

## NT 501 Reading the New Testament Missionally

April 2–May 7; Also April 13  
Tuesdays 6:30–10:00 pm;  
Saturday 10:00–2:00 pm (trip to Penn Museum)  
Spring 2019

Last revised: February 7, 2019

**Missio exists to produce missional Christian leaders—men and women who incarnate the story of Jesus with humility and authenticity and who communicate the story with fidelity to Scripture, appreciation of the Christian tradition, and sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of postmodern culture.**

### INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: by appointment via Skype, phone, or in person in my office in the MacRae House (to the left when you enter and up the stairs). Contact me by email or voice mail to schedule an appointment.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Evangelical biblical scholarship is gradually realizing that a missional theology does not begin with the Great Commission in Matthew 28. The heart of God is missional from the beginning. The Bible serves God's mission of redeeming a lost creation in Jesus Christ. Failure to read the Bible in that light is to misread it and ultimately to misapply it. In this course students will learn to approach the New Testament from a missional perspective which appreciates its rootedness in and relevance to first-century culture, its complex story-like unity with the Old Testament, and its multifaceted witness to the surprising and climactic nature of Jesus and his work. Students will discover in the New Testament a God whose missional hallmark is creative and costly faithfulness and who calls us to embody that same trait.

### PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE PROFESSOR

I am convinced that if we care about understanding the life and mission of Jesus, we need to care about the Scriptures he loved. If we want to be excited about the climax of the biblical narrative, we need to examine Jesus' teaching from within his own Jewish context instead of through our 21st century lenses tinted with 21st century assumptions. If we are going to understand the birth and development of the early church, we need to try to understand who the Apostles were and how they interpreted their Scriptures—the Old Testament.

~ Cyndi Parker

### SYLLABUS

This syllabus provides an overview of the course and course requirements. Students are responsible to know the content of the syllabus and follow the course schedule. Questions about the syllabus or schedule should be emailed to the professor promptly and will generally be answered in an email to the entire class so that everyone is informed.

This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the term and will be followed as closely as possible. However, the professor reserves the right to modify, supplement, and make changes as course needs arise.

**PROGRAM GOALS AND COURSE OBJECTIVES**

PROGRAM GOALS	COURSE OBJECTIVES
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Students will cultivate grace-based missional lives increasingly characterized by the fruit of the Spirit, and love for God and others.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage new ideas with humility, and be open to opportunities to grow in wisdom and obedience to God by (re)aligning our story to HIS story.</li> <li>2. Develop professional behavior towards one’s work and towards one’s student community and towards one’s professional community.</li> <li>3. Wrestle collectively with challenging texts and ask of each other how to be leaders who orient people towards God.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Goal 3:</b> Students will cultivate knowledge of the Bible and ability to humbly interpret &amp; apply it in light of history, culture &amp; genre.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Recognize the significance of geography, politics, and religion in understanding the NT. Identify geographical context of the narratives, locate places on a map, and connect people, place, and time.</li> <li>5. Describe the missions of Jesus, the early church, and Paul as they are both products of and challenges to their first century Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts.</li> <li>6. Articulate a missional biblical theology that traces both the powerful continuities and the surprising discontinuities between the Old and New Testaments.</li> </ol>

**COURSE ASSESSMENTS AND HOMEWORK HOURS**

ASSESSMENTS AND HOMEWORK HOURS*	RELATED OBJECTIVES	PERCENT OF GRADE	ESTIMATED TIME
Attendance, participation	All	15	n/a
Reading	1, 2, 4, 5		45
Response paper to Neusner	1, 2, 5, 6	20	10
Movie Critique	2, 4, 5, 6	20	5
Final exam	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	25	20
Total estimated time on homework		100%	80 hrs.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY IN ADDITION TO CLASS SESSIONS*	RELATED OBJECTIVES	ESTIMATED TIME
Videos	1, 4, 5	5
Guided Reading	1, 4, 5, 6	3
Online Forums	1, 2, 3	3.25
Total		11.25 hrs.

\*These required assignments involve instruction comparable to what occurs in the classroom (lectures, presentations, and instructor-led activities such as discussions, debates, and collaborative work. They should be completed on the due dates listed in this syllabus.

