\_\_\_\_
- Theological engagement: \_\_\_\_\_
- Formatting skills: \_\_\_\_\_
- Citation conventions: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised paper is due \_\_\_\_\_. Late penalty is ½ point per day (or part thereof).

\_\_\_\_\_ (reader)

## Appendix D: Evaluation Rubric for Research Paper

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.