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| Logo  Description automatically generated | **MTG201.9**  **Interpreting the New Testament (SCMOI)** |
| **Semester 1, 2025** |



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| Unit Supervisor & Lecturer | Very Rev. Dr Peter A. L. Hill  [frpeter@scmoi.edu.au](mailto:frpeter@scmoi.edu.au) | | |
| Delivery | Tuesday 6pm – 8pm (AEST)  Fully Online | | |
| AQF Level | 9 | Credit Points | 6 |
| *Please note*: This unit is taught in parallel with an undergraduate equivalent. This means that you will share learning experiences with students completing an undergraduate award; however, the learning outcomes, work for assessment, and some other expectations will differ. Your requirements should be clearly articulated in this unit description. If you have any concerns or queries about Tabor’s practice of parallel teaching, please speak to your lecturer. | | | |

**UNIT DESCRIPTION**

This unit examines the formation, content, background, storyline, main themes and literature of the New Testament canon to facilitate its faithful interpretation for, and communication to, diverse contemporary audiences. Our approach is grounded in the patristic and liturgical interpretive framework of the Church, but students will critically analyse the three worlds of the biblical text, developing an informed theory of interpretation and engaging with various perspectives, methodologies and biblical criticisms. Special focus is given to the cultivation of methods and skills for reading and communicating the various genres within this corpus.

**PREREQUISITES**

N/A

**CLASS ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

Students are expected to participate in class discussions, complete required readings and to submit assessment work on time. Attendance at the scheduled online classes is compulsory. Failure to attend three or more classes without permission may result in a fail mark for the unit.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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| **ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS TASK THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:** | **RELATED CONTENT** | **RELATED ASSESSMENT** |
| 1. Analyse contemporary issues, perspectives and criticisms in New Testament interpretation, evaluating their significance for engaging with the world behind, within, and in front of the biblical text. |  | 1. 4. |
| 1. Evaluate the contribution of non-canonical studies and literature for New Testament interpretation. |  | 1. |
| 1. Analyse the background, storyline and main themes of the New Testament and apply to the interpretation of various New Testament texts. |  | 3. |
| 1. Synthesise and critically apply the insights from contextual and comparative studies to the interpretation of various New Testament genres |  | 4. |
| 1. Creatively communicate clear and coherent interpretations of various New Testament genres to diverse audiences, justifying the strategies employed. |  | 3. |

**CHANGES MADE SINCE LAST OFFERED**

N/A

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (Students should purchase this/these texts)

Boersma, Hans, *Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

Wright, N. T, and Michael F Bird. The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019).

The text of Holy Scripture used in class is *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008).

# While not required, students are encouraged to obtain as an introduction to traditional Orthodox interpretation of the New Testament: Archbishop Averky Taushev, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament* (3 Vols; trans. Nicholas Kotar; Jordanville: HTSP, 2013 – 2015).

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY**

# Alfeyev, Metropolitan Hilarion*, Jesus Christ: His Life and Teaching Volumes 1- 3.* Yonkers, NY: SVS Press, 2018-2021).

Baker, Matthew, and Mark Mourachian (eds), *What is the Bible? The Patristic Doctrine of Scripture* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016).

# Bauckham, Richard, Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

Beale, G.K, and D. A. Carson, (eds), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

Bernier, Jonathan, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: The Evidence for Early Composition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022).

Black, David Allan, *Why Four Gospels?* (Grand Rapids: Kregal, 2001).

Bokedal, Tomas, “The Early Rule-of-Faith Pattern as Emergent Biblical Theology,” in *Christ the Center: How the Rule of Faith, the* Nomina Sacra*, and Numerical Patterns Shape the Canon* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023), 283–314.

Breck, John*, Scripture in Tradition: The Bible and Its Interpretation in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2001).

# Burge, Gary M., Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament Within Its Cultural Context* (2nd edition; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020).

Daniélou, Jean, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers* (London: Burns & Oates, 1960) (various reprints).

DeSilva, David A., *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation* (2nd ed; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018).

De Young, Stephen, *Saint Paul the Pharisee: Jewish Apostle to All Nations* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith, 2024).

Dungan, David Laird, *A History of the Synoptic Problem* (New York: Doubleday, Anchor, 1999).

Evans, Craig A., *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007).

Flegg, Columba Graham, *An Introduction to Reading the Apocalypse* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1999).

Florovsky, Georges, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View* (Vol. 1 Collected Works; Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987).

Ford, Mary S., *The Soul’s Longing: An Orthodox Christian Perspective on Biblical Interpretation* (Waymart: St Tikhon Monastery Press, 2015).

# Gorman, Michael J., *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. ed. 2016).

# Green, Joel B, and Lee Martin McDonald, (eds.), *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).

Hill, Peter A. L., “The Diatessaron: A Short Introduction,” *Orthodox Faith and Life* 1 (2019): 28–60.

