



**The REACH Program of  
Trinity International University**

**BI 120R –  
Understanding the New Testament**

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Student's Manual 3.4

“Do not be conformed to the patten of this world,  
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”  
Romans 12:2 (ESV)

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## I. Course Description

BI 120R – Understanding the New Testament. An overview of the various types of literature in the New Testament (gospel, historical narrative [Acts], letter, and apocalypse), the methods of study appropriate to each with application to specific texts and to New Testament content. This course explores the background, literary art, theological teaching, and contemporary message of the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation. Attention will also be given to the canonical significance of these writings, appropriate methods of interpretation and the application of Scripture.

## II. Course Overview

Few writings have had the powerful influence on Western civilization that the Bible has had. For Christians, this influence is even greater. The Bible is held to be *the* foundational document of religious faith and the New Testament, in particular, is viewed as supremely authoritative for belief and behavior. Yet for all its importance and culture-shaping influence, the New Testament is not always understood and interpreted correctly. Amongst church attendees, the detailed study of the scriptures has frequently been replaced by casual, topical exposition and inquiry.

This course consists of five sessions that are each four hours long. For each week that the class meets, you are required to complete both reading and written assignments. During each session, your instructor will guide you through a detailed study of the New Testament documents. Furthermore, during each session, there will be ample time for group interaction and discussion of the New Testament texts. In essence, each session builds upon the other so that at the end, you will have a good understanding of the NT text.

More specifically:

1. This course will expose the student to the history and geography of the NT. Many of the names and places should become clear, and the timeline of events should crystallize the student's understanding of the story of redemption. Along the way, insights from comparative studies will be discovered.
2. At appropriate points in the study of the material, the questions that generations of modern scholars have asked of the text will be raised and their answers supplied and critiqued. The strengths and weaknesses of these approaches will be considered, including the "grammatical-historical" method of interpretation.
3. The student will gain adeptness at relating the NT documents to Christ's person and work. How the NT influences our reading of the Old Testament is an important consideration in this course.
4. Finally, the importance of the NT in the formation of the believer's personal spiritual life will also be explored.

### III. Course Materials

#### 1. Required Reading

- a. Elwell, W. A., & Yarbrough, R. W. (2005). *Encountering the New Testament: A historical and theological survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- b. Zondervan NIV Study Bible (rev. ed.). (2008). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. ISBN: 978-0310938965

#### 2. Recommended

- a. Gundry, Robert H. (2006). *A Survey Of The New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

### IV. Course Policies

#### 1. APA Documentation

All written work (e.g. worksheets/essay questions, reflection papers, final projects, etc.) in the REACH Program must conform to the APA parenthetical notation style (please consult *A Pocket Style Manual* listed above). This includes:

- an APA title page (including a running header and page number)
- an “Abstract” page with a 1-2 paragraph summary of your paper (an abstract is only necessary for your Applied Learning Papers, but not for your smaller assignments)
- In-text citations (with author(s), date, and page number (if applicable))  
Note Well: Even discussion board postings and PowerPoint presentations, for example, must use in-text citations when you cite another person’s work or ideas.
- a “References” page (it is not called a “bibliography”)
- one inch margins
- 12 point font
- double spaced

Failure to use and cite others’ work or ideas properly will lead to charges of academic dishonesty. See below for more information.

#### 2. Academic Integrity

As a member of the Trinity community, we ask you to hold yourself and others to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Violations take many forms, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism: using another’s work or ideas without proper documentation, which requires citing the author or authors’ name(s), date of publication, and page number (if applicable)
- Cheating: using notes, books, or crib sheets during closed-book quizzes or exams, or copying from another’s student’s work
- Submitting Previous Work: submitting your work that was previously turned in for credit

- Ghosting: writing a paper or taking a quiz (or any other evaluation) in place of another student
- Aiding and Abetting: helping others to commit acts of academic dishonesty, or failing to report those who have or plan to commit dishonest acts

Faculty members will investigate all violations of academic integrity, whether deliberate or non-deliberate. If a violation is confirmed, the student may receive an “F” for the assignment and the course. In such a case, the student may not drop the course. The faculty member will document the case of dishonesty, explaining the incident and the action taken. The Associate Dean of Nontraditional Education will receive a copy of this report, and a copy will be placed in the student’s file. In serious cases of academic dishonesty, the Associate Dean may choose to meet with the student and faculty member to review the case. Multiple violations may lead to a student’s dismissal from the program.

