

**Associated Canadian Theological Schools  
of Trinity Western University**

**BIB 540 OL - New Testament Foundations (Online)**

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Fall 2019

3 Credit Hours

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Course Semester: Sep 3 – Dec 21, 2019

Instructional Content: Oct 28 — Dec 21, 2019

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**Course Description**

This course provides an introductory survey to the New Testament and its social and canonical settings. It will engage in a study of the major themes and theological expressions of the New Testament documents in the context of their historical development, listening for both commonalities and distinctives in theological expression with a concern for communicating their message to contemporary culture.

**Objectives**

This course aims to help students:

### Cognitive

- Examine the cultural, literary, and theological background of the documents that make up the New Testament.
- Differentiate the unique theological emphases in the various parts of the New Testament canon, as well as their areas of commonality.
- Appraise the major approaches and strategies for discerning New Testament theologies to enable theological construction.

### Affective

- Demonstrate an increased interpretive sensitivity to how historical and cultural factors contributed to the composition of the New Testament documents and the contemporary communication of their teachings.
- Distinguish the unity found within the diversity of the New Testament's theologies.
- Demonstrate an increasing interpretive confidence in handling the New Testament texts and their theological themes for their application to meeting contemporary spiritual needs.

### Practical

- Apply insights derived from personal study of New Testament theology to contemporary life, community, and the church through sermons, Bible studies, or other media.
- Discern "points of contact" between ancient and contemporary culture and use these to communicate the Gospel message today.

## Course Textbooks

### Required:

DeSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004. \*Degree Students: available through Logos.

Thielman, Frank. *Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Walton, John H., and D. Brent Sandy. *The Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture and Biblical Authority*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.

## Course Instructional Content

This course will be delivered through the Moodle platform. You are required to watch, listen to, and/or read the course instructional content and interact about the content in the online forums. The full

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instructional script along with links to the videos and audio podcasts will be posted in the Moodle online classroom.

## Course Assignments

### 1. Readings (10%)

Read the assigned course textbooks and relevant Scripture portions noted in the syllabus, and complete and sign the Reading Report appended below.

Additional supplementary readings (SR) intended to facilitate class discussion and the engagement of NT materials with culture will be made available via the Moodle website at: [learn.twu.ca](http://learn.twu.ca)

Reading Report Due: October 28, 2019.

### 2. Forum Participation (20%)

“Classroom” participation is gauged by the degree to which a participant engages in the online discussion forums. ACTS students come from diverse educational, socio-economic, and theological backgrounds. Since we will not all agree on every matter or consider each issue to be of equal importance, it is vital that all participants be intentional about modelling civility, empathy, and reasoned discourse when participating in group discussions. Cumulatively, these are worth 20% of the final score.

### 3. Written Assignments (70%)

Assignments should follow Turabian or SBL formatting (APA is acceptable for students in counseling programs but must include page numbers in any citation). Essay assignments should be double-spaced and written in English using Times New Roman 12-point font. Citations should take the form of footnotes using 10-point font. Essays should begin with a separate title page, with the bibliography placed after the essay and beginning on its own new page. Students must use scholarly theological tools in their research; Bible Study notes are not appropriate resources for graduate work.

Assignments are due by midnight (your time) on the day they are due. I would ask that you submit your assignments in the online Moodle classroom accessible through [learn.twu.ca](http://learn.twu.ca). When you go to the Moodle classroom, you will see assignment folders where you can submit assignments. Once I have marked your assignment, I will put it in your grade book in the Moodle classroom where you can check your grade and review the comments I made on the assignment (you will receive an automatic notification whenever I put a graded assignment in your grade book).

The instructor will generally accept late assignments, provided the delay in submission is not unreasonable. Late assignments lacking a valid reason for being late (i.e., a family emergency such as a child’s major illness) will be penalized -5% for each day late, with weekends counting as 1 day. In the event that an extension is needed please contact the instructor immediately via email.

Typically, approximately 40 hours are required to complete the work necessary to earn 1 semester hour of credit—hence, 120 hours for a 3-credit course. This includes class sessions, course readings, and time required to complete written assignments.

