

Course Syllabus

TRT2110 – Living Tradition: Reading the New Testament
Trinity College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2022

Instructor Information

Instructors: Dr Daniel G Opperwall
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: TRT2110
Course Format: *In-class and Online*
Course Name: Living Tradition: Reading of the New Testament
Course Location: Larkin Building, Room ____ (*with synchronous and asynchronous online options*)
Class Times: Tuesdays, 7pm to 9pm
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

This course is a survey of the New Testament books in their historical and religious background with attention to hermeneutics, the patristic exegetical heritage, and modern biblical studies. The New Testament will be read in its entirety, along with commentaries by church fathers and writings by modern theologians.

Students will be evaluated on their online class participation, preparing and leading a seminar discussion in the discussion forums on a selected patristic commentary, and a written exegetical study of a New Testament text.

Course Resources

Required Study Bible

Students will be required to purchase (if they do not already have a copy):

- *The Harper Collins Study Bible: Including Apocryphal and Deuterocanonical Books with Concordance* (HarperOne, 2006)

Additionally, a Bible software package or online Bible library resource comprising primary sources, interlinear and multiple translations and concordance tools may be helpful.

Recommended Course Book

The following book is highly recommended. Supplementary readings will be provided for each class to enrich students' background knowledge and further develop course themes.

- NT Wright and Michael Bird, *The New Testament and Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Zondervan Academic, 2019)

Course Readings

Additional course readings (excerpts from patristic commentaries and modern scholars) will be provided via the course portal, which students can choose to view online or download and print.

Please note that the readings in the course portal represent only a minimal selection of New Testament studies; students are strongly encouraged to pursue further reading as time permits.

Further Recommended Books

In addition to extensively available patristic commentaries, exegetical treatises and homilies on the New Testament, the following books are recommended for this course, both to supplement class discussion and for the preparation of research papers.

- CK Barrett, ed., *New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (HarperOne)
- John Behr, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death* (SVS Press)
- John Breck, *Scripture in Tradition* (SVS Press)
- John Breck, *The Power of the Word in the Worshipping Church* (SVS Press)
- Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Prentice-Hall)
- Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the New Testament as Canon* (Fortress Press)
- Joel Green and Lee McDonald (eds.), *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Baker Academic)
- Luke Timothy Johnson, *Living Jesus* (HarperOne)
- Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (HarperOne)
- Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament* (Fortress)
- Veselin Kesich, *The Gospel Image of Christ* (SVS Press)
- Veselin Kesich, *The Passion of Christ* (SVS Press)

- Veselin Kesich, *The First Day of the New Creation: The Resurrection and the Christian Faith* (SVS Press)
- Richard Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (Regent College)
- Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Eerdmans)
- Andrew Louth, ed., *Early Christian Writings* (Penguin)
- Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Clarendon Press)
- Ben Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (Wipf & Stock)
- Ben Meyer, *The Early Christians* (Wipf & Stock)
- Patrick Henry Reardon, *The Jesus We Missed: The Surprising Truth About the Humanity of Christ* (Thomas Nelson)
- James Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Baker Book House)
- Theodore Stylianopoulos, *The Making of the New Testament: Church, Gospel and Canon* (Holy Cross Press)
- Theodore Stylianopoulos, *The New Testament, An Orthodox Perspective: Scripture, Tradition, Hermeneutics* (Holy Cross Press)
- Burton Throckmorton, ed, *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels* (NRSV) (Thomas Nelson)
- Christopher Tuckett, *Reading the New Testament: Methods of Interpretation* (Fortress)
- NT Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vols 1-4: The New Testament and the People of God; Jesus and the Victory of God; The Resurrection of the Son of God; Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Fortress)
- NT Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is* (IVP Books)
- NT Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Eerdmans)
- Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Baker Academic)

Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> . Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask Sydney Yeung (divinity@trinity.utoronto.ca) for further help.

As in the classroom, online communication must be carried out respectfully and civilly at all times. Writing within the online media of blogs, discussion forums is not an excuse for laziness, lack of proper reflection or uncivility. Arguments must be carefully crafted, respectfully presented and grounded in source texts and solid reflection. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will not succeed in this course.

