

**Syllabus for
New Testament Theology
BIB750**

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I. Course Description and Objective

Description:

The catalogue describes this course as “a study of the faith affirmations of the New Testament, with special reference to the redeeming grace of God, the person and work of Christ, the new life in Christ, full salvation, the nature of the Church, and the Christian hope” (NTS 2009-10 Catalogue, p. 66). These topics will be an ad-hoc part of the matrix of the classroom discussion and will be addressed in the reading. The class discussions will focus on: (1) examining the way that the death of Jesus is presented in some of the major NT witnesses; (2) considering how this engagement with the NT is related to formulating a theologically adequate understanding of atonement.

Objectives: My overall objective for this class is that you would become a self-consciously theological interpreter of Christian Scripture. More specifically, upon successful completion of the course you will have (R= Requirement related to objective):

1. Demonstrated a basic grasp of the variety of depictions of Jesus’ death in the NT (R1, 2, 7).
2. Demonstrated a rudimentary understanding of the literary, socio-historical, inter-textual/canonical, theological factors (especially large scale hamartiological and soteriological assumptions) that contribute to the way that NT writers and their interpreters assign significance to these depictions of Jesus’ death (R1-5, 7).
3. Demonstrated an ability to reflect on and discuss contemporary atonement issues in a biblically and theologically competent manner (R2-5).
4. Demonstrated an ability to exercise creative theological imagination by reflecting on how your resulting understanding might be embodied in a local church body given the particular challenges facing the Church in North America (R6, 7).
5. Demonstrated an ability to utilize responsibly a NT document or documents to shape the understanding of others with regard to the death of Jesus in an ecclesial setting (i.e., most probably teaching or preaching in a local church or para-church setting; R6).

II. Textbooks Required for Purchase (Other reading will be required but will be available in the NTS library, in Moodle, or online.)

Carroll, John T. and Joel B. Green. *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*. Hendrickson, 1995.

Gunton, Colin. *The Actuality of the Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality, and the Christian Tradition*. New York: T & T Clark International, 2003.

Hooker, Morna D. *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004 (Cheaper at the publisher: http://wipfandstock.com/store/Not_Ashamed_of_the_Gospel_New_Testament_Interpretations_of_the_Death_of_Christ).

McKnight, Scott. *A Community Called Atonement*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.

Park, Andrew Sung. *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2009.

III. Select Recommended Books on NT Theology

Adam, A. K. M. *Making Sense of New Testament Theology: "Modern" Problems and Prospects*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995.

Davis, Ellen F. and Richard B. Hays. *The Art of Reading Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

Marshall, I. Howard. *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004.

Matera, Frank. *New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity*. Louisville/London: WJK, 2007.

IV. Requirements (See Schedule of Topics and Assignments below for more details on the following requirements.)

1. Reading the New Testament. You will read a large portion of the New Testament this semester. The content of the assigned reading and the due date for it is in the Schedule of Topics and Assignments below. By class time on the due date of the reading, you must have posted a statement in the Reading the NT Forum in Moodle saying that you have completed that due date's reading of the NT documents assigned. You may earn up to 80 points in total for this reading. **You cannot "make up" any of this reading. You can only get credit for what you actually read by the due date listed on the Schedule of Assignments below. Because these are basically "give away" points, this is an all or nothing assignment. You do not get credit for partial reading.**

