

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE
BIBLE 120
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT
CREDIT, 3 SEMESTER HOURS
Spring, 2012
DR. G. ROGER GREENE (“BIG G”), PROFESSOR

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A general overview of the background, development, and content of the New Testament.

RATIONALE FOR BIBLE 120

Bible 120 addresses the matters of history and faith in an appropriate interpretational context. Comprehension of geographical, historical, and literary aspects of the New Testament create a biblical literacy which contributes in meaningful ways to the personal values, attitudes, social, and cultural understanding of the student.

Bible 120 thus seeks to make a significant contribution toward the integration of faith and learning through the exploration and understanding of the religious, social, and cultural values inherent in the faith and story of Christians in a first century Greco-Roman world. Their faith and story remain distinctly relevant to contemporary Christianity. Bible 120 seeks to enhance knowledge, develop skills of interpretation, and advance attitudes necessary for making responsible and reasoned moral choices in response to a changing world. Application of scriptural texts is made in the living of a more satisfying life in the service of God and humanity.

In addition, Bible 110 and Bible 120 provide the foundational introduction for other courses in the area of Bible and Christian Heritage.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The following learning objectives apply to this course.

1. ***To cultivate in students an understanding of the historical setting of the New Testament.*** In BIB 120 students are presented an historical account of Judaism and early Christianity in the context of the Greco-Roman world. Such an historical survey provides a contextual setting for the New Testament literature. To demonstrate that this objective has been met, students should be able to show in writing that they know about key people, events, and dates, and understand their significance, as these items provide a meaningful context for proper interpretation of the New Testament.

2. ***To cultivate in students an understanding of the geographical setting of the New Testament.*** This objective has been met when students can demonstrate their knowledge of the major geographical features and locations of the Roman world of the Mediterranean, as these contribute to a fuller understanding of the New Testament literature.

3. ***To cultivate in students a characteristic best described as “biblical literacy.”*** Students are required to read the New Testament with a view toward coming to understand the basic literary features of the text such as plot, setting, theme development, and literary genre. Major characters in the New Testament materials are treated. Questions relating to the historical setting, authorship, audience, date of writing, and literary genre are addressed as these items contribute to a more complete understanding of the

individual books of the New Testament. Students are encouraged to see the New Testament literature in relation to its historical and cultural environment. Tests designed to measure the student's "biblical literacy" can demonstrate that this objective is being met. Basic literacy provides a steady foundation for subsequent study of the New Testament by the student.

4. To cultivate in students the ability to make application of the New Testament texts in personal formation and growth. Bible 120 can help students develop a foundation for subsequent study and appropriate utilization of the New Testament. To come to appreciate the New Testament faith and story is to provide a rich foundation for the living of life today through contemporary application. The student will grapple with contemporary issues raised in the classroom setting and make application from the biblical text to those issues.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mississippi College students are expected to be honest. Dishonesty is not tolerated at Mississippi College and is subject to severe penalties, including loss of credit and dismissal from school. The student should be thoroughly informed on these matters of academic and personal integrity which are set forth in the *Mississippi College Undergraduate Catalog*, in student publications, or **Policy 2.19** available on the Mississippi College web site.

OUTLINE OF COVERED TOPICS

The following represents a significant listing of broad topics to be covered in detail in this course.

The World of the New Testament

The Nature and Canon of the New Testament

The Legacy of the English Bible

The Beginnings of the Church

The Ministry of Paul

The Correspondence of Paul

The Person and Ministry of Jesus

The Nature of the Gospels

The Content of the Gospels

The Life of the Early Church

Times of Challenge and Persecution

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Primary methods of instruction utilized in this course include dialogical lecture, class discussion, interpretation of specific scriptural passages, map-work, and occasional audio-visual materials.

REQUIRED PRACTICES

Required practices include reading of required texts, discussion of assigned material within the classroom setting, recall and application of material learned.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Instructional materials include the following textbook required for the course.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha. Ed. by Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger. Revised Standard Version. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

The New Testament itself is the primary required reading for this course. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings for each class. Assignments will thus involve work outside of class and preparation made in advance of the designated class period.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

The primary method of evaluation utilized in this course consists of sectional examinations. Attendance assumes a positive role in the learning process as it pertains to attitudes of learning and class participation. It also carries associative bonus points.

Evaluation of Student Progress

1. Examinations. Total: 300 points.

There will be three sectional examinations, each worth 100 points, given at the points indicated in the schedule of assignments. These major exams may not be missed without penalty, except for emergency reasons and authorized college activity. Death in the immediate family and illness verified by a doctor's statement qualify as emergency reasons. See the make-up policy of the professor given below. Each exam will be sectional, i.e., it will focus upon material covered since the previous exam.