Course Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Recognize the overall content and themes of the New Testament (having read it in its entirety)
- Define and use with critical awareness several of the main tools of modern New Testament exegesis
- Outline the main schools and methods of patristic exegetical tradition
- Examine the worldview and historical circumstances of the apostles and the early Church in order to assess the Gospel *kerygma* which gave birth to the New Testament texts

Course Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

- to work with both primary and secondary sources and to gather, analyse and prepare materials for reflection and engaged class discussion
- to acquire and develop analytical tools within critical schools of thought and methodologies
- to prepare and deliver a seminar presentation and lead a class discussion
- to write an exegetical study paper

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

- to recognise the overall content and themes of the New Testament (having read it in its entirety)
- define and use with critical awareness several of the main tools of modern New Testament exegesis
- outline the main schools and methods of patristic exegetical tradition
- examine the worldview and historical circumstances of the apostles and the early church in order to assess the gospel *kerygma* which gave birth to the New Testament texts

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- to manage their own learning
- to demonstrate behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

- to demonstrate qualities and skills necessary for ministry, further study, and community involvement
- to exercise initiative, personal responsibility, and accountability in both personal and group contexts
- to work effectively with others

Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be based on the following areas:

- **Class participation (25%):** most class sessions will include a period of discussion of primary and secondary texts. All students are expected to read all texts thoroughly. Students will be assigned a grade based upon their preparedness for and participation in these sessions. In addition, students will make two brief presentations to the class (described below). Participation online is through discussion forums, and interactive document discussions—specifics and instructions will be available on Quercus at the start of the course.
- **Short responses/seminar presentation (25%):** In class 2 students will submit a very brief (300 words strict maximum) initial response essay on a passage of the New Testament. In a later week, students will submit a 1,000 word (strict maximum) argumentative assessment of a patristic commentary on the same text. Students will present their conclusions to the class orally (5 minutes maximum) – for online students, the presentations will be by video recording.
- **Exegetical study paper (50%):** students will write a 3,000 word (strict maximum) exegetical study of a New Testament text of their choice (normally the same passage as selected for the short response), and also present a brief summary of their research to the class during the final session (10 minutes maximum) – for online students, the presentations will be by video recording.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A RANGE: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, and broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base
B RANGE: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work. Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. A 2% per day penalty applies (up to a maximum of 20%) for late work. This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Anti-harassment policy. As we all adjust to online classes and lectures, and increasingly participate in virtual learning environments, students are reminded of the expectation that we all demonstrate respect for one another. As outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, the University of Toronto does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities especially when based on grounds protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The University of Toronto recognizes its commitment to human rights, equity and inclusion and acknowledges the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has on various parts of our community. COVID-19 is not isolated to people of any particular ethnic origin, place of origin or race. Equity, diversity and respect must remain integral as we continue to transition during these challenging times. The institution will monitor and address discriminatory comments or behaviour including on U of T's online platforms and classrooms.

In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, no person shall engage in a course of vexatious conduct that is directed at one or more specific individuals, and that is based on the race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age marital status, family status or disability. This includes:

- Racial slurs or “jokes”
- Insults due to racial identity
- Online posts of cartoons or pictures, in a workplace or school that degrade persons of a particular racial group
- Name-calling due to race, colour, citizenship, place of origin, ancestry, ethnic background or creed
- Pseudonyms or handles that are inappropriate about ancestry, colour, citizenship, ethnicity, place of origin, race, or religion.

The University of Toronto's Equity Offices remain available to students to provide support on equity issues that arise as a result of COVID-19. Students are encouraged to support one another and the University's commitment to human rights and our values of diversity, inclusion, and respect in managing any inappropriate comments or disruptive behaviours. If you experience or witness inappropriate

comments or behaviours in your classes, you are encouraged to contact your instructor. If you can, take and share a screenshot of the inappropriate content with your instructor so they can follow-up with you and address the conduct.

Course Schedule

Class 1 – Course Introduction

Topics

- Course introduction and overview
- Introduction to concepts of exegesis, hermeneutics
- Apostolic 'kerygma': meaning and centrality to understanding the New Testament
- Setting the scene: first century Palestine – history and geography

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Introduction to reading the New Testament, pp 38-59
- World of Jesus and the early church, pp 86-170

Class 2 – Gospel of Matthew

Topics

- Gospel of Matthew: structure, themes, who is Jesus?
- Development of the New Testament canon
- Manuscript traditions
- English translations
- Gospel parallels and harmonization
- Canonical perspective and 'shaping' (Childs *et al*)

Readings

- *Gospel of Matthew* (in full)
- Please watch Part 4 of Fr John Behr on Life & Learning (if you have time, watch the whole lecture)
- Veselin Kesich, "The Early Church's Adherence to the Gospels" from *The Gospel Image of Christ*
- Brevard Childs, excerpts from *The New Testament as Canon*

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Gospel of Matthew, pp 578-603
- Textual criticism of the New Testament, pp 850-865
- Development of the New Testament canon, pp 866-875

Class 3 – Gospel of Mark

Topics

- Gospel of Mark: structure, themes, who is Jesus?
- Literary context of New Testament writings
- Comparison with other forms of literature from the period
- The 'Gospel' as unique Christian literary genre
- Oral dynamic of proclaiming the Word of God
- The “synoptic problem”

Readings

- *Gospel of Mark* (in full)

Questions to Consider in Reading Mark

- What is the structure of Mark?
- What is different from Matthew? How might you explain these differences and similarities?
- How are the disciples characterised?
- What is Mark's theology?

