THE SOCIAL SETTING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT NTEN 5395
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
New Testament Department, Biblical Studies Division
Dr. Bill Warren, Landrum P. Leavell, II, Professor of NT and Greek
WORKSHOP, OCTOBER 2016

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NOBTS MISSION STATEMENT:
The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

COURSE PURPOSE, CORE VALUE FOCUS, AND CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES:
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “academic excellence” especially highlighted in this course. The seminary is emphasizing the core value of “academic excellence” this year and encourages all at the seminary to focus especially on this emphasis.

NOBTS has seven basic competencies guiding our Masters degree programs: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual & Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. This course addresses the “Biblical Exposition” competency by helping the student learn to interpret the Bible accurately.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The purpose of this course is to involve the student in an extensive study of various social, political, religious, and economic backgrounds that can serve as aids for understanding the message of the New Testament. An introduction to the study of social settings is followed by an analysis of the various backgrounds based upon the historical documents from the NT period.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
The objectives of this course include the following:
1. Students should understand the history and state of research related to NT social settings
2. Students should gain an increased appreciation for how understanding the NT social settings aids in the study of the NT
3. Students should acquire the ability to apply their understanding of NT social settings to sound interpretation of the text

COURSE TEACHING METHODS:
This course will be taught via a combination of pedagogical methods, including but not limited to the following: lectures, discussions, student assignments, small group work, computer resources, textbook discussions, and student presentations. Both inductive and deductive approaches to learning will be utilized.

TEXTBOOKS:
1. David DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking NT Culture*
2. Richard Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and NT Interpretation*
And either
3a. Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*

Or:

**REQUIREMENTS IN THE COURSE:**
1. Students are expected to participate in the conversations and take notes on the lectures for all class sessions and lectures. 10%

2. Students are expected to read the textbooks and submit reviews for each one. Written reviews can be submitted either electronically or via a hard copy. The book reviews should each be 2-4 single-spaced pages and include the following: (15% per review = 45% total)
   1) Bibliographic Entry
   2) Statement of the Author’s Purpose
   3) Summary of the Contents (the bulk of the review)
   4) An Evaluation of the book, including consideration of the most suitable readership, the scope of the book (comprehensive? or lacking in major areas), the viewpoints presented (multiple viewpoints when pertinent, or only one, etc.), and your overall evaluation of the book.

   Each summary should be general in nature, covering the broad topics and a selection of specific examples or scenarios. Due dates for the reviews are as follows:
   1. Due the first day of the workshop at the beginning of class: David DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking NT Culture*
   2. Due by the end of the workshop week: Richard Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and NT Interpretation*
   3. Due within two weeks of the end of the workshop:
      EITHER
      Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*
      Or:
      Brian Howell and Jenell Williams Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*

3. A take-home final exam will be given, with a due date of two weeks after the end of the workshop (Saturday, Nov. 14th). 20%

4. Each student will prepare an exegesis paper on a New Testament passage that incorporates insights from the social setting of the NT for unfolding the background and historical meaning of the passage. Due date = 4 weeks after the end of the workshop (Saturday, Nov. 19). 25%

**COURSE EVALUATION:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Reviews</td>
<td>45% (15% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:

MONDAY:  1: Intro to the course  
          Defining Cultural Anthropology  
          A Brief History of the Field  
          Anthropology and Biblical Studies  

          2: Ethnographies and Ethnologies  
             How to Realize an Ethnographic Study  
             The Major Components of a Culture  
             Methods for Analyzing a Culture  
             Concepts for Understanding a Culture  

TUESDAY:  1: Kinship Structures and Concepts  

          2: Political Structures and Concepts  

WEDNESDAY:  1: Social Structures, Values, and Concepts: Part 1  

               2: Social Structures, Values, and Concepts: Part 2  

THURSDAY:  1: Religious Structures, Values, and Concepts  

               2: Other Social Structures, Values, and Concepts, Open Discussion  

FRIDAY: Submission of research proposal and research on papers  

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY  

Atkins, Robert A., Jr., *Egalitarian Community: Ethnography and Exegesis*, 1991  
Balch, David, ed., *Social History of the Matthean Community*, 1991  
Douglas, Mary Tew, *Cultural Bias*, 1978  
Evans-Pritchard, Edward E., *Theories of Primitive Religion*, 1965
Finley, Moses I., *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*, 1983
Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, 1973
Hamel, G., *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C. E.*, 1990
Harris, William, *Ancient Literacy*, 1989
Kearny, Michael, *World View*, 1984
Kee, Howard Clark, *Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to NT Interpretation*, 1989
Leach, Edmund, *Culture & Communication: The Logic by Which Symbols Are Connected*, 1976
MacDonald, Margaret Y., *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*, 1988
Malina, Bruce, & R. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 1992
Myers, Ched, *Binding the Strongman: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, 1988
Neyrey, Jerome H., *In Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letters*, 1990
Nida, Eugene. *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*, 1954
Robbins, Vernon K., *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark*, 1992
Simmel, Georg, *Conflict and the Web of Group-Affiliations*, 1955
Tilborg, Sjef van, *The Sermon on the Mount as an Ideological Intervention*, 1986
White, L. Michael, ed., *Social Networks and Early Christianity*, 1988