

School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
900 Broadway
Seattle, Washington 98122
Winter Quarter, 2008

STMM 527-01 Christian Scriptures
Hunthausen 110
Mondays, 9:00 – 11:50 a.m.

Pre-requisite: STMM 526

Instructor: Ann Holmes Redding, Ph.D.
Office: Hunthausen 128
Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.
(please call in advance, if possible)
Other times by appointment
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Texts:

Required: The most important text is the Bible. I encourage you to use more than one translation in your study, particularly for writing the paper. Our common version will be the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which you should bring to class.

Chilton, Bruce. *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography*.

Duling, Dennis C. *The New Testament History, Literature and Social Context (4th ed)*.

Roetzel, Calvin. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*.

Schneiders, Sandra. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (2nd ed.). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999.

Supplemental: For the critical paper, you will need to choose **one** of the two books below.

Felder, Cain H., ed. *Stony the Road We Trod*.

Schussler Fiorenza, Elizabeth. *In Memory of Her*.

Course Description (From the course listing): “Origins of Christian Scripture in Christian faith; experience of God revealing; New Testament development in time; major theological themes in cultural context; impact on living experience; methods of criticism and principles of interpretation aimed at personal appropriation of text, meanings and tradition.”

Approach: The emphasis in this course is on our becoming more able, perceptive, and practiced independent readers of the New Testament texts within a faithful community. In the words of J. Louis Martyn, Professor Emeritus at Union Theological Seminary in New York, we are seeking to enter into a conversation with the biblical authors in the authors’ own terms as these writers speak through the texts. This model of conversation is first relational and not primarily “scientific.” Our methods and strategies of interpretation are designed to aid us to understand better what our conversation partners are saying. In order to understand the

theology, the “God-talk” of scripture, we need to become students at least of literature and history. But for the conversation to be two-sided, we also bring our own questions and concerns to the table. We will always be particularly attentive to the images of Jesus that precede, surround, and result from our dialogue.

Objectives and Student’s Learning Outcomes

Students are to gain from the course:

1. Discernment of major influences that they bring to the interpretation of scripture, such that they are able to complete a biblical hermeneutical inventory.
2. Familiarity with the literature, situation, and theology of books of the NT, such that they are able to
 - a. Give main theological themes of major writings
 - b. Locate major NT works situationally, as far as possible.
3. Basic understanding of the kinds of approaches to Biblical criticism and scholarly methods used in NT study, such that they are able to
 - a. Identify those methods when they are used in reading scholarly material
 - b. Select methods appropriate for addressing particular questions in their critical papers.
4. Introduction to major issues of and guidelines for NT interpretation which is both responsive to communities contemporary to the interpreters and respectful of the content, original context, and audience of the work, such that they are able to produce a hermeneutical response which addresses contemporary issues in relationship to a particular NT work.
5. Ability to be independent, critical readers both of the NT and of secondary scholarly work, such that they are able to
 - a. identify and evaluate literary, historical, social, and theological patterns and issues in reading the NT and in preparing their critical papers;
 - b. be in conversation with scholars, by including the work of at least two other scholars in their critical papers.

Course Requirements, Grading Points (Grading criteria given in individual assignments):

1. Attendance and participation: Although there is no assigned point value for it, attendance is important. Both exemplary attendance and participation will count for extra credit in the case of a close call with a grade.
2. Biblical hermeneutical inventory: Initial completion by **28 January**. Re-visiting on 10 March. **35 points**.
3. Critical paper: An eight- to twelve-page, double-spaced paper comparing the treatment of a theme or topic addressed in a gospel and in one other early Christian writing will be

due on **3 March**. The proposals for the paper will be the main topic of discussion during the first of the two student conferences. (See below.) **65 points**.

4. Content and thematic quizzes (diagnostic and beginning and re-evaluation at end of class. Extra credit points only.
5. Self-evaluation and student conferences: Each student will develop evaluative criteria based on personal goals for the class. Those goals and progress made in the course will be topics in the two student conferences that will be scheduled over the course of the semester. The final student conference will take the place of written comments on student papers. The initial conferences will start on 28 January, and the final conferences on 3 March. The student's self-evaluation will be considered in the grading process.

Policy regarding due dates of assignments and of the returning of assignments:

1. Instructor will accept no late work without two-way communication with the student prior to the date on which the assignment is due. Otherwise, a student will receive **no credit** for late work.
2. All late work will receive a grade reduced to the next lowest increment. For example, a late B+ paper will receive a B; a late A- will receive a B+.

Class Schedule at a Glance

Note: Always read the pertinent biblical texts *first*

Date	Assignment in preparation	In Class	Due
7 January		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions: to students, instructor • Context setting: our context(s), including distribution and discussion of hermeneutical inventory interpretive approaches. 	
14 January	Read <i>Schneiders</i> , through Ch. 2; <i>Duling</i> , Preface through Ch. 2. Read syllabus and note questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context setting, continued: The World of the New Testament; sharing of inventories • Syllabus review • Introduction to 4-part method of reading NT letters and distribution of assignments • Sign-up for conferences. 	

28 January	Complete biblical inventories. Read <i>Duling</i> , Chs. 3-6; <i>Roetzel</i> , through Ch. 4; continue reading <i>Schneiders</i> (to be finished by 11 February). Prep for student conferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul: The man and his work • Close reading of Philemon • Who is Jesus to Paul? 	Biblical inventories. Student conferences begin. Bring paper topics and course goals.
4 February	Read <i>Duling</i> , Chs. 7 and 13.; <i>Roetzel</i> , Chs. 5 – end; continue reading <i>Schneiders</i> (to be finished by 11 February). Start <i>Chilton</i> (to be finished by 28 February).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul’s earliest interpreters: 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians; Pastoral Epistles; extra-canonical writings • Rhetorical outline of Ephesians • Who is Jesus? • “So what?” 	Student conferences, cont’d.
11 February	Read <i>Duling</i> , Chs. 8 – 10; finish <i>Schneiders</i> ; continue <i>Chilton</i> (to be finished by 28 February).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the gospels • Method for reading the gospels. Distribution of assignments. • Overview of historical critical methods. 	
15 February (NOTE: Friday class!)	Reread <i>Duling</i> , Chs. 8 – 10; continue <i>Chilton</i> (to be finished by 25 February).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the synoptics and Acts: • Close reading of parable of great banquet • Images of Jesus in synoptics and Acts • “So what?” 	
25 February	Read <i>Duling</i> , Ch. 11. Finish <i>Chilton</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of previous week. • Reading Johannine literature • The “I Am” sayings • The Johannine Jesus • “So what?” 	
3 March	Read <i>Duling</i> , Chs. 12-13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the later epistles • Social study of 1 Peter • Reading Revelation • “So what?” 	Critical papers due in class. Final conferences begin.

10 March	Read <i>Duling</i> , Ch. 14. Review <i>Schneiders</i> and <i>Chilton</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose favorite biblical image of Jesus. Bring in depiction.• Revisiting of hermeneutical inventories• “Big so what?”	Final conferences, cont’d.
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