### 3. Late Work

All assignments must be turned in on or before the date they are due. Any assignment turned in late will be deducted as follows:

- a. 10% off for up to one day late
- b. 20% off for up to two days late
- c. assignments more than two days late will receive a zero

An extension on the time needed to submit final course requirements (such as the ALP) will be granted only in unusual circumstances and if the instructor and the Associate Dean grant the request.

### 4. Attendance Policy

Because of the accelerated and collaborative nature of the REACH courses, students are required to attend every class session. Missing a single class means a significant portion of contact with the instructor and the learning community has been lost.

For face-to-face courses, students missing one class session will be penalized between one-half and one full letter grade. Students missing two class sessions will receive an “F” for the course. Any student missing more than 30 minutes of a course session will be considered absent for the full course session.

For online courses, students must participate actively in class discussions and activities. Failure to do so will result in a grade reduction of one-half to a full letter grade at the discretion of the instructor.

## V. Course Objectives

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

1. Define the parts of the New Testament Canon and the principles of its formation.
2. Apply hermeneutics to biblical passages and explain the importance of hermeneutics in avoiding interpretation errors.

3. Describe reasons for reading and studying the New Testament and applying it to daily life.
4. Define ‘Gospel’ and concisely describe the relationship between Jesus Christ and the ‘Gospel of Good News’ found in the New Testament.
5. Describe the main themes found in the gospels, epistles, and Revelation.
6. Recognize the cultural, religious, and other effects of the Greek society on the pre-Christian and Early Church world.
7. Describe the theological significance and real world relevance of Jesus’ death on the cross for the entire world.
8. Explain the relationship between New Testament believers and Old Testament teaching.
9. Distinguish between Jesus’ first coming and His second coming from relevant scripture passages.

## VI. Course Requirements

In order to receive a passing grade for this course, you must complete, to the best of your ability all of the assigned reading and written assignments. Each session assignment is due at the beginning of class. The ALP paper will be due one week after the last class period. Your instructor will inform you regarding the dates and times of when each class meets.

## VII. Grading Scale

Your final course grade will be based on the total number of points that you earn throughout the course.

Percentage	Grade
92-100	A
90-91	A-
88-89	B+
82-87	B
80-81	B-
78-79	C+
72-77	C
70-71	C-
68-69	D+
62-67	D
60-61	D-
0-59	F

**Grading Sheet: BI 120R: Understanding The New Testament**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Reading (35 points)**

- Percentage of reading completed before class \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Student worksheets (40 points per worksheet)**

- Worksheet #1 \_\_\_\_\_
- Worksheet #2 \_\_\_\_\_
- Worksheet #3 \_\_\_\_\_
- Worksheet #4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Worksheet #5 \_\_\_\_\_

**Worksheet Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Applied learning paper (100 points total)** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Class participation (25 points total)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Points (360)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Grade in Course** \_\_\_\_\_

## VIII. Applied Learning Paper

The major assignment for this course, known as the Applied Learning Paper, will be **due one week after session five**. You can choose from one of the options listed below, **or** you can come up with your own topic. **Give the instructor a one page typed outline of the paper by the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the class.**

### **Option #1: Inspiring Figure of the New Testament**

Who inspires you in the New Testament? Besides Jesus, who do you want to know more about? Is there a woman or man whose life and character is special to you? If so, do a study of this person's life. Find out as much as you can about the person in question. Create an outline and let your instructor review it before you begin writing. Include a section that addresses how this person's life lessons are relevant to your own spiritual journey.

### **Option #2: The Story of the New Testament**

How would you summarize the message of the New Testament? What is the storyline? How is the story a continuation of the Old Testament story? What are the New Testament's central events? What are its key themes? How does the story end (or has it)? How is your life (and in what ways) is your life a continuation of that story?

### **Instructions for ALP Papers**

For the ALP students should rely on the textbooks, commentaries and other reference sources like a concordance and dictionaries or encyclopedias of the Bible. The student must interact with these commentaries and resources by evaluating interpretations of the Bible.

The paper should have a clear introduction explaining what you intend to accomplish and what you will address in your study. The paper should end with a concluding paragraph which either summarizes what was accomplished or suggests further implications of your study.