2. Final Examination. Total: 150 points.

A final examination, with a value of 150 points, will be given at the end of the semester during the regular examination period on the day and at the time as determined by the Registrar's Office. ***This exam is not optional.*** It will be a maximum of two hours in length and will be *comprehensive in nature.*

Class Policy on Make-Up Examinations

If it is necessary to miss an exam, the professor should be notified **prior to** the exam period if the student is to avoid penalty. It is the intention of the professor that few or no make-up exams be given. In any event, **whether or not a make-up exam is allowed and whether or not a penalty is assessed is at the sole discretion of the professor.** Generally speaking, exams missed without appropriate excuse incur at least a letter grade or 10% penalty. It is to your advantage to be present at all regularly scheduled exam periods. In the event the student misses the final exam, the policies of this paragraph apply as well as the procedures involving incomplete grades. See below.

Criteria of Grade Assignment

The final grade will be averaged on the basis of 450 total points. Any student who accumulates 91-100% of the total will earn a grade of **A**, 81-90% a grade of **B**, 71-80% a grade of **C**, 61-70% a grade of **D**, and below 60% an **F**. It is to the student's advantage to take all exams at the regularly scheduled time.

No provision is made in this course for “extra credit” to make up for deficiencies on required examinations. The focus of student performance is upon the *mastery of the assigned materials*. However, there will be an attendance bonus of **12** points given to students who have no absences in the course. A student with one absence will receive a bonus of **6** points. No points will be given with two or more absences, although there may be an absence penalty. The first class period counts toward attendance. Whether the absences are excused or not does not matter with regard to the attendance bonus.

Final Course Grade

In accordance with the percentages given above, the final grade earned in the course will be representative of the quality of student work accomplished in terms of mastery of the material assigned. A grade of **A** will represent superior work, **B** above-average work, **C** average work, **D** below-average work, and **F** a failure to meet minimal course and proficiency requirements.

OTHER COURSE INFORMATION

Attendance

Mississippi College has standards regarding attendance of classes. These are printed in the *Mississippi College Undergraduate Catalog*. The student is expected to attend classes regularly and punctually. The student should be fully aware of these policies. All classes missed count as absences, whether excused or unexcused. An automatic **F** is given if absences exceed 25% of the class meetings. This is the equivalent of 7 class meetings in a TR class, 11 class meetings in a MWF class, and 4 class meetings in a night class which meets once a week. There is an appeal process which may be instituted through the office of the appropriate dean.

In addition to the above, the student should be advised that excessive *unexcused* absences beyond the allowable limits (three clock hours, which is only **2 unexcused absences** in a summer class) **will penalize** the student’s final percentage semester grade point average by **1% per unexcused absence**. To reiterate, **the student’s final grade point average will be penalized for excessive unexcused absences**. The professor values class attendance. The days when one is *least* prepared are the days when one *most* needs to be in class. Habitual tardiness reflects either a poor attitude or poor self-discipline. In the event of tardiness, it is the student’s responsibility to remind the professor of his/her attendance to insure that he/she is not marked absent. See below.

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete (grade of **I**) may be given to a student who has been hindered by circumstances beyond the student’s control from completing work required for the course. The stipulations for awarding and removing an incomplete grade are given in the *Mississippi College Undergraduate Catalog*. The student should be familiar with the full statement of these procedures.

Tardiness

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Class attendance will be emphasized by this professor and roll will be checked or roll sheet passed at the beginning of each class period. **In the event of tardiness, it is the student’s responsibility to sign the roll sheet or notify the professor at the close of the particular class period in order to assure that she/he is not marked absent**. No recorded absences will be erased after the week in which they are recorded, if the tardy student fails to properly notify the professor. *Three tardies is the equivalent of one absence*.

Other Information

Information on student appeals of academic matters is given generally in the *Mississippi College Undergraduate Catalog*, as are materials pertaining to accommodation and support services. As stated in the *Mississippi College Undergraduate Catalog*, Mississippi College does not discriminate in admission to its programs or activities. Should students need special accommodations due to learning, physical, psychological, or other disabilities, students should direct their inquiry to the Director of the Counseling and Career Development Center

In order for a student to receive disability accommodations under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, he or she must contact Student Counseling Services (SCS). SCS will assist with information regarding the appropriate policy and procedure for disability accommodations before each semester or upon immediate recognition of the disability. SCS is located in Alumni Hall Room #4 or you may contact them by phone at 601-925-7790. The Director of Student Counseling Services, Dr. Bryant may be reached via email at mbryant@mc.edu.

The student should be advised that Mississippi College is a service oriented institution. Academic concerns may be addressed in appropriate order by the course instructor, the advisor, the department chair, the dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Other support services may be found through the Counseling and Career Development Center, through the Office of Financial Aid, etc., according to the specific area of need. The student is referred to the general catalog and to his/her advisor for referral of specific needs.

Important dates pertaining to the current academic year at Mississippi College may be found in the academic calendar on the Mississippi College web site. The final examination schedule may also be found there as well.

