

## SYLLABUS

### ***Description***

A study of the formation and transmission of the New Testament Canon from the teaching of Jesus until the Paschal Letter of Athanasius (367 CE). Required of Master of Divinity students and biblical studies majors in the Master of Arts program.

### ***Objectives***

1. Students will gain a basic understanding of the historical, social, cultural, and religious contexts in which the New Testament was born and transmitted.
2. Students will consider how the New Testament came to be what it is today and how this story has been interpreted in the past.
3. Students will further their ability to do historical research and answer critical questions.
4. Students will become aware of the history and processes of the textual criticism of the New Testament.
5. Students will consider how the content of this course impacts ministry in the Church.

### ***Required Textbooks***

1. John Barton, *Holy Writing, Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1998.
2. David H. Johnson, *The Birth of the New Testament: A Theological and Historical Paradigm for Understanding the Development of the New Testament Canon*. Otterburne, Manitoba: Providence Bookstore, 2011.
3. D. C. Parker, *New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

### ***Recommended Books (on reserve)***

1. D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005<sup>2</sup>).
2. Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance*. Oxford: OUP, 1987.

Further bibliography for each section of the course is noted in Johnson, *The Birth of the New Testament*. These bibliographies should be used in student research papers where pertinent.

### ***Requirements***

1. **Read the three required textbooks.** This reading will be reported on the final exam. Up to five (5) marks will be subtracted from the total for incomplete reading.
2. **Write a 2000-word critical review article** of Barton, isolating and interacting with the central ideas of the book. Note that Metzger's book on the canon will be an aid in this writing. This is a review article, which is longer and more penetrating than a regular review. 20 marks.
3. **Write a final exam** over the printed notes, class discussion, and *New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* by D.C. Parker (concentrating on Parts Two and Three). The two exam questions will ask for practical application of material studied. The exam will be open book and take home. It will be handed out at class #10. 40 marks.
4. Read Johnson, and survey Carson and **write a major research paper** on a topic pertinent to New Testament backgrounds or introduction. The paper should demonstrate the student's ability in the area of research and writing, i.e., it should formulate a question which it then answers through a clear presentation of evidence (primary literature) and support (secondary literature). Papers should be formatted strictly according to the *SBL Handbook of Style* (on reserve in the Loewen Learning Resource Centre) with footnotes or endnotes. Papers with too many formatting, grammatical, or typing errors will be marked down accordingly. 40 marks.

**Late papers will receive a penalty of 10% per class day late (i.e., papers must be turned in by 3:30 on the day they are due or they are late).**

### ***Class Procedure***

Since students have a copy of the notes for the course, class time will involve illustration, supplementation, and discussion of the notes. *Students should read the pertinent section of the notes before the class day as set forth in the course schedule. They should bring the notes to class for discussion purposes.* These discussions are designed to facilitate the objectives of the course. Electronic copies of the notes will be made available when the course is finished. No computer is necessary in class.

**Course Schedule**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Sep 13	Course Introduction How to Write a Critical Book Review How to Write a Research Paper (The Librarian will help us with this topic.) 0. Introduction
2	Sep 20	1. Prolegomena
3	Sept 27	2. The Original “New Testament” Canon
4	Oct 11	3. Oral Traditions and the New Testament
5	Oct 18	4. Written Traditions and the New Testament
6	Oct 25	4. Written Traditions and the New Testament (cont) <b>Book Review Due</b>
7	Nov 1	5. The Composition of New Testament Books
8	Nov 8	5. The Composition of New Testament Books (cont)
9	Nov 22	5. The Composition of New Testament Books (cont)
10	Nov 29	6. The Formation of the New Testament Canon
11	Dec 6	6. The Formation of the New Testament Canon (cont) <b>Major Paper Due</b>
12	Dec 13	7. The History of the New Testament Text Appendix: The Practice of Textual Criticism <b>Exam Due</b>