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Here is an overview of all the assignments followed by a detailed description of them:

Week	Due Date	Assignments	% Final Grade	Cumulative %
1	Oct 28	Pre-reading Report Due	10%	
2	Nov 4-9	Forum Week #1	5%	15%
3	Nov 11-16	Forum Week #2	5%	20%
3	Nov 15	Book Review Due	20%	40%
4	Nov 18-23			
5	Nov 25-30	Forum Week #3	5%	45%
5	Nov 29	Socio-Cultural Paper Due	20%	65%
6	Dec 2-7			
7	Dec 9-14	Forum Week #4	5%	70%
8	Dec 20	Theological Research Paper Due	30%	100%

### Readings and Online Forum Participation (25 % of the final grade)

Students are expected to contribute to the weekly forum discussions by posting a **conversational** and **substantive** contribution each week. Please note that all weekly discussion will close at midnight on Saturday. It will be important for you to post your response to the question or direction on or before Wednesday to allow your peers time to respond.

Please note that **Saturday is given as the final day for each week's forum discussion**. Please always aim to post your responses earlier in the week to allow everyone time to read and join the conversation before the Saturday when the discussion closes.

### Notes about Forum Posts

By conversational contributions, I mean simply joining the flow of discussion with shorter responses (e.g. questions, affirmations, quick thoughts about what someone has said).

By substantive responses, I mean responses that show a deep processing of relevant ideas (this usually takes 200-300 words). We have a tremendous opportunity to build upon one another's knowledge, insights, and experience. Our goal is to collaborate in the forum. At times, we will respectfully challenge each other. We anticipate that this will be a rich time of dialogue. To create a safe environment for this to

take place, we must build a supportive subculture that encourages one another. Disagreeing and challenging can be stimulating if done in an edifying manner.

**Substantive participation may include (among other things):**

- Providing and developing a new thought, idea, or perspective.
- Citing an experience or example of what we are learning and showing how it applies.
- Adding a new twist on a perspective.
- Critically reflecting on an idea/concept.
- Questioning or challenging a principle/perspective and giving reasons for your questioning.
- Integrating Scripture and other sources in a meaningful way

**What Substantive Participation is NOT:**

- Very basic comments such as “I agree” or “I disagree.”
- Restating what someone has said (*unless there is a direct purpose in doing so*).
- Disrespectfully disagreeing.
- Pat answers that are not thought-provoking.

**Below are examples of how to stimulate your own and others’ thinking:**

- What would happen if...
- Other times it may be helpful to...
- It is my understanding...what is your experience with this?
- You might approach this from...
- Is it possible that...
- Would you consider...
- Maybe...
- Possibly...
- Sometimes...
- I'm wondering if...
- Do you think...

Have fun!

Note: You can use any of your forum posts in other papers for this course. I would also encourage you to view the posts of others as resources that you can cite in your papers. Everyone brings a wealth of insights into the class.

**Book Review and Critique (20% of the Final Grade)**

Write a 9-page book review (12-point font, double-spaced) of Walton and Sandy’s *Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture and Biblical Authority*.

The review portion in which you will summarize the content and argument(s) of the book should constitute no more than 2/3 of the project.

The critique portion in which you assess, evaluate and appreciate the text should comprise 1/3 of the project.

Include:

- a. Bibliographic data at the top of the page (no title page necessary).
- b. The author’s professional and theological background.
- c. Summarize the content of the book in your own words.

- d. Explain the most interesting or important points in the book.
- e. Provide constructive criticisms parts of the book that you think could use more development or refinement, or its possible limitations.
- f. Summarize how this book is useful to you or how it might be useful to others.