Humphrey, Edith M*., Scripture and Tradition: What the Bible Really Says* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013).

Jovanović, Ljubica, “A Contemporary Orthodox Approach to the Bible: Back to the Sources,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 63 (2017): 257–82.

Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Richard D. Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregal, 2011).

Legaspi, Michael C., *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

McGuckin, John A., “Recent Biblical Hermeneutics in Patristic Perspective: The Tradition of Orthodoxy,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 47 (2002):295–326.

Mihoc, Vasile, “Principles of Orthodox Hermeneutics,” in *Vetus Testamentum Congress Volume Ljubjana 2007* (Louvain: Brill, 2007): 293–320.

Negrov, Alexander I., *Biblical Interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church: A Historical and Hermeneutical Perspective* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

Oden, Thomas C. (Gen. ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament* (14 vols; Downers Grove: IVP, 2005).

O’Keefe, John J., and Reno, R.R., *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

Parsenios, George L., “An Orthodox Perspective on the New Testament Canon,” in *Five Views in the New Testament Canon* (ed. Stanley E. Porter & Benjamin P. Laird; Grand Rapids: Kregal, 2022), 159–87.

O’Keefe, John J., and Reno, R.R., *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005)

Stylianopoulos, T. G., *The Making of the New Testament* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2014).

Troitsky, New Hieromartyr Hilarion, “Holy Scripture and the Church,” *The Orthodox Word* 264/265 (2009): 28– 72. Online at various sites, including <https://pravoslavie.ru/33327.html>

Troitsky, New Hieromartyr Hilarion, “The New Testament Doctrine Concerning the Church,” in *On the Dogma of the Church* (tr. Nathan Williams; n.p: Uncut Mountain Press, 2022), 21–82.

# White, Gregory A. (ed.), *NET Bible Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 2004). Online at <https://bible.org/assets/pdf/White_ntsynopsis.pdf>

Dictionaries:

Freedman, David N. (Gen. ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols; New York: Doubleday, Anchor, 1997).

Green, Joel B., Jeanine K. Brown & Nicholas Perrin (eds), Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (2nd edn; London: IVP, 2020).

Hawthorne, G. F., and R. P. Martin ( eds), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993).

**SEMESTER PROGRAM**

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| **Date** | **Week** | **Lecture / Workshop Topic** | **Weekly readings** |
| 25 Feb | 1 | NT as Christian Scripture, Historical Setting and Cultural History  [Before class please read  New Hieromartyr Hilarion Troitsky, “Holy Scripture and the Church”] |  |
| 3 – 7 Mar |  | **First Week of Great Lent – NO CLASSES** |  |
| 11 Mar | 2 | NT as Book: Tradition, Canon, Transmission of the Text  What is exegesis? | Wright & Bird, 60–75 & 825–75. |
| 18 Mar | 3 | Why Four Gospels? Historical and Literary Criticism of the Gospels. The Gospels as history. The Synoptic ‘Problem’  ***Census Date Monday 19th, last date to withdraw without financial penalty*** | Wright & Bird, 680–99. |
| 25 Mar | 4 | Principles of Patristic Interpretation; Historical-Critical Interpretation; Missional hermeneutics; Interpreting parables & miracles. | Vasile Mihoc, “Principles of Orthodox Hermeneutics” |
| 1 Apr | 5 | Survey of Matthew & Mark; Son of Man; Son of David; Son of God | Wright & Bird, 216–41 & 578–603. |
| 8 Apr | 6 | Survey of Luke | Wright & Bird, 680–99. |
| 14–25 Apr |  | **Holy Week, Pascha, Bright Week – NO CLASSES** |  |
| 29 Apr | 7 | Survey of John | Jovanović, “A Contemporary Orthodox Approach to the Bible: Back to the Sources” |
| 6 May | 8 | Survey of Acts; The concept of the Church in the NT  (*Multimedia Presentations*) | Wright & Bird, 628–47. |
| 13 May | 9 | The Apostle Paul’s life and writings; the “Rule of Faith” | Theodore Stylianopoulos, *The Making of the New Testament*, 45–65.  Wright & Bird, 336– 95. |
| 20 May | 10 | Galatians, Romans and Ephesians | Wright & Bird, 396– 415 & 502–27. |
| 27 May | 11 | Hebrews and James | Wright & Bird, 710– 49. |
| 3 June | 12 | 1 Peter and 1 – 3 John | Wright & Bird, 756–63 & 770–77 & 784– 807. |
| 10 June | 13 | Revelation | Wright & Bird, 808– 47. |

**ASSESSMENT TASKS**

**Due Dates Summary:**

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| **Assessment** | **Words** | **Value** | **Due Date** |
| 1. Short paper 1 | 1000 | 20% | Saturday, 22 March by 23:59 (AEST) |
| 1. Short paper 2 | 1000 | 20% | Saturday, 12 April by 23:59 (AEST) |
| 1. Multimedia presentation | 1000 (equiv) | 20% | Tuesday, 6 May by 23:59 (AEST) (presentation in class) |
| 1. Research Essay | 3000 | 40% | Monday 2 June by 23:59 (AEST) |