- 2. Weekly Fishbowls.** You may earn up to 180 points by actively participating in weekly “fishbowl” discussions. The “fishbowl” will consist of a designated subset of the class participating “up front” in a seminar discussion/critical analysis of the assigned reading for the day. **I will not simply give these points away because you show up in class.** You must make regular contributions in a way that demonstrates familiarity with, and an understanding of, the assigned topic/reading especially as it relates to particular scripture passages. There will be 9 opportunities for you to participate in fishbowls. You may earn up to 20 points for your participation in each one. See the Schedule of Topics and Assignments below for further details on the assigned readings for the fishbowls.
- 3. Insights from Gunton’s, *The Actuality of Atonement*.** After carefully reading Gunton, briefly describe 20 insights you gained from the book that you consider to be significant. In each case, **first note the insight and then note its significance**. The book has 7 chapters. Make sure you draw at least 2 insights from each chapter **noting the chapter and page number from which you are drawing the insight**. The remaining 6 insights may come from anywhere in the book. If you choose to disagree or question an aspect of the author’s treatment as one of your “insights,” **you must state the basis for your disagreement/question**. This assignment should be 1,000-1,500 words and will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) how well you appear to have understood and interacted with the biblical/theological issues raised by Gunton; (2) your use of correct English; (3) your adherence to length requirements. You may earn up to 60 points for this assignment. You will submit your paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for Gunton. On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. It must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM on Tuesday, February 16. An example of an “A” quality “Insights” assignment from another course will be available for you in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. It will be called “Model Insights Assignment.” My teaching assistant may be grading this assignment.
- 4. Insights from Park’s, *Triune Atonement*.** After carefully reading Park, briefly describe 20 insights you gained from the book that you consider to be significant. In each case, **first note the insight and then note its significance**. The book has two Parts. Make sure you draw at least 5 insights from Part 1. Part 2 has three major sections (beginning on pp. 39, 73, 94 respectively). Make sure you draw at least 2 insights from each of these sections. The remaining 9 insights may come from anywhere in Part 2. For each insight, **note the chapter and page number from which you are drawing it**. If you choose to disagree or question an aspect of the author’s treatment as one of your “insights,” **you must state the basis for your disagreement/question**. This assignment should be 1,000-1,500 words and will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) how well you appear to have understood and interacted with the biblical/theological issues raised by Park; (2) your use of correct English; (3) your adherence to length requirements. You may earn up to 60 points for this assignment. You will submit your paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for Park. On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. It must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM on Tuesday, March 30. An example of an “A” quality “Insights” assignment from another

course will be available for you in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. It will be called “Model Insights Assignment.” My teaching assistant may be grading this assignment.

- 5. Peer Evaluated “Roundtable” Paper.** After reading Scot McKnight’s, *A Community Called Atonement*, you will write a short paper (1,000-1,250 words) in which you compare and contrast Gunton, Park, and McKnight by constructing a fictive roundtable discussion among them. In the paper you should have four sections (about 250 words each): (1) what you imagine Gunton might learn from McKnight and Park and what he might disagree with them on; (2) what you imagine Park might learn from McKnight and Gunton and what he might disagree with them on; (3) what you imagine McKnight might learn from Gunton and Park and what he would disagree with them on; (4) what you imagine might be a consensus that could emerge in their discussion.

On April 27, you must bring a certain number of hard copies of the paper to class with you. (After I know for sure how many people are in the class, I’ll let you know how many you need to bring.) **Only one of these should have your name or any identifying mark on it.** I will split the class up into small groups and each of the small groups will be responsible for evaluating a certain number of papers based on the criteria explained in the paragraph below. Your paper will **not** be evaluated by your own group. The groups will make comments on the paper and give it a written evaluation with a grade. **I reserve the right to assign a different grade (either higher or lower) to the paper if I do not think the paper was graded fairly.** You may earn up to 100 points for the paper and 20 points for your participation in your group’s evaluation of the papers of others.

This assignment will be evaluated based on: 1) how well you appear to have understood and interacted with the arguments of the three authors in the paper (50 points); 2) how well you have critically integrated your other class reading/lectures in your interaction with, and integration of, the arguments of these authors in the paper (40 points); 3) your use of correct English prose (i.e., spelling, sentence and paragraph construction) and adherence to length requirements in the paper (10 points); 4) your ability to give coherent feedback on the papers of others in the group process (20 points).

Note Carefully: Because of the nature of this assignment, I will not accept it late.

- 6. In-Ministry Assignment.** During the semester, you will teach or preach at least once in which the primary subject matter of your lesson/sermon answers the question as to why Jesus dies **and answers it in terms other than those associated with the penal satisfaction** theory of the atonement. You could do this in a local church setting (e.g., preaching, teaching a Sunday School class, a Bible study, etc.) or a para-church setting (e.g., preaching at the Kansas City Rescue Mission, leading a Bible study at the KC Urban Youth Center, etc.). Whatever setting you choose, you must ask someone (preferably a pastor, a person in charge, someone with theological training who is not currently an NTS student, or a professional type person) to fill out an evaluation form and

sign it. The evaluation form can be downloaded from the Course Resources area of Moodle. **I must approve the person you plan to ask ahead of time.** I will use that person's evaluation of your presentation as well as your written sermon, notes, lesson plan, etc. to evaluate this assignment. You may earn up to 50 points for it. It can be done any time this semester **after February 16** but it must be completed with the evaluation and your written materials in my NTS regular mailbox **by no later than Tuesday, April 27 at 4:30 PM CT.**

- 7. Synthetic Essay Exam.** You will write a take-home essay on a question (or questions) that will be made available on Tuesday, April 20. If I approve it, you may write a research paper on some aspect of the death of Jesus instead. The approximate length of the take-home essay should be 3,000-5,000 words and the research paper should be approximately 5,000-6,000. You may earn up to 450 points for this assignment. You will submit your Essay/Paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for "Essay/Paper." On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. Your essay/paper must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:00 AM CT on Tuesday, May 11.

