



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

BIB820—Cultural Backgrounds of the Biblical World Spring, 2011

Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available at http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential_Information. Additional technical support information can be found at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Master of Divinity Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

Instructor Information

Professor: Joseph Coleson, Ph.D.

Email: jecoleson@nts.edu

Office: (816) 268-5482

Office Hours: Tues., 1:30-4:30 p.m., or by appt.

Catalog Description

A thematic course focusing on various aspects of the multiple cultural settings of both the Old and the New Testaments. Its purpose is to provide students with insight into the cultural conditions and conditioning of the biblical text.

Course Narrative & Rationale

All Christians view the Bible as instructional and authoritative, especially in matters of faith and living by faith. However, a complicating factor arises in our efforts to interpret and appropriate the instruction of the Bible to the modern life of faith. The Bible in its various parts was written in (and originally for) at least three other cultural settings, namely, ancient Israel/Judah of the Divided Monarchy, the Exilic/Post-Exilic Jewish community, and the early decades of the church's existence as it established itself in the Greco-Roman/Jewish world of the First Century.

How do we understand these vastly different cultural worlds and their impact on the content and message of the Bible? How do we “translate” these into the several cultural milieus in which we live and serve? These and related questions provide the rationale for offering, and taking, a course in cultural backgrounds. In addition, the study of cultures is fun and interesting because, in the

end, cultures are about people, created in the image of God and the objects of God's infinite love and redemptive purposes. As C. S. Lewis said in another context, there is serious joy here!

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will:

1. Recognize items of cultural significance in the biblical text;
2. Express a general understanding of the features of the various biblical cultures;
3. Use an expanding array of the many resources available for cultural understanding;
4. Begin to interpret effectively, to today's cultures, the various biblical cultures.

(Assignments 1&2)

Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies

While none of these will be realized completely, the following competencies will be enhanced, directly or indirectly, through your participation in this course:

- CN 4, 5, 7, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 27
- CP 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36
- CH 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
- CX 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Required Texts

- Bauckham, Richard, (ed.). *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting, Vol. 4: Palestinian Setting*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1995.
- King, Philip J., and Lawrence E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Meyers, Carol. *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Course Outline and Calendar

Feb. 1 – Course Introduction; syllabus; the book of Ruth, explored culturally

8 – Meyers, *Discovering Eve*

15 – King and Stager, chapters 1-2

22 – King and Stager, chapters 3-4

Mar. 1 – Kings and Stager, chapters 5-6; Epilogue

8 – Bauckham, chapters 1-3

15 – Bauckham, chapters 4-6

22 – Reading and Research Week

29 – Bauckham, chapters 7-9

Apr. 5 – Bauckham, chapters 10-12

12 – Bauckham, chapters 13-15

19 – Seminar presentations

26 – Seminar presentations

May 3 – Seminar presentations and/or course synthesis

Course Assignments & Requirements

1. Seven 600-word expositions constitute seventy percent (70%) of the course grade.

Subjects will be proposed weekly; seven will factor into the course grade. Expositions are to be submitted through the course MOODLE site, and are due at class time (6:00 p.m.) each week. (Course Outcomes: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, variously throughout the course)

2. A final seminar paper and presentation constitutes thirty percent (30%) of the course grade.

A 3,500-4,000-word research/expositional/exegetical paper, with in-class presentation, is the culminating course assignment. The proposed issue/theme/topic is to be cleared with the professor by March 15. The paper is to be submitted through the course MOODLE site, and is due at class time on the day of presentation, April 19, April 26, or May 3.

(Course Outcomes: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4)

All grades will be posted as letter grades; descriptions are included in the *NTS Student Handbook*.

Policy Regarding Late Work

In justice to all participants, no late work can be accepted in this course.

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	39
Reading	49
Writing	47
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	0
Exams & Quizzes	0
TOTAL	135

Method for Submitting Assignments

All assignments should be submitted through Moodle.

Form and Style Expectations

Unless noted otherwise by the professor, all writing assignments should conform to Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing), Eds. Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. University of Chicago Press, 2007

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Course Grading

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies which have been beneficial for the student in the past.