**Note:** All assignments must be submitted by the due date listed in the syllabus and no later than the final due date for the course listed in this syllabus by permission of the instructor. After the final due date, faculty cannot grant students permission to submit late work. See “Completion of Course Work” below.

## REQUIRED READING AND MATERIALS

**NOTE:** Hyperlinks to Amazon.com are placed here for your convenience. Please be aware that there may be other websites (by publishers or by other ebook publishers) that may sell the same item for cheaper prices. Please shop around! Check out [bookdepository.com](http://bookdepository.com) (free delivery) and [bookbutler.com](http://bookbutler.com) (comparative prices). In addition, some sites offer ebook rental prices for a limited number of weeks. These may also be cost effective. Just be sure to buy the right edition and recognize some of the smaller sellers may not deliver books in a timely fashion.

### Books:

English Bible

Neusner, Jacob. *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000.

Young, Brad. *Paul the Jewish Theologian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1997.

### Articles:

Levine, Amy-Jill. “Misusing Jesus: How the church divorces Jesus from Judaism.” *The Christian Century*, December 1, 2006: 20–25.

Sheeley, Steven M. “From ‘Scripture’ to ‘Canon’: The Development of the New Testament Canon.” *Review & Expositor* 95, no. 4 (September 1, 1998): 513–522.

### Map:

Two maps with marking guides will be available in class. Please bring \$5 to give to the professor for the 2 maps.

### Video:

A New Testament movie of your choice to critique.

Video interviews will be posted on e-Campus

## RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Bates, Matthew. *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.

Bailey, Kenneth. *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.

Beitzel, Barry, ed. *Lexham Geographic Commentary on the Gospels*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.

———. *Lexham Geographic Commentary on Acts through Revelation*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017.

Boring, Eugene. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

Hayes, Richard. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016.

———. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. Yale University Press, 1989.

Levine, Amy-Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew*. New York: Harper One, 2006.

Levine, Amy-Jill and Warren Carter. *The New Testament Methods and Meanings*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013.

Miles, Jack. *Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2001.

Richards, Randolph and Brandon J. O’Brien. *Paul Behaving Badly*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016.

Spangler, Ann and Lois Tverberg. *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

Wilson, Marvin. *Our Father Abraham*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989.

Wright, Christopher. *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.

Wright, N.T. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.

———. *New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992.

——. *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.  
Young, Brad. *Jesus the Jewish Theologian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1995.

## COURSE PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

### Attendance Policy and Grades

We have a limited amount of time together in class. I expect all of us to respect each other's time and effort to arrive on time despite our busy schedules. For the sake of professionalism, I will take attendance at the beginning of class. **Participation points will be deducted for every late arrival or missed class. The student is responsible for all material covered in class (even for excused absences!).**

Students are also expected to login to the E-campus course site regularly and participate in the course activities in a timely manner. If you know you are going to be absent from the course site for more than three or four days, please notify the instructor and group members (if applicable) in advance. Nevertheless, recognize that your grade may be lowered for tardiness or absences at the discretion of the instructor.

Attendance in this course constitutes both 1) coming to class and 2) logging in to the E-campus course site and participating in the online or out-of-class activities assigned throughout the course. Students are responsible for reading and familiarizing themselves with the material posted on the E-campus course site throughout the course.

Student usage of the course site is tracked by the E-campus software and monitored by the professor of the course. Students who need to be absent from the course site for three or more days during a discussion forum activity or required web conference should email the professor in advance of the absence (see Attendance Policy and Grades in this syllabus). Students may email the instructor at any time if they have questions about the course.

### Completion of Course Work

*All assignments must be handed in to pass the class.* All course work should be completed by the last day of classes for the term or by the date posted in the course syllabus. Extensions to this time limit will be made only by the academic administration committee. The individual faculty member does not have the authority to grant any extensions of time beyond the last class of the term. Requests for extensions must be made in writing to the committee at least one week prior to the last day of classes. Variance forms for this purpose are available in the academic office or on BTS' website. All requests should specify the reasons for the extension and the length of the extension desired. Requests are not automatically granted.