The ALP should be between 8-10 pages (double-spaced) and must include an additional references page. Considerations for determining the grade include:

- Written expression with attention to format/grammar/spelling
- Clarity of thought and organization of contents
- Reference to a broad array of written sources
- Depth of analysis of the data
- Integration of experience/observations with applied learning outcomes
- Practicality of application points

## Instructor Evaluation for Written Work

<b>Student's Name</b>	<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
	IDS 105	ALP

<b>Specific Requirements</b>	<b>Percentage Distribution Determined by Instructor</b>	<b>Percentage Earned by Student</b>	<b>Instructor Comments</b>
<b>Organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction<sup>1</sup> and Conclusion<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Section Titles<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Section Introductions and Conclusions<sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ Organizing Words, Phrases, and Sentences</li> </ul>	10		▪
<b>Research / Sources (pp. 91-102<sup>5</sup>)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Credibility (academic vs. non-academic)</li> <li>▪ Number of Supporting Viewpoints</li> <li>▪ Number of Opposing Viewpoints</li> <li>▪ Primary Research</li> </ul>	10		▪
<b>Discipline-Specific Knowledge/Content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explanation (restate, define, describe, illustrate)</li> <li>▪ Analysis (reasons, causes, effects, purposes)<sup>6</sup></li> <li>▪ Critique (agree, disagree, strengths, weaknesses)</li> <li>▪ Synthesis of Existing Ideas and/or Theories</li> </ul>	20		▪
<b>Discipline-Specific Application</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contextualization (individual, group, organization, sub-culture, culture, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Recommendations (stop, start, continue, modify)</li> <li>▪ Creation of New Ideas and/or Theories</li> </ul>	20		▪
<b>Christian Worldview (and Other Worldviews)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of Scripture (interpretation and application)</li> <li>▪ View of Scripture</li> <li>▪ View of God, gods, or Ultimate Reality</li> <li>▪ View of Humanity</li> <li>▪ View of Birth, Life, Redemption, &amp; Death</li> <li>▪ View of Creation/Origin, History, the Present, &amp; the End Times</li> <li>▪ View of Knowledge</li> <li>▪ View of Ethics</li> </ul>	20		▪
<b>Documentation (pp. 155-195)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ APA Paper Format</li> <li>▪ APA Title Page (with Header) &amp; Abstract</li> <li>▪ APA Integration of Sources<sup>7</sup></li> <li>▪ APA "References" Page</li> </ul>	10		▪
<b>Composition (pp. 1-90)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clarity and Concision</li> <li>▪ Grammar, Punctuation, and Mechanics</li> <li>▪ Voice (Academic vs. Non-academic)</li> <li>▪ Tone (Assertive vs. Passive or Aggressive)</li> </ul>	10		▪

Total Possible	Total Percentage Earned by Student	Total Possible Points for Assignment	Total Points Earned	Final Grade for Assignment
100%		x		

### Explanatory Notes

<sup>1</sup> An effective introduction: (1) grabs attention through a quote(s), statement(s), statistic(s), question(s), and/or story, (2) states the thesis or claim (which needs to be clear, concise, arguable, & controversial(?)), and (3) previews/outlines the paper.

<sup>2</sup> An effective conclusion: (1) summarizes the paper and ties its main points together and (2) ends with final thought(s), question(s), quotation(s), warning(s), challenge(s), and/or action points.

<sup>3</sup> Section titles are often as follows: Title of the Paper (not the word “Introduction”), Background or Organizational Context or..., (Main Sections of the Paper), and Conclusion.

<sup>4</sup> Section introductions and conclusions are usually not necessary in shorter papers (e.g., 1-2 pages).

<sup>5</sup> All page references refer to Hacker, D. (2008). *A pocket style manual* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s.

<sup>6</sup> Other categories for analysis include: assumptions, problems, solutions, and predictions.

<sup>7</sup> There are three strategies for integrating sources into a paper: quotation, paraphrase, and summary.

## IX. Course Related Documents

### Assignments for Session One

#### Session 1 Objectives

After reading the specific chapters in ENT, answering the assigned study questions, and attending session #1, the student should be able to:

- Explain ways in which the New Testament differs from the Old Testament
- Interpret ways in which the New Testament completes the Old Testament
- Narrate consensus theories of how the NT books appeared in chronological sequence
- List and classify the books of the New Testament
- Explain how the New Testament canon was formed
- Show relative plethora of manuscripts that establish integrity of the NT text
- Articulate various viewpoints regarding NT Interpretation.