The take-home essay will be a question (or questions) related to the death of Jesus and the ministry implications of the material we've covered in class and in the reading. Hence, to answer it, you will creatively draw on your class notes, all your course reading, and on your own theological reflections in the context of a ministry situation.

Unless you will have regular access to the NTS library or another equivalent theological library, you should **not** consider writing the research paper. As a research paper, it clearly **requires additional research over and above your class resources**. I must approve not only your doing it but also your **topic by no later than Tuesday, April 20.**

As general guidelines for the research paper, follow the instructions given by Joel Green in the document, "Some Comments on Research Papers." It is located in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. **I will assume you have read and followed Green's directions when I grade your paper.** Note carefully: You should begin your research paper with a thesis statement that explicitly states the thesis you intend to argue and return to that thesis statement in your conclusion. While the paper should generally follow Turabian style, you may consult the *SBL Handbook of Style* for proper form for footnotes, abbreviations, etc. You may also use the document entitled "Ripples and Luke 24HBT.doc" located in Moodle in the Course Resources topic areas as a general guide as to how this paper should look in terms of footnotes and style.

Note Carefully: Because grades are due shortly after the due date, I will not accept the exam or research paper late.

V. Summary of Grading Policy

A Word about Grading: Evaluation in this kind of course, by its very nature, involves an element of subjectivity. It involves someone who is an expert in the field making a judgment on the kind of work you produce. That is a part of what you are paying for in this class. The primary factors I take into account in assessing “good solid graduate work,” the sort of work to which I assign a “B” are (1) ability to demonstrate a breadth and depth of understanding of the material engaged; (2) ability to engage this material **in a critical way**; (3) ability to exhibit how the material is related to a larger theological and ecclesial context. If you demonstrate a **consistent** ability to do these things in all your coursework, you can expect to receive a B. If you demonstrate consistent ability to do them **incisively and with excellence**, you can expect to receive an A. If you demonstrate an ability to do these things **often, but not consistently**, you can expect to receive a C. (Hence, I assume that a C means “average,” or “satisfactory” work. It does **not** mean “bad” or “unsatisfactory.”) If you **seldom** demonstrate an ability to do these things, you can expect to receive a D.

The final grade will be computed using the following points:

80 Points	Reading the NT
180 Points	Weekly Fishbowls (18 points each)
60 Points	Gunton Insights
60 Points	Park Insights
120 Points	“Roundtable” Paper & Peer Evaluation
50 Points	In-Ministry Assignment
450 Points	Final Synthetic Essay

The following point scale will determine letter grades:

A	1,000-930	C+	799-780	D-	629-600
A-	929-900	C	779-730	F	599-0
B+	899-880	C-	729-700		
B	879-830	D+	699-680		
B-	829-800	D	679-630		

VI. Policy on Attendance and Late Work

You are expected to attend class regularly and participate in the daily discussions. Attendance will be taken daily. An absence will only be excused in accordance with the guidelines established in the NTS catalogue. Unless I have noted above that I will not accept a written assignment late, I will assign a letter grade penalty to all written assignments turned in after the time they are due. When an assignment is more than one week late, I will assign a two letter grade penalty to it. **I will not accept an assignment that is more than two weeks late.**

VII. Schedule of Topics and Assignments (subject to change at my discretion)

02/09 “House of Sand and Fog” (2 hours, 6 min) and Course Intro

02/16 The New Testament, Sin, and Salvation

Assigned Reading:

- (1) Mark Biddle, “Sin,” *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*. Baker, forthcoming (Moodle).
- (2) Michael Gorman and Richard Middleton, “Salvation,” *New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, Abingdon, 5: 45-61 (NTS Library reference section).