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Gospel of Mark, pp 554-576
- Study of the historical Jesus, pp 172-186

Class 4 – Luke

Topics

- Gospel of Luke: structure, themes, who is Jesus?
- Overview of historical-critical (form, redaction) and new literary-critical methods
- Orthodox response to and use of these methods
- The Old Testament in the New

Readings

- *Gospel of Luke* (in full)
- "The Glorious Dying of the Son: The Gospel of Luke & Jesus' Noble Death" by Peter Scaer (*Touchstone Magazine*)

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- The New Testament as literature, pp 60-74
- Jesus and the victory of God:

- Profile and praxis of a prophet, pp 188-214
- Who did Jesus think he was?, pp 216-240
- The death of the Messiah, pp 242-262
- Gospel of Luke, pp 604-627

Class 5 – John

Topics

- Gospel of John: structure, themes, what makes John different? does John contradict the synoptics? who is Jesus?
- Historical Jesus vs Christ of faith
- Contemporary questions in the encounter with Christ
- The NT as theology

Readings

- *Gospel of John* (in full)

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Gospel of John, pp 648-678
- Making of the Gospels, pp 680-700
- The New Testament as theology, pp 76-84

Class 6 – Acts of the Apostles

Topics

- Acts of the Apostles: why is Luke writing this book? what is the message? what is the church for Luke?
- Early church context from Pentecost
- Apostolic missions and spread of the Gospel
- Other early writings

Readings

- *Acts* (in full)
- “God Is with Us: The Temple in Luke-Acts” by Fr Cyprian Hutcheon

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Acts of the Apostles, pp 628-646
- Story of Paul's life and ministry, pp 336-364

Class 7 – Romans

Topics

- Epistle to the Romans: author and themes
- introduction to Paul's preaching and theology, including issues in his ministry and proposed solutions, views of Judaism in light of Christ and the new covenant, meaning of faith, person of Christ
- Textual, authorial and historical issues in the Pauline corpus

Readings

- *Romans* (in full)

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Primer on Pauline theology, pp 366-394
- Romans, pp 502-526

Class 8 – I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians

Topics

- Epistles: I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians: main themes
- Critical Realism
- "New" and "Fresh" Perspectives on Paul
- Further consideration of Paul's teaching: the church, the Holy Spirit, further reflection on Christ and the Kingdom

Readings

- *I Corinthians; II Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians* (in full)

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- I and II Corinthians, pp 474-500
- Galatians, pp 396-414
- Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians, pp 450-472

Optional Background Reading on Critical Realism and New/Fresh Perspectives on Paul

- Ben Meyer, *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 1989)
- NT Wright, "Knowledge: Problems and Varieties," chapter 2 of *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992)
- NT Wright, "New Perspectives on Paul": Rutherford House Conference, 2003

Class 9 – I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews

Topics

- Epistles: I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews: main themes, question of authorship
- Conclusion of reflection on Paul and his teaching
- Overview of early patristic exegesis
- Two schools? Alexandria and Antioch

Readings

- *I Thessalonians; II Thessalonians, I Timothy; II Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Hebrews* (in full)

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- I and II Thessalonians, pp 416-432
- Pastoral Epistles, pp 528-552
- Hebrews, pp 710-728

Class 10 – James, I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude

Topics

- General Epistles: James, I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude
- Overview of the 'general' epistles, including comparison with Pauline collection
- Further consideration of patristic exegesis of the New Testament

Readings

- *James; I Peter; II Peter; I John; II John; III John; Jude* (in full)

Other Background Reading

- NT Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God"

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Introduction to early Christian letters, pp 702-708
- James and Jude, pp 730-754
- Petrine letters, pp 756-782
- Johannine letters, pp 784-806

Class 11 – Revelation

Topics

- Book of Revelation: canonicity, authorship, purpose, place in the church, the person of Christ
- Further consideration of patristic exegesis of the New Testament
- Works that were nearly included in the New Testament

Readings

- *Revelation* (in full)

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Revelation, pp 808-848
- The resurrection of the Son of God
 - Afterlife in Greek, Roman, and Jewish thought, pp 264-294
 - The story of Easter according to the Apostle Paul, pp 296-314
 - The story of Easter according to the Evangelists, pp 316-334

Class 12 – Course Review

Topics

- Recapitulation of course themes
- Return to the early Christian exegetical vision
- Short presentations of exegetical papers by students

Readings

- Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Continuing Mystery" (ch 12 of *Living Jesus*)

Supplementary Reading from The New Testament in Its World

- Living the story of the New Testament, pp 878-889

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change in accordance with the regulations in the TST *Basic Degree Handbook*.