#### Student Reading Assignments

Before class, you should read:

- Text: *Encountering the New Testament* (ENT) Chapters 1,2,10.
- Bible: The Book of Matthew

#### Writing Assignments

As you read each chapter in *Encountering the NT* and the biblical text, look for answers to the following questions. For each of the following questions or groups of questions, provide 2-4 paragraph answers. Your total word count should be a minimum of 1500 words and a maximum of 2100 words (5-7 pages, double spaced). You need to document your sources using APA format.

1. Up to this point in your life, how much do you know about the New Testament? How did you learn about it? What mental associations come to mind when you think about the New Testament? What mental associations come to mind when you think about Jesus?
2. Explain your own religious background. How might that affect your ability, whether positively and/or negatively, to understand the message of the New Testament on its own terms (instead of reading it with a heavy bias)? In other words, in what ways will your religious background make it more difficult for you to learn about the Bible?
3. What is the New Testament canon? Discuss how the NT canon came into existence.
4. Describe the major geographical regions of Palestine.
5. Describe Judaism in the time of Jesus. How did that context help Jesus' ministry and message? How did that hinder his ministry and message?
6. Define hermeneutics. Discuss its various aspects. Why is hermeneutics so important? What happens when we fail to practice sound hermeneutical principles?

7. Do you think the New Testament is relevant for your own life? If so, how, and in what ways? If not, why not?
8. Do you view yourself as a Christian? If you were to die today, how sure are you that you would go to heaven (on a scale of zero to 100%)? If God said to you, "Why should I let you into heaven?" what would you say?
9. How should a Christian live his or her life compared to non-believers?
10. What percentage of the required reading from the textbook and the Bible did you complete prior to class?

## Assignments for Session Two

### Session 2 Objectives

After reading the specific chapters in ENT, answering the assigned study questions, and attending session #2, the students should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of the term *kerygma* and describe how it embodies the gospel message.
- Describe how the synoptic gospels and John came into existence.
- Differentiate between Roman Catholic and Reformed views of the authority of Scripture
- Enumerate general hermeneutical principles held by evangelicals
- Distinguish the salient emphases of each of the four Gospels
- Identify major teaching or discourse “blocks” of Matthew’s Gospel

### Student Reading Assignments

- Text: *Encountering the New Testament* (ENT) chapters 4-9.
- Bible: Mark, Luke, and John.

### Writing assignment

As you read each chapter in *Encountering the NT* and the biblical text, look for answers to the following questions. For each of the following questions or groups of questions, provide 2-4 paragraph answers. Your total word count should be a minimum of 1500 words and a maximum of 2100 words (5-7 pages, double spaced). You need to document your sources using APA format.

1. Summarize the life of Jesus by focusing on his major life events.
2. Discuss the meaning of the word “gospel.” What does it mean that Jesus is the “Savior” of those who believe? How does he “save”? From whom or from what does he save?
3. What are the main themes from Matthew’s gospel? How are they relevant to your own life?
4. Explain the meaning of Matthew 28:18-20 (focus especially, though not exclusively, on the phrase “make disciples”)? How does this passage apply to your own life?
5. How would you respond to the charges by modern critics who suggest that Matthew was not the author of the Gospel of Matthew?
6. What are the main themes from Mark’s gospel? How are they relevant to your own life?
7. What are the main themes from Luke’s gospel? How are they relevant to your own life?
8. What are the main themes from John’s gospel? How are they relevant to your own life?
9. Was the coming of Jesus into the world meant more for the Jews or for the Gentiles (the non-Jews)? Defend your answer.

10. What percentage of the required reading from the textbook and the Bible did you complete prior to class?

## Assignments for Session Three

### Session 3 Objectives

After reading the specific chapters in ENT, answering the assigned study questions, and attending session #3, the student should be able to:

- Assess the role of the Roman empire in the spread of Christianity.
- List and characterize the key emperors of the New Testament era
- Discuss the effects of the empire on the early church
- Define Hellenization and how this cultural movement influenced the NT documents.
- Identify the philosophies that the early church encountered
- Explain the beliefs of early Christians
- Trace the development of the early church in Acts
- Show the progression towards multi-ethnicity in the early church in Acts
- Recognize Luke's principal purposes in penning Acts

### Session 3 Reading Assignments

- Text: *ENT* chapters 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.
- Bible: Acts

### Writing Assignments

As you read each chapter in *Encountering the NT* and the biblical text, look for answers to the following questions. For each of the following questions or groups of questions, provide 2-4 paragraph answers. Your total word count should be a minimum of 1500 words and a maximum of 2100 words (5-7 pages, double spaced). You need to document your sources using APA format.