Written Assignment Due at 11:55PM CT: Gunton Insights

Class Activities:

- (1) Class Discussion: With the movie, “House of Sand and Fog,” as a backdrop, use your assigned reading in discussing this question: In the scenario portrayed in the movie what would constitute a biblically/theologically adequate conception of sin and of salvation? (2) What does Jesus’ death have to do with any of this?

02/23 “NT Theology”

Assigned Reading:

- (1) Frank J. Matera, “New Testament Theology: History, Method, and Identity,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 67 (2005): 1-21 (NTS Library/ATLA).
- (2) Stephen Fowl, “The Conceptual Structure of New Testament Theology,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, 225-36 (on reserve).
- (3) Joel Green, “Scripture and Theology: Failed Experiments, Fresh Perspectives.” *Interpretation*, 56 (2002): 5-20 (NTS Library/ATLA).
- (4) “Nine Theses on the Interpretation of Scripture,” in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, 1-5 (on reserve in NTS Library).
- (5) Richard Hays, “Can Narrative Criticism Recover the Theological Unity of Scripture?” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 2 (2008): 193-211 (library/provided).
- (6) Michael W. Goheen, “Continuing Steps Toward a Missional Hermeneutic,” *Fideles: A Journal of Redeemer Pacific College* 3 (2008): 49-99 (Moodle).

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading. Each group will discuss and react to at least two of the articles but will not know which until class time.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation.

03/02 Jesus’ Death in Mark

Assigned Reading: (1) Mark (8 points). (2) C&G, 1-38. (3) Hooker, 7-19; 47-67. (4) Sharyn Dowd and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “The Significance of Jesus’ Death in Mark: Narrative Context and Authorial Audience,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125 (2006): 271-97 (ATLA). (5) Andy Johnson, “The ‘New Creation,’ the Crucified and Risen Christ, and the Temple: A Pauline Community as an Audience for Mark,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation*, 1 (2007): 171-191.

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading. Each group will discuss a portion of the reading but will not know which portion until class time.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation

03/09 Jesus' Death in Matthew

Assigned Reading: (1) Matthew (11 points). (2) C&G, 39-59, 205-33. (3) Hooker, 68-77. (4) Catherine Sider Hamilton, "His Blood Be upon Us': Innocent Blood and the Death of Jesus in Matthew," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70 (2008): 82-100 (ATLA).

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading. Each group will discuss a portion of the reading but will not know which portion until class time.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation

03/16 Jesus' Death in Luke/Acts (Joel Green may be in class)

Assigned Reading: (1) Luke and Acts (22 points). (2) C&G, 60-81. (3) Hooker, 78-93.

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading. Each group will discuss a portion of the reading but will not know which portion until class time.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation

03/30 Jesus' Death in John

Assigned Reading: (1) John (9 points). (2) C&G, 82-109, 182-204. (3) Hooker, 94-111.

Written Assignment Due at 11:55 PM CT: Park Insights

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading. Each group will discuss a portion of the reading but will not know which portion until class time.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation

04/06 Jesus' Death in Paul

Assigned Reading: (1) Romans through 2 Corinthians (10 points). (2) C&G, 113-32, 165-81. (3) Hooker, 20-46.

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading. Each group will discuss a portion of the reading but will not know which portion until class time.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation

04/13 Jesus' Death in Paul

Assigned Reading: (1) Galatians through Philemon (9 points). (2) N. T. Wright, "Redemption from the New Perspective?: Towards a Multi-Layered Pauline Theology of the Cross" (http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Redemption_NPP.htm).

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation

04/20 Jesus' Death in Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation

Assigned Reading: (1) Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John and Revelation (11 points). (2) C&G, 133-47. (3) Hooker, 112-138.

Final Exam to be distributed today

Last day for approval of research topic

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading. Each group will discuss a portion of the reading but will not know which portion until class time.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation

04/27 Jesus' Death in Christian Theology and Practice

Assigned Reading: (1) McKnight

Written Assignment: "Roundtable" Paper

Session 1: Peer Evaluation of "Roundtable" papers

Session 2: Peer Evaluation of "Roundtable" papers/Discussion

05/04 Jesus' Death in Christian Theology and Practice

Assigned Reading: (1) C&G, 256-79. (2) Hooker, 139-41. (3) Work on your final paper/essay.

Session 1: Fishbowls over the reading.

Session 2: Lecture and Evaluation/Sample Sermons/Lessons (if time).

05/11 Final Essay Due by 11:00 AM