**Task Description:**

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| **ASSESSMENT TASK 1**  **Title of Assessment**  Short Paper 1  20%  *Due:* Saturday, 22 March by 23:59 (AEST)  *1000 words* |
| **Instructions**  Introduce and analyse “The Gospel of Thomas” **or** “The Gospel of Peter.” Evaluate how the text selected has contributed to theories about the formation of the canonical Gospels and their interpretation. Students must engage with the non-canonical work selected plus at least 5 additional scholarly sources.  **Rationale and Expectations**  This assessment requires the student to engage critically with a non-canonical document and to evaluate its contribution to New Testament studies, theories of Gospel formation, and impact on the interpretation of the Fourfold Gospel text. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 2**  **Title of Assessment**  Short Paper 2  20%  *Due:* Saturday, 12 April by 23:59 (AEST)  *1000 words* |
| **Instructions**  “Can patristic allegorical interpretation still be of use to us today? This is a weighty question, since by definition ‘allegorizing’ may seem to imply misinterpretation of the biblical text. The etymology of the term ‘allegory’ speaks for itself: *allos* (other) and *agoreuein* (to speak); hence, ‘to speak other’—other, that is, than what the words themselves appear to say. By what right would one ‘speak other’ than what the words themselves convey? And how does such a practice of allegorizing not turn into an arbitrary imposition of our own preconceived notions onto the biblical text?” (Hans Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 81). Discuss, specifically with reference to Boersma’s treatment of allegorical interpretation, and the overall argument of *Scripture as Real Presence*. Students need to show that they have critically engaged with Boersma’s presentation by refencing related literature (at least six items).  **Rationale and Expectations**  This assessment requires the student to engage critically and in-depth with an important hermeneutical study and to reflect on the various ways in which a particular interpretative stance might be utilised. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 3**  Multimedia Presentation  20%  *Due:* Tuesday, 6 May by 23:59 (AEST)  1000 *words (equivalent)* |
| **Instructions**  Create a media presentation (e.g. slide show, video, etc; or a blend of technologies) explaining a key New Testament theme as it is presented throughout the NT canon.  Students will make their presentations (MAX 10 minutes) during class time on 6 May (Week 8) and have until 23:59 (AEST) on the same day to submit their media artifact online. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  The assignment requires the student first to identify and understand the presentation of a NT theme across the varied genres of the NT canon, and then, utilising an appropriate methodology, communicate their understanding to others. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 4**  Research Essay & Annotated Bibliography  40%  Due: Monday 2 June by 23:59 (AEST)  *3000 words* |
| **Instructions**  **Major Essay**: 3000 words (inc. 500-word Annotated Bibliography).  For the major essay students will select (in consultation with the Lecturer) a passage from either the Gospels, Acts or the Pauline epistles and analyse and compare how it has been interpreted by patristic commentators and by two other hermeneutical perspectives. The essay must engage critically with the methodology and exegesis of each of the interpretations selected and show reflective engagement with the literature listed in your Annotated Bibliography (see below). Include a brief assessment of how each of these approaches may be, or not be, useful to communicating the New Testament message in the Australian context.  **Annotated Bibliography** (500 words, included in the Major Essay word count)  In preparation for dealing with the topic of the major essay, students submit NO LATER THAN WEEK 8 a bibliography that evidences engagement with a representative range of the relevant scholarly literature. There is no limit on the number of items listed—noting that the word limit for the bibliography should not exceed 500 words—but a bibliography of less than eight items, or one that does not evidence consultation of the academic journals, will not be acceptable. It is expected that the major essay will evidence comprehension of, and reflective engagement with, the works listed in the bibliography. The bibliography is not a literature review but for each item listed in the student will:   1. Give full bibliographical details in the approved format; 2. State in one sentence the main thesis of the listed work; and 3. State in one sentence why the listed work relates to the essay topic.   The Annotated Bibliography attached to the Major Essay is the version of the bibliography that will be marked (= 10% of the total assessment, i.e. one quarter of the 40% mark for Assessment 4) |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  This essay requires investigation of the nature of the NT writings, especially with respect to the question of historicity, and of contextual and comparative approaches to NT hermeneutics. |

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ASSESSMENTS**

Please refer to this Unit’s website tile *Assignments* (hyperlink) for further information about assignments, assessment criteria, grading scale, and the process for late submission of assignments.

Refer to the [*Student Academic Toolkit*](https://learn.tabor.edu.au/course/view.php?id=3718)for information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, referencing, formatting, and for relevant links to Tabor and faculty policy. If you are unsure, consult your lecturer or program coordinator for advice.

Please note that all assignments in this unit will be assessed with reference to the SCMOI Marking Rubric posted on the Unit Moodle page.