**Due: November 15, 2019.**

### **Socio-Cultural Paper (20% of the final grade)**

Select a cultural or historical issue from the New Testament that is important to you. Research its background (4–5 pages) and explain how it is important for understanding the New Testament (3–4 pages). Also explain how the interpretive implications of the social or cultural issue should be used to influence the church's ministry/community practice and our witness to our culture today (2–3 pages). Examples of possible historical issues may include:

- The theology of Pharisaism or other Jewish parties in the Gospels and Acts.
- Exorcism and/or Greco-Roman medicine.
- The social status of women or children in the New Testament period.
- The role of woman and church leadership in the New Testament period.
- The Historical Jesus.
- Apocalypticism.
- Jewish Nationalism.
- Patron-Client relations.
- House Churches.
- Jewish Christianity.
- John and Qumran.
- The role of apocalyptic on John's Gospel or 1–3 John (excluding Revelation).

Tips:

- Determine your topic's key Greek vocabulary and trace its occurrences in the New Testament and Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament, including the Apocrypha).
- Select a single key passage about your topic and describe your topic's historical and social development.
- Explain how this background is important for understanding your passage.
- The assignment should be 10–12 pages long, not including title page and bibliography.
- On average, 10 peer-reviewed sources should be consulted including journal articles, commentaries, lexicons, and theological dictionaries. Study Bibles and Bible study notes DO NOT count as appropriate sources.

**Due: November 29, 2019.**

### **Theological Research and Application Paper (30%)**

Select one New Testament theological issue and explain its importance for church life, ministry, and witness today. Select one of the following:

- One metaphor used in the NT for describing the function of the Atonement.
- Relation of Christianity to the Mosaic Law.
- Covenant theology in the New Testament.
- Wisdom Christology.
- Temple Ecclesiology.
- The role of Gentiles as compared to Jews in God's people.
- A ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Tips:

#### Keep it Focused

- Focus your study on a single corpus or book but try to concentrate your attention on a single passage that you think is representative of an author's viewpoint.
- Show awareness of how your theological issue may be handled similarly or differently in other parts of the New Testament but avoid rabbit trails.

#### Keep it You

- Familiarize yourself with the relevant passages of Scripture BEFORE going to theological texts, commentaries, or specialist studies.
- You should examine the historical context of the passage or issue, the occasion for the issue, literary context, and authorial intent, and how these are important for interpretation and personal application.
- Identify important Greek words, check their meaning in a lexicon or commentary and compare the meaning of this word in other places in the New Testament or Septuagint. Explain how the meaning of these important words shed light on your topic.
- Try to rely as much as possible on your own thinking and reasoning, and dialogue with scholars rather than citing them as authorities.

#### Keep it Relevant

- Identify points of cultural contact between the New Testament context and your own. Devote some space to clearly communicating how your New Testament theological issue addresses challenges that the church or society faces today.

#### Keep it Informed

- Demonstrate the importance of the Old Testament for your New Testament theological issue.
- Use of at least 12 significant peer-reviewed sources of which fully 1/3 are from significant journals and periodicals. Study Bibles and Bible study notes DO NOT count as appropriate sources.
- The paper should be 16 pages double-spaced (excluding Title Page and Bibliography), Times New Roman font. Approximately 8 pages should be devoted to historical, cultural, and exegetical issues, approximately 4 pages to theological construction, and 4 pages to contemporary application (ethical, social, ecclesiological, etc.).

**Due: December 20, 2019**

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## Course Evaluation

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is very important, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be integrated into the Moodle classroom in Week 8.

## Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	97-100	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	93-96.99	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	90-92.99	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skilful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	87-89.99	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	83-86.99	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	80-82.99	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	77-79.99	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.

C	73-76.99	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	70-72.99	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision <i>or</i> references and resources not taken fully into account <i>or</i> examples are basic or not completely convincing <i>or</i> barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below 70	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

*Note: This grading rubric is an adaptation of the one used in the MA in Leadership and MA in Educational Leadership programs at TWU.*

## Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made with the ACTS Office.

## Important Academic Notes from ACTS

### Web Support – Student Portal

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

### Paper Formatting

The preferred manner for citations is the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format. For information and accuracy you may wish to reference the following style guide: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Students may find the following website helpful: [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)

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Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

### **Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU**

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage ([www.acts.twu.ca](http://www.acts.twu.ca)).

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self-running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://acts.twu.ca/library/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial) [http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism\\_Short.swf](http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism_Short.swf) (8 minute flash tutorial)

### **Equity of Access**

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.