

Module Title:	Introduction to the New Testament
Module Code:	410 TINT
Level:	4
Credit Rating:	20 Credits
Duration:	Student Learning Time: 200 hours
Teaching Hours:	40 Hours
Academic Responsibility:	Joseph O’Hanlon PhD

Module Aims:

This module seeks to familiarise students with the New Testament from the perspectives of its origins and broad content, and the diversity of its materials - revealing the New Testament as a collection of disparate works. Students will learn how to navigate around the NT, that is, know the geography of the canonical texts as a collection. In tandem with such study, students will be introduced to some of the methods by which scholars approach New Testament literature (as conveniently discussed in *L'Interprétation de la Bible dans l'Église* and more recent criticism of the historical-critical method). Engagement with the texts and the contexts from which they emerged will equip students for the close encounter and engagement with texts which will be required in subsequent levels of scripture study.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the module students should be able to:

1. Understand the factors which define each genre and appreciate the critical insights which both determine and describe genre identification.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the NT corpus, both as a corpus and of its components.
3. Begin an exploration of critical approaches to NT texts – and an introduction to shifting theological paradigms.
4. Gain familiarity with the many questions besetting the understanding of texts and their employment in historical research.

Indicative Module Content:

This module seeks to introduce neophytes to the study of the documents which make up the New Testament. Factors which impelled the emergence of such texts, the nature of the compositions which form the New Testament, and the “process” of canonicity will be concerns. The structure of ancient letters, the Pauline and non-Pauline letters, and the disparate exigencies which gave them birth, and issues of pseudonymity, will be addressed. The genre gospel and factors which gave rise to the production of Gospels (canonical and non-canonical), insofar as these may tentatively be determined, will form a major part of this module. Attention will be paid to the sociological (widely understood) complexes which may have generated New Testament writings. Students will be encouraged to acquaint themselves with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern history without which New Testament study is impossible.

The module will specifically address the following areas:

1. Introduction: the NT, its geography and the significance of the ordering and descriptions of its contents.
2. The *Sitz im Leben* of epistolary documents; their form and content.

3. The meaning of the word gospel in Greek and Jewish discourse. Its NT uses. The perennial debates on genre.
4. Post Enlightenment Critical Approaches to the Gospels and biblical criticism.
5. The emergence of New Testament Christologies.

Learning and Teaching Strategies:

The basic format of presentation will be four weekly lectures systematically treating the subject matter as described in the Indicative Module Content. Students are given specific weekly reading assignments as well as directed toward extra-curricular reading proposed by the instructor. Research interests are quickly identified and tutorial sessions, depending on individual needs of the students, arranged for clarification and direction, inclusive of suggested extra-curricular reading. Within the classroom context of lectures, active participation of students in terms of questions and, especially, discussion is strongly encouraged as a primary way of developing analytical skills, critical thinking, and clarity of expression.

Assessment:

The module will be assessed by

- a written essay of not less than 2,500 words chosen from a selection of questions proposed by the instructor (50%),
- and a written paper treating primary as well as secondary sources according to the research interests of the student and not exceeding 2,500 words (50%).

Indicative Essay Titles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Illustrative Bibliography

Brown, Raymond E. (1997)	<i>An Introduction to the New Testament.</i>	Doubleday.
Achtemeier, Paul J., Green, Joel B., Thompson, M. M. (2001)	<i>Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology.</i>	William B. Eerdmans
Theissen, Gerd, Merz, Annette (1998)	<i>The Historical Jesus.</i>	SCM Press.
Ehrman, Bart D. (2000)	<i>The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings.</i>	Oxford University Press.
Ehrman, Bart D. (1998) Press.	<i>The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader.</i>	Oxford University
Johnson, Luke Timothy (2003)	<i>The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation.</i>	SCM Press.

- Witherington III, Ben (2001) *New Testament History: A Narrative Account.* Baker Academic/
Paternoster Press.
- VanderKam, James C. *An Introduction to Early Judaism.* William B.
Eerdmans (2001)
- The Pontifical Biblical Commission (1993) *L'Interprétation de la Bible dans l'Église.* Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- The Pontifical Biblical Commission, (2002) *The Jewish People and their Scriptures
in the Christian Bible.* Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Dunn, James D. G. (1980) *Christology in the Making.* SCM Press.
- Freyne, Sean (2004) *Jesus, A Jewish Galilean.* T & T Clark.