

St. Andrew Center for Christian Learning
Bible Academy

INTRODUCING THE NEW TESTAMENT
Spring 2006
Monday Evenings

Class Times:

6:45 - 7:00, gathering time
7:00 - 8:30, class time

Class Dates: 3/27, 4/3, 4/10, 4/17, 4/24, 5/1, 5/8, 5/15

Instructor: Scott L. Engle, Ph.D.

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You can find the syllabus and other course materials at website for the St. Andrew Center for Christian Learning, www.standrewccl.org. Simply go to the Bible Academy page and you'll find the link to the materials for this class.

IN THE EVENT OF BAD WEATHER, CHECK THE CENTER'S WEBSITE, WHERE I'LL POST ANY CANCELLATION ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THE HOME PAGE. If we have to cancel a class, we'll simply reduce the class to seven weeks and I'll modify the lectures so we can get back on schedule. If we have to cancel two or more classes, then we'll extend the class further into May.

Course materials:

Required:

A study Bible
The set of weekly worksheets

If you want to purchase a survey textbook on the New Testament, I'd recommend *Introducing the New Testament*, Achtemeier, Green, and Thompson, 2001, Eerdmanns Publishing Company. I relied on their book heavily in preparing the material on the individual books of the New Testament. Their book contains historical, literary, and theological analyses of all the books.

Another excellent introductory text is *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Raymond E. Brown, 1997, Doubleday. Brown's book has some especially good general essays on the New Testament and its world.

Course Description

The UMC Book of Discipline reminds us, “*United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine. . . . The biblical authors, illumined by the Holy Spirit, bear witness that in Christ the world is reconciled to God. The Bible bears authentic testimony to God’s self-disclosure in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as in God’s work of creation, in the pilgrimage of Israel, and in the Holy Spirit’s ongoing activity in human history.*” The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the New Testament. We will learn how we got the New Testament, how we can better interpret it, and how we can begin to apply it in our lives as members of the Christian community. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we will survey the entire New Testament, but concentrate on the books of Matthew, John, Galatians, Philippians, Romans, James, 1 Peter, and Revelation. We will study the over-arching New Testament story, always looking for Jesus and the early Christians’ understanding of him and his life.

We will study the books of the New Testament in a somewhat more logical and chronological order than they appear in the New Testament. We will look first at Jesus’ life, as told by the gospel writers. We will then begin looking at the 30-year story of the early church told in Acts. Within the context of the book of Acts, we will look at Paul and his letters. In the closing weeks, we’ll look at the general epistles.

Learning Objectives

Those who complete this course should be able to:

1. Outline the development and history of the New Testament.
2. Identify and appreciate the different types of literature found in the New Testament, as well as the basics of interpreting them.
3. Better appreciate the historical, geographical, and cultural contexts in which the books of the New Testament were written.
4. Describe the main themes of the New Testament.
5. Explain how Christians can apply the New Testament to life.
6. Gain a deeper understanding of how we can use the New Testament to further our discipleship.

Expectations

To get the most out of this class, you should attend every meeting and be prepared to devote at least a couple of hours each week to the assignments. I suggest that you devote a half-hour each day, rather than do the reading and the worksheet at one sitting. This class can be a good means of building a daily “Bible habit” that can sustain and enrich our lives and our congregation. The weekly worksheets are designed to help you build a daily habit.

I expect you to bring to the class all the questions and uncertainties about the New Testament that have puzzled you. We won’t necessarily be able to tackle them all, but I want the class to be responsive to your needs, while still ensuring that we cover most of the material in the syllabus.

I expect you to enjoy the class and I will do all I can to exceed your expectations!

Schedule of Class Activities
Introducing the New Testament
 Spring 2006

Class Date	Topic	Chapter Assignments/Worksheets
3/27 (Wk #1)	Introduction to the class A brief review of the story leading up to the time of Jesus Background of the New Testament <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judea in Jesus' day • Timelines and geography 	
4/3 (Wk #2)	The synoptic gospels Understanding parables The life of Jesus as told by Mark, Matthew, and Luke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Worksheet for Week 2 - Matthew
4/10 (Wk #3)	Acts and the beginnings of the Church Paul, apostle to the Gentiles Paul's early letters His 1st and 2nd missionary journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Worksheet for Week 3 - Galatians
4/17 (Wk #4)	Paul's Third Missionary Journey Life in the early churches The religious & philosophical world in NT times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Worksheet for Week 4 - 1 Corinthians
4/24 (Wk #5)	Toward the end of Paul's Life The destruction of Jerusalem The political and social world in NT times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Worksheet for Week 5 - Romans
5/1 (Wk #6)	Christianity spreads The nature and origin of the New Testament The text of the New Testament New Testament canonization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Worksheet for Week 6 - James
5/8 (Wk #7)	Christianity begins to mature Jesus' generation dies off The persecution of Christians Applying the New Testament to our lives as Christians, the people of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Worksheet for Week 7 - 1 Peter & Revelation
5/15 (Wk #8)	Jesus as portrayed by John John's letters A few key questions about Jesus How did Jesus fit into Judaism? What were Jesus' aims? Why did he die? How and why did the church begin?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Worksheet for Week 8 - John