*Late Work:* Assignments submitted after the time specified on the syllabus will automatically be deducted **3 points** for every late day. All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

*Online submissions:* Assignments that are requested for submission online should be formatted in the following way: Heading with Student's name, Professor's name, Assignment's Name. One inch margins. Single spaced. Use Times New Roman 12pt. font (or something similar). Present your paper in a professional way.

*Printed paper submissions:* Assignments should include a heading on the first page with the Student's name, Professor's Name, Assignment's Name. Do not use a title page. The paper should be single space with 1" margins and 12pt. Times New Roman font. Please number the pages and include a Bibliography.

*Rubrics:* All rubrics for submitted assignments will be posted online. Also note the added articles for helpful hints for writing successful essays.

*Plagiarism:* In this class we follow the seminary's policies on plagiarism as outlined in the Student Handbook. Remember, if you use someone else's words, put them in quotations and cite the source in a footnote. If you refer to someone else's idea, even if you summarize, you must cite the source. **Do not cut and paste full paragraphs.** Each essay is to be your own work and not a long series of quotes from others.

*Disability Accommodation:* Biblical Theological Seminary complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you believe you have a condition which will require accommodation, please refer to the BTS Student Handbook and follow the procedures outlined. Please review this syllabus carefully and make an appointment with the professor to discuss any assignments for which you believe you will need accommodation according to the arrangements made with the dean.

*Student Laptop Security Statement:* BTS recognizes the need for computer use throughout the entire educational process today. Computers equipped with Internet access and applications that help deliver information and knowledge are vital. Students are encouraged to bring their electronic computing devices to campus to facilitate their course work and supplemental activities. Given the current climate of online dangers such as viruses, malware, phishing scams, and other related risks it is critical to secure all such devices regardless if they are being used on campus or not. Please take the appropriate steps to safeguard the security of your own electronic devices to protect the integrity of the student network on campus and provide a safe computing environment for everyone to use. Contact the Academic Office if you have any questions about this statement.

## ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS AND GRADING

### Online Forums

Discussion questions about a given subject are due according to the calendar below. This is not a formal writing assignment (can be more like a journal entry). The paper is your chance to pause and think about how our readings are relevant to Christian thought and formation. Papers receive a “Pass+” for thoughtfulness and for references to the biblical text *and to our reading material*, a “Pass” for a “fine” answer that is completed on time, “Pass-” for a late assignment, and a “Fail” for not turning the reflection paper in.

**Response to Neusner** submitted in print: Students will write a well-organized and charitable, 4-5 pp. response to Jacob Neusner, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus*. *As you read the book*, be sensitive the following questions:

1. How is Neusner challenging my understanding of Torah and Jewish adherence to it?
2. Where does Jesus differ from the Law or at least from the Jewish understanding of the law?
3. Is the Jewish understanding of the law obviously wrong? How? Where? How can I respond from the OT itself (i.e., without presupposing Jesus in my arguments)?
4. (MOST IMPORTANTLY) What does the discussion with Neusner tell me about the relationship of Jesus and the NT to the OT (and to Judaism)? What does it reveal about a properly Christian hermeneutics?

In your paper, be sure to **explain what Neusner thinks that Jesus is doing in his teaching ministry**, and why he decides to “say a polite no, and walk away.” In addition to answering this general question, **engage one or two of the particular arguments** Neusner has with Jesus (e.g., over the Sabbath, honoring parents, being perfect, etc.). In conclusion, include **some general reflections**: if Neusner has made some valid points about how to read the Torah and how to read Jesus’ challenge to it, what does that mean for **our understanding of the person and work of Jesus AND of the Bible?** (*Remember*, this is a course on how to read [parts of] of the Bible, not a course on apologetics!)

### Movie Critique: (700-1,000 words)

View a movie based on the Bible and then write a movie review *as a biblical scholar*. This means the goal of the review is not to assess the quality of the movie as a cinematic experience (as we know, many Bible movies are terrible), but rather to comment on it from a scholarly perspective. You are writing your review as a Bible expert; therefore, your primary concern is not how ‘good’ the movie or book is, but how it relates to the Bible itself. Thinking critically about the movie and reflect on questions of representation (particularly of race and ethnicity, though also of gender) and of power.

