



**THTH8305 - The Bible and Contemporary Issues**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**  
**Theological & Historical Studies Division**  
**July 13-15, 2026**  
Mon 1-9pm; Tues 8am-4pm; Wed 8am-4pm CST

**Steve W. Lemke, PhD**

Provost Emeritus, Professor of Philosophy and Ethics  
Phone: 504-458-6724  
Email: slemke@nobrts.edu

**Mission Statement**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

**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.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

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

- Defend the inspiration and authority of Scripture.
- Understand more deeply apologetic or ethical issues from a Christian perspective.
- Preach a message addressing a contemporary issue in apologetics or ethics.

**Textbooks**

Cowan, Steven B., and Terry L. Wilder, ed. *In Defense of the Bible: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of the Bible*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013.  
Swartley, Willard. *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation*. Conrad Grebel Lectures. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 1983.

**Course Teaching Methodology**

The course will involve the following methodologies: professor-facilitated student presentations, class discussions, a book review, chapter summaries, and post-course curriculum development. Students will be learners and also facilitate the learning of their peers.

**Course Requirements**

- Pre-Seminar Assignment 1: Chapter summaries of *In Defense of the Bible* -- Due 6/1.  
Read *In Defense of the Bible* and submit a one-page, single-spaced summary for each chapter, with a list of insights gleaned and two discussion questions for each chapter.
- Pre-Seminar Assignment 2: Chapter summaries of *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women* – Due 6/22  
Read *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women*, and submit a one-page, single-spaced summary of each chapter, plus a list of insights gleaned & two discussion questions for each chapter.

- Pre-Seminar Assignment 3: Book review – Due 7/13
  - (a) Choose a book to review from the Bibliography. Books with an asterisk beside them are preferred, since they deal with contemporary issues, but you may choose any book from the Bibliography that best serves your interests. Each student must review a different book. To sign up for a book, register it at the place provided in Canvas by 7/1.
  - (b) Cite page numbers parenthetically. Footnote only outside sources. Use quotations sparingly. Limit first-person language (I, me, my). Format in double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font.
  - (c) Begin with a one or two-sentence biography of the author.
  - (d) Summarize and explain the author's thesis and supporting arguments. This section might also include a description of the book's contents and definitions of key terms (500-600 words).
  - (e) Write a critique of 1,000-1,200 words. The critique should address the following that are relevant:
    - critique of the author's thesis, assumptions, supporting arguments, method, sources, logic, and style;
    - specific examples of strengths and weaknesses (such as any relevant areas not addressed) of the book;
    - discussion of the book's usefulness for the intended audience, how the book contributes to its field, and other books which explore the issue;
    - a closing sentence either recommending the book or not, and explaining why.
  - (f) Prepare your book review with the evaluation rubric in mind.
  
- In-Seminar Assignment: Lead Presentation & Participation in Discussion – Due 7/13
  - (a) Be prepared to share your insights about the hermeneutics about each of the topics addressed in Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women, as well as the hermeneutical model for dealing with issues presented in the text. Students will read all pre-seminar material and complete all pre-seminar assignments prior to the first day of class, as well as to participate meaningfully in seminar discussions.
  - (b) Prepare a presentation program and handout for the class about the book you reviewed. Overview the content of the book, summarizing the views presented. Lead the seminar in a discussion of these issues. A schedule for presentation times will be posted in Canvas.
  
- Post-Seminar Assignment: Submit a 4-week sermon or lesson curriculum – Due 8/2

Develop a sermon series or series of discipleship sessions regarding a cluster of contemporary issues.

  - (a) For the sermon, prepare a four-week sermon series addressing a cluster of related contemporary issues. The sermon should be expressed with a brief that describes the primary meaning of the text, the thesis or main point, and an outline. Include a basic manuscript of the message, plus a PowerPoint presentation to accompany it.
  - (b) For the four-week discipleship series, address four contemporary issues from a Biblical perspective. Each of the four lessons should be comprised of:
    - \* a teaching manuscript and lesson plan for 30–45 minutes of material (3,000–4,500 words). Include footnotes to document important claims or quotations. Discussion questions or case studies are encouraged.
    - \* a PowerPoint presentation.
    - \* a handout for listeners.

## Book Review Grading Rubric

	10	9	8	7	5
Content	proper length robust explanation and critique of thesis all details accurate	proper length acceptable explanation and critique of thesis minimal inaccuracies	improper length provides some explanation and critique of thesis some inaccuracies	improper length provides little explanation and critique of thesis many inaccuracies	improper length neither explains nor critiques the thesis no accurate details
Organization	addresses topic directly highly organized structure	addresses topic directly organized structure	addresses topic somewhat organized structure	somewhat addresses topic highly unorganized structure	wanders significantly no organized structure
Logical Support	superior examples of the topic	examples of the topic	acceptable support of the topic	minimal support of the topic	no logical support of the topic
Communication	exceptionally clear meaning to the reader	clear meaning to the reader	somewhat clear meaning to the reader	unclear meaning to the reader	incoherent for the reader
Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	no visible or significant errors	errors do not disturb the reading process	errors sometimes disturb the reading process	errors often disturb the reading process	errors make reading difficult

### Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

- 20% - Pre-Seminar Assignment 1: Chapter summaries of *Formation of the Bible*
- 20% - Pre-Seminar Assignment 2: Chapter summaries of *In Defense of the Bible*
- 20% - Pre-Seminar Assignment 3: Book review of *Flood and Fury*
- 20% - In-Seminar Assignment: Lead Presentation & Discussion
- 20% - Post-Seminar Assignment: Submit a 4-lesson curriculum

### Attendance Policy

**Traditional and NOLA2U Classes:** Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of "F" for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

### If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Live student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. The course on the New Orleans campus will be connected synchronously via Web conferencing with Internet students. These courses will require weekly attendance at the stated class meeting times.
2. Students are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in this syllabus.
3. Technical issues will not be considered a valid reason for missing a class session.

## Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. [Selfserve@nobts.edu](mailto:Selfserve@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the [Selfserve.nobts.edu](http://Selfserve.nobts.edu) or [My.nobts.edu](http://My.nobts.edu) site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. [Canvas@nobts.edu](mailto:Canvas@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) [Canvas.NOBTS.edu](http://Canvas.NOBTS.edu).
3. [Video Conferencing Help Desk](#) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Video Conferencing NOBTS classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. [TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu](mailto:TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. [ITCSupport@nobts.edu](mailto:ITCSupport@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time)
7. [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://www.NOBTS.edu/itc/) - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

## Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at:

<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

## Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for the definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

## Course Schedule

Day	Time	Topic	Facilitator
6/1		Submit Pre-Seminar Assignment 1: Chapter summaries of <i>In Defense of the Bible</i>	Canvas
6/22		Submit Pre-Seminar Assignment 2: Chapter summaries of <i>Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women</i>	Canvas
7/13		Submit Pre-Seminar Assignment 3: Book review	Canvas
7/13	1:00-4:00 pm	Introduction to the Class Discussion of <i>In the Defense of Scripture</i>	Dr. Lemke
7/13	6:00-9:00 pm	Getting a Biblical Authorization for an Ethical Issue: Old Testament	Dr. Lemke
7/14	8:00-11:00 am	Getting a Biblical Authorization for an Ethical Stance: New Testament	Dr. Lemke
7/14	1:00-4:00 pm	Discussion of Hermeneutical Perspectives on Slavery, Sabbath, War, & Women	Dr. Lemke
7/15	8:00-11:00 am	Presentation of Book Reviews	Class
8/2		Submit 4-week sermon or lesson curriculum	Canvas

## **Selected Bibliography**

- \*Akin, Daniel. *God on Sex: The Creator's Ideas about Love, Intimacy, and Marriage*. Nashville: B & H, 2003.
- \*Baucham, Voddie, Jr. *Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
- Beckwith, Roger T. *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church: and its Background in Early Judaism*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008.
- \*Berding, Kenneth, and Jonathan Lunde, eds. *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Counterpoints: Bible and Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
- \*Black, Amy, and Stanley Gundry, eds. *Five Views on the Church and Politics*. Counterpoints: Bible and Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.
- 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.
- \*Bock, Darrell L. Bock, Robert M. Bowman, Jr., and Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.
- 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.
- \*Copan, Paul. *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.
- \*Copen, Paul, ed. *War, Peace, and Violence: Four Christian Views*. Spectrum Multiview Book Series. Downers Grove: IVP, 2023.
- Corley, Bruce, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy. *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Guide to Interpreting Scripture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010.
- \*Darling, Daniel. *Ministers of Reconciliation: Preaching on Race and the Gospel*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019.
- Dockery, David S., and Yarnell, Malcolm B. III. *Special Revelation and Scripture*. Theology for the People of God. Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2024.
- Evans, Craig A. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Groothuis, Douglas. *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity against the Challenges of Postmodernism*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.
- \*Hammett, James S. Hammett and Katie J. McCoy, *Humanity*. Theology for the People of God series. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2023.
- \*Keathley, Kenneth, J. B. Stump, Joe Aguirre, eds. *Old Earth or Evolutionary Creation? Discussing Origins with Reasons to Believe and BioLogos*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017.
- 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.
- 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.
- \*Lozcalzo, Craig A. *Apologetic Preaching: Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.

- \*Lynch, Matthew J. *Flood and Fury: Old Testament Violence and the Shalom of God*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2023.
- McDonald, Lee Martin. *Formation of the Bible: The Story of the Church's Canon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Before There Was a Bible: Authorities in Early Christianity*. London: T&T Clark, 2023.
- Meade, John D., and Peter J. Gurry. *Scribes and Scripture: The Amazing Story of How We Got the Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022.
- \*Meister, Chad, and James K. Dew, Jr., *God and the Problem of Evil: Five Views*, Spectrum Multiview Book Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- \*Okholm, Dennis L., and Timothy R. Phillips. *Four Views of Salvation in a Pluralistic World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Pearcey, Nancy, and Charles Thaxton, *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*. Ada, MI: Baker Books, 1994.
- \*Pearcey, Nancy. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019.
- \*\_\_\_\_\_. *The Toxic War on Masculinity: How Christianity Reconciles the Sexes*. Ada, MI: Baker, 2023.
- \*Richards, E. Randolph, and Brandon J. O'Brien. *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012.
- \*Sanders, John, ed., with Gabriel Fackre and Ronald Nash. *What about Those Who Have Never Heard? Three Views on the Destiny of the Unevangelized*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- \*Sprinkle, Preston, ed. *Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church*. Counterpoints: Bible and Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Stewart, Robert B., ed. *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel Wallace in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
- \*Trimm, Charlie. *The Destruction of the Canaanites: God, Genocide, and Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022.
- \*Verhey, Allen. *Reading the Bible in the Strange World of Medicine*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Wallace, J. Warner. *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013.
- Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translation: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999.