

# **THE SOCIAL SETTING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (NTEN 5395)**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
New Testament Department, Biblical Studies Division  
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ISRAEL TRAVEL, DEC 2015-JAN 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 “missions focus” 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 An introduction to the study of social settings is followed by an analysis of the various backgrounds based upon the historical documents from the NT period.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, student assignments, small group work, computer resources, textbook reviews, travel notes and journal, and student presentations. Both inductive and deductive approaches to learning will be utilized.

## **TEXTBOOKS:**

1. Richard Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and NT Interpretation*

2. Bruce Malina, *Windows on the World of Jesus*
3. David DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking NT Culture*

### **REQUIREMENTS IN THE COURSE:**

1. Students are expected to participate in and take notes for all of the class sessions and lectures in Israel. These notes should be included in the travel notebook mentioned below.

2. Students are expected to the assigned readings based on the following schedule: Rohrbaugh before arriving in Israel, DeSilva by the end of the trip in Israel, and Malina within three weeks from the end of the trip (Jan. 29). Written reviews on the readings are due when the readings are due and can be submitted either electronically or via a hard copy (can be hand written if done on the trip). The book review should be 3-4 single-spaced pages and include the following elements:

- 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), and your overall evaluation of the book.

The summary on Malina should be general in nature, covering the broad topics and several of the specific examples or scenarios below each topic. Also, a one-page statement should be included regarding how Malina's work could be helpful in local church ministry (teaching and/or preaching especially, but with other options open as well). (10% per review = 30% total)

3. Each student will keep a journal with notes on the sites, the lectures, and personal impressions. This journal (or a copy) is to be submitted after returning from the trip (can be submitted at the end of the trip on the last day in Israel, but must be submitted by Jan. 29). (30%)

4. Each student will select a text from the NT in consultation with the professor and write a formal paper on the text, incorporating cultural background insights from the overall topics of the class in order to highlight the exegetical meaning of the text. Papers should be approximately 12-15 pages double-spaced, including Bibliography and **are due on February 6**. Papers can be submitted via e-mail to the professor at [WWarren@nobts.edu](mailto:WWarren@nobts.edu). (30%)

5. Students will make a presentation on one of the topics listed below, with up to 3 students participating in each presentation. The presentation should reflect a specific New Testament passage related to the setting via an explanation of how the cultural background illuminates the meaning of the text. The presentation should be creative, communicating the subject in an attention-keeping manner. The time for the presentation is 2 to 3 minutes. (10%)

1. Chorazin, emphasis = Synagogue Worship (how was synagogue worship structured)
2. Caesarea Philippi, emphasis = travel in the ancient world
3. Masada, emphasis = Roman honor (if they did not win, what would people think?)
4. Jerusalem, emphasis = Burial Customs (what were the normal Jewish & Roman practices)

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

Trip Participation & Log	30%	Book Reviews	30% (10% each)
Research Paper	30%	Presentation	10%

**CLASS TOPICS AND RELATED READINGS:**

BOOK REVIEW ON ROHRBAUGH DUE PRIOR TO ARRIVING IN ISRAEL (DEC. 30)

LECTURE AND CLASS TOPICS WHILE IN ISRAEL:

**Topic #1: Honor and Shame**

The concept of Honor and Shame in the NT

Examples of Honor and Shame from Malina (M 1-19)

Source Materials and NT texts related to Honor and Shame

**Topic #2: Interpersonal Behavior**

Intro to the concepts of group/grid and group/indiv.

Examples of Interpersonal Behavior from Malina (M 21-45)

Source Materials & NT texts on Interpersonal Behavior & kinship

Examples of kinship from Malina (M 47-70)

Introduction to in-groups and out-groups

Source materials and NT texts related to in-groups and out-groups (M 71-87)

**Topic #3: Purity Laws and the System of Purity**

Intro to the concepts of Purity/Taboo and Clean/Unclean

Examples of Purity Laws from Malina, (M 113-153)

Source Materials & NT texts related to the Purity System

**Topic #4: First Century Social Institutions**

Intro to the social institutions of the first century

Source Materials and NT texts related to social institutions

**Topic #5: First Century Social Dynamics**

Concepts of table fellowship, ancient reading, and event time

Literacy in the Greco-Roman Empire

Examples of event time from Malina (M 155-171)

Source Materials and NT texts related to these concepts

BOOK REVIEW ON DESILVA DUE BY THE END OF OUR ISRAEL TRIP (JAN. 8)

BOOK REVIEW ON MALINA DUE THREE WEEKS AFTER THE TRIP (JAN. 30)

TRAVEL LOG/NOTEBOOK DUE THREE WEEKS AFTER THE TRIP (JAN. 30)

RESEARCH PAPER DUE: FEBRUARY 6

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