Other Considerations

Cell phones should be turned off and put away entirely while in the classroom. If a student chews gum, it should be done with the mouth closed. No meals are allowed in the classroom. The professor finds it very distracting for the student to be playing with a cell phone, writing notes, laughing, or talking with a neighbor during class about matters not pertaining to this class. The professor does not tolerate the student making preparation for other classes while present in this class. The professor does not wish to embarrass the student, but he will publicly insist these matters be properly observed. The professor expects the student to be involved in the classroom proceedings with full freedom to contribute to the mutual classroom learning experience.

A Final Word

Participation is expected in this class—it is not a spectator sport. Hence, class preparation and attendance assume some importance. While there may be a significant amount of reading to be completed in this course, it is meant to be an enjoyable course which offers some rather unique learning opportunities for the broadening of both knowledge and faith. It is also intended to develop the student's listening, thinking and writing skills through inquiry and dialogue with the biblical text, the professor, and other students. The course will be, however, what **you the student** make it to be. The more one is willing to both receive and give, the more one will gain foundationally from the course.

5. The Beginnings of the Church

Acts 1-15 (NOAB, 1319-1341)

Romans 1 (NOAB, 1361-1362)

List in writing and be prepared to discuss at least five significant elements in the earliest Christian preaching (*kerygma*) as it pertains to the definition of the “Gospel.” (Hint—see the early sermons in Acts in particular.)

6. The Developing Church and the Ministry of Paul

Galatians 1-2 (NOAB, 1410-1416)

Acts 15-28 (NOAB, 1341-1360)

7. Exam 1

8. Paul’s Early Letters: The Thessalonian Correspondence

1 Thessalonians (NOAB, 1433-1436)

2 Thessalonians (NOAB, 1437-1439)

For each of the assignments pertaining to Paul’s letters, write down an answer to each of the following: (1) Why did Paul write the letter? (2) What appears to be the basic theme or concern? (3) What do you see to be the relevance for today?

9. Paul’s Central Letters: The Corinthian Correspondence

1 Corinthians (NOAB, 1380-1397)

2 Corinthians (NOAB, 1398-1409)

10. Paul’s Central Letters: Galatians and Romans

Galatians (NOAB, 1410-1416)

Romans (NOAB, 1361-1379)

11. Paul’s Central Letters: Galatians and Romans—cont.

12. Paul’s Prison Letters: Philippians and Colossians

Philippians (NOAB, 1423-1427)

Colossians (NOAB, 1428-1432)

13. Paul’s Prison Letters: Philemon and Ephesians

Philemon (NOAB, 1453-1454)

Ephesians (NOAB, 1417-1422)

14. Exam 2

III. UNDERSTANDING THE PERSON AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

15. The Gospels

NOAB, “Literary Forms in the Gospels,” 1530-1532

Methodological Considerations in Gospel Study

The Birth Stories

List at least five similarities and differences between the accounts. What does each account suggest about Jesus? What does each account suggest about the Gospel writer?

16. The Gospel of Mark and Mighty Works

Mark 1-8 (NOAB, 1213-1225)
The Basic Contours of Jesus' Ministry
Jesus' Mighty Works

17. The Gospel of Mark and Mighty Works—cont.

Mark 9-16 (NOAB, 1225-1239)
Jesus' Mighty Works

18. The Gospel of Matthew and Jesus' Teachings

Matthew 1-13 (NOAB, 1171-1189)
Jesus' Teachings

19. The Gospel of Matthew and Teachings—cont.

Matthew 14-28 (NOAB, 1189-1212)
Jesus' Teachings

20. The Gospel of Luke and Parables

Luke 1-9, 19-24 (NOAB, 1240-1259; 1273-1285)
Selected parables of Jesus

21. The Gospel of Luke and Parables—cont.

Luke 10-18 (NOAB, 1259-1273)
Selected parables of Jesus

22. Exam 3—Thursday, March 31 (Tentative)

23. The Gospel of John

John 1-12—The Book of Signs (NOAB, 1286-1307)

24. The Gospel of John—cont.

John 13-21—The Book of Jesus' Passion (NOAB, 1307-1318)

IV. UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

25. Some Pastoral Concerns

1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus: Advice for Young Ministers (NOAB, 1440-1452)

26. Refuting Errors in Teaching

2 Peter: The Promise of Christ's Return (NOAB, 1482-1483)
Jude: Contention for the Faith (NOAB, 1491-1492)
1, 2, 3 John: Concerns for Spiritual Well-Being (NOAB, 1484-1490)

27. The Practice of Faith

James (Jacob): Faith in Action (NOAB, 1469-1473)

28. Responding to Persecution

Hebrews: Preeminence of Christian Faith (NOAB, 1455-1468)

1 Peter: Epistle of Hope (NOAB, 1474-1479)

29. Responding to Persecution–cont.

Revelation 1-22: Judgment and Victory of God (NOAB, 1493-1514)

FINAL EXAM– Saturday, April 28, 8-10 A.M.