

**THTH8305 - The Bible and Contemporary Issues**  
NOBTS Professional Doctoral Seminar

**Winter 2017 Trimester, January 11-13, 2017**

Wednesday, 1:00 - 9:00 pm; Thursday & Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm CST

**Professor**

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**Seminary 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.

**Core Value Focus and  
Curriculum Competencies Addressed**

Core Value - The primary core value addressed in this course is Doctrinal Integrity. The core value focus for this academic year is Characteristic Excellence, which states, "What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Characteristic Excellence is addressed by preparing students to excel in their ability to interpret Scripture, which is foundational to effective ministry."

Core Competencies - The course will primarily address the competencies of Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, and Disciple Making.

**Course Description**

This course focuses upon how best to communicate the message of the Bible in order to address contemporary apologetic issues. Issues addressed include oral and written communication forms, apologetic methodology, biblical authority, textual authenticity, science and the Bible, and other similar issues. Students will also study how best to communicate biblical truth and the Christian worldview via contemporary media. Special attention will be given to implementing these communication forms in pastoral ministry.

**Note:** In order to assist everyone in focusing attention on the topic and presenters, laptops and tablets may be used by students only when they are delivering a presentation.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- describe the formation of the Old and New Testament canon and account for other extra-biblical, religious literature of the period.
- answer major philosophical, methodological, textual, ethical, and scientific challenges to the authority of the Bible.
- discuss the views of radical skeptics regarding the uniqueness of Jesus and the reliability of the New Testament.

## Required Textbooks

McDonald, Lee Martin. *Formation of the Bible: The Story of the Church's Canon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012. 178 pages.

*In Defense of the Bible: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of the Bible*. Edited by Steven B. Cowan and Terry L. Wilder. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013. 490 pages.

Komoszewski, J. Ed, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus: How Contemporary Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006. 347 pages.

## Course Schedule and Assignments

### Pre-Seminar Assignments

1. Students will read *Formation of the Bible* and submit 1-page, single-spaced summaries or outlines for each of these chapters: Introduction & Chapters 1–8. **Due: Dec. 2.**
2. Students will read *In Defense of the Bible* and submit 1–2-page, single-spaced summaries or outlines for each of these chapters: 1–17. **Due: Dec. 9.**
3. Students will read *Reinventing Jesus* and submit 1-page, single-spaced summaries or outlines for each of these chapters: 1–18. **Due: Dec. 16.**

### In-Seminar Assignments

1. Students will develop and deliver a 45-minute presentation (with a PowerPoint or Keynote Presentation) and lead a 30-minute discussion on one of these topics from the pre-seminar readings (**Sign up for topic via [this Google Docs link](#) by Nov. 18**; the presentation will be made and discussion will be led during the seminar):
  - 1) Scripture and OT Canon (McDonald, chs. 1–4)
  - 2) NT Canon, Manuscripts, and Councils (McDonald, chs. 5–8)
  - 3) Philosophical and Methodological Challenges to the Bible (Cowan & Wilder, chs. 1–4)
  - 4) Textual Challenges to the Bible (Cowan & Wilder, chs. 5, 7)
  - 5) Answers to New Testament Textual Cynicism (Cowan & Wilder, ch. 6; Komoszewski, chs. 4–8)
  - 6) Historical Challenges to the Bible (Cowan & Wilder, chs. 9–11)
  - 7) The Uniqueness of the Biblical Claims among Extra-Biblical Religious Literature (Cowan & Wilder, ch. 8; Komoszewski, chs. 16–18)
  - 8) Ethical Challenges to the Bible (Cowan & Wilder, chs. 12–13)
  - 9) Scientific & Theological Challenges to the Bible (Cowan & Wilder, chs. 14–15)
  - 10) A Final Word about the Word (Cowan & Wilder, chs. 16–17)

Wednesday, 1:00-1:30 PM	Introductions & Syllabus
Wednesday, 1:30-2:20	Bible Translation
Wednesday, 2:30-3:45	Presentation 1
Wednesday, 4:00-5:15	Presentation 2
Wednesday, 5:30-6:45	Presentation 3
Wednesday, 7:00-9:00	Dinner
Thursday, 8:00-8:15 AM	Prayer Requests/Class Admin
Thursday, 8:15-9:30	Presentation 4
Thursday, 9:45-11:00	Presentation 5
Thursday, 11:00-1:00	Lunch
Thursday, 1:00-2:15 PM	Presentation 6
Thursday, 2:30-3:45	Presentation 7
Thursday, 4:00 PM	Dinner
Friday, 8:00-8:15 AM	Prayer Requests/Class Admin
Friday, 8:15-9:30	Presentation 8
Friday, 9:45-11:00	Presentation 9
Friday, 11:00-1:00	Lunch
Friday, 1:00-2:15 PM	Presentation 10
Friday, 2:30-3:45	Discussion of Post-Seminar Assignment & Conclusion

2. Students will read all pre-seminar material and complete all pre-seminar assignments prior to the first day of class. Also, they will participate in seminar discussions.

**Post-Seminar Assignments (Due Date: Feb. 10)**

1. Students will develop a 4-part series of lessons on the Bible and contemporary issues, based on material covered in this course. The series of lessons should be planned for successive Sunday nights or Wednesday nights at your church or place of ministry. Each session should be comprised of:
  - a. four teaching manuscripts with 30–45 minutes of material (3,000–4,500 words) for each lesson, including footnotes to document important claims or quotations
  - b. a PowerPoint (or Keynote) presentation
  - c. a fill-in-the-blank handout for listeners

Note regarding **Directed Study**:

Students who enroll in the course for credit under the directed study format will be required to complete the same Pre and Post-Seminar Assignments. In lieu of the in-seminar assignment and to make up for missed “seat time,” directed study students will be required to prepare and record a 45-minute presentation from the presentation list above (but with no discussion) plus read and review an **additional** book from the bibliography. The review should summarize the content of the book, including its major supporting arguments, and a substantive critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the book and its supporting arguments. The review is due by **Jan. 20**.

**Supplemental Bibliography**

Bird, Michael F., ed. *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus' Divine Nature*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Beckwith, Roger T. *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church: and its Background in Early Judaism*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008.

Blomberg, Craig. *Can We Still Believe the Bible?: An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs*. B&H Studies in Christian Apologetics. Edited by Robert B. Stewart. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016.

Bruce, F. F. *The Canon of Scripture*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1988.

Carr, David. *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Ehrman, Bart. *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Michael J. Kruger. *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Law, Timothy Michael. *When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Lim, Timothy H. *The Formation of the Jewish Canon*. In *The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library*. Edited by John J. Collins. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

McDonald, Lee Martin. *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Plantinga, Alvin. *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

*The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel Wallace in Dialogue*. Edited by Robert B. Stewart. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.

Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translation: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999.

Wise, Kurt. *Faith, Form, and Time: What the Bible Teaches and Science Confirms about Creation and the Age of the Universe*. Nashville: B&H, 2002.