Based on what we have learned in class, is the film historically accurate? Is it faithful to the text? Which text(s)? Does it incorporate non-canonical sources? What changes does the movie or book make? How does it represent everyday life? How does it represent race and/or ethnicity (intentionally or unintentionally)? How does it represent gender and/or sexuality (intentionally or unintentionally)? How do you as a scholar/expert view this movie? Some suggestions are:

*The Nativity Story* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2006)

*The Last Temptation of Christ* (dir. Martin Scorsese, starring Willem Defoe 1988)

*The Passion of the Christ* (dir. Mel Gibson, 2004)  
*Jesus Christ Superstar* (dir. Norman Jewison, musical, 1973)  
*The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964)  
*Son of God* (dir. Christopher Spencer, starring Diogo Morgado, 2014)  
*Last Days in the Desert* (dir. Rodrigo Garcia, 2016)  
*Paul, Apostle of Christ* (dir. Andrew Hyatt, 2018)

**Final Exam:** the final will be available online after our final class on May 7. Students must finish before May 11 at 11:59 pm. It is a closed note, closed Bible, closed book exam. It will cover material from the lectures, videos, maps, and readings. A review sheet will be posted online.

*\*At the end of the exam, you will state the percentage of the NT reading you completed for class.*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY	IN CLASS	HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK
April 2		<b>In the Beginning...</b>	Read Matthew and Mark. Watch/complete first map marking guide Start Neusner book (complete before April 16)
April 9	Bring 1st marked map to class	<b>Son of God</b>	Read John in one sitting. Forum #1 Read Levine's article
Saturday, April 13	Forum #1: Are these the same books?	<b>Trip to Penn Museum</b>	Read Acts Watch video and respond on Forum #2
April 16	Forum #2: TBD	<b>Death and Resurrection</b>	Complete the Response to Neusner's book Read Romans in one sitting Watch/Complete second map marking guide Start Young book (complete before May 7)
April 23	<b>Responses to Neusner (work due even though there is no class)</b>	NO CLASS: Easter Break	Read 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians Work on the Movie Critique
April 30	Bring 2nd marked map to class	<b>Who is Paul and what did you do with Jesus?</b>	Read Philippians to Revelation Work on the Movie Critique Forum #3 Read Sheeley's article
May 7	Movie critique Forum #3: Response to Paul as a Jewish Rabbi	<b>Acts/Epistles and other writings? Exam Review</b>	Final Exam: Due by <b>Saturday, May 11 at 11:59 pm.</b>

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACADEMIC POLICIES

1. **Academic Policies:** Students are fully responsible to know and follow all seminary rules, regulations, and deadlines published in the Academic Catalog and all requirements concerning their degree programs. See the e-campus home page.
2. **Course Syllabus:** Students are fully responsible to know and fulfill the requirements stated in the course syllabus. Students should email the professor about issues related to course work and deadlines during the course. See above under “completion of course work” for policies on course extensions.
3. **E-campus Course Site:** Students are fully responsible for course content and materials that are posted on the course site. Students are encouraged to check the course site frequently during the course. Students who experience difficulty accessing or using the E-campus should email [helpdesk@biblical.edu](mailto:helpdesk@biblical.edu) and include their student ID# in their correspondence.
4. **Academic and General Integrity:** As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to integrity and Christ-likeness in all areas of life. What this means in the academic realm is that the completion of all assignments and assessments are to reflect your own work. Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will receive a grade of zero on the assessment and will follow the process outlined in the Academic Catalog. See the Academic Catalog for more information on plagiarism and policies related to cheating and plagiarism.

## GRADING SYSTEM

To remain in good academic standing, a student must maintain the grade point average designated for his or her program.

A	4.00	93.0–100	Excellent
A-	3.67	90.00–92.9	
B+	3.33	87.0–89.9	
B	3.00	83.0–86.9	Good
B-	2.67	80.0–82.9	
C+	2.33	77.0–79.9	
C	2.00	73.0–76.9	Fair
C-	1.70	70.0–72.9	
D+	1.30	67.0–69.9	Poor
D	1.00	63.0–66.9	
D-	0.70	60.0–62.9	
F	0.00	0.0–59.9	Failing