1. Explain the modern search for Jesus. What are its limitations?
2. What is Hellenization? Explain how Hellenization was beneficial to early Christian missionary efforts.
3. Explain how Hellenistic cultic practices affected the reception of Paul's gospel message.
4. Describe how Christianity differs from Stoicism, Cynicism, and Skepticism.
5. How did the early Christians view themselves? What were their primary beliefs?
6. Outline the content of Acts 1-28.
7. List and explain five reasons why Christians should read and understand the book of Acts.
8. Identify three people in the book of Acts who responded to the gospel message. Re-read those stories for yourself in the Bible. Next, explain what happened in each story. Finally, in what ways can you personally identify with the each of those people?
9. Explain the meaning and significance of Acts 1:8. How is that relevant in your own life?
10. What percentage of the required reading from the textbook and the Bible did you complete prior to class?

## Assignments for Session Four

### Session 4 Objectives

After reading the specific chapters in ENT, answering the assigned study questions, and attending session #4, the student should be able to:

- Give a sketch of the life of Paul
- Identify the major cities on Paul's missionary journeys
- List the books Paul wrote and give evidence for his authorship
- Demonstrate how God was the center of Paul's theology
- Discuss Paul's letter to the Romans
- Explain Paul's position on legalism
- Document how Paul viewed Jesus as the Messiah

### Session 4 Reading Assignments

- Text, *ENT* chapters 17-21.
- Bible: Romans through Titus.

### Written Assignments

Write out a one page tentative outline of your ALP and bring to next session to give your instructor.

As you read each chapter in *Encountering the NT* and the biblical text, look for answers to the following questions. For each of the following questions or groups of questions, provide 2-4 paragraph answers. Your total word count should be a minimum of 1500 words and a maximum of 2100 words (5-7 pages, double spaced). You need to document your sources using APA format.

1. What were the purposes of Paul's missionary journeys? How many did he have? Were they successful? Supplement your answer taken from the book with research from the web. If you find a source that disagrees with the textbook's position, note the difference in your answer. Devote a minimum of one paragraph per question.
2. Explain the structure and contents of Romans. What is its unique historical situation? From your reading of this book, what teachings are most relevant for your own life? Why?
3. Explain the structure and contents of 1 Corinthians. From your reading of this book, what teachings are most relevant for your own life? Why?
4. Explain the purpose and significance of Jesus' death on the cross.
5. Explain the purpose and significance of 1 Corinthians 15.
6. Explain the structure and contents of Galatians. From your reading of this book, what teachings are most relevant for your own life? Why?
7. Explain the structure and contents of Colossians. From your reading of this book, what teachings are most relevant for your own life? Why?
8. How should the principles of ethics that Paul taught affect Christian living today?

9. What are some teachings of Paul that indicate that the Old Testament is still relevant today?
10. What percentage of the required reading from the textbook and the Bible did you complete prior to class?

## Assignments for Session Five

### Session 5 Objectives

After reading the specific chapters in ENT, answering the assigned study questions, and attending session #5, the student should be able to:

- Summarize in general terms the books of Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation.
- Explain the purpose of the Book of Hebrews
- Discuss the author of Hebrews' view of the Old Testament
- Show ways in which James and Paul are both alike and different in their view of Christian life
- Illustrate how James reflects elements of both prophecy and wisdom writings from the Old Testament.
- Identify the emphases of 1 Peter
- Relate 2 Peter and Jude to one another
- Briefly summarize 1, 2, and 3 John
- Describe various ways to interpret Revelation.

### Session 5 reading assignments

- Text: *ENT* chapters 22 to the Epilogue.
- Bible: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation.

### Written Assignments

Next week in class, each student will share, in 3 minutes or less, a summary of what they have discovered in the preparation of their ALP.

As you read each chapter in *Encountering the NT* and the biblical text, look for answers to the following questions. For each of the following questions or groups of questions, provide 2-4 paragraph answers. Your total word count should be a minimum of 1500 words and a maximum of 2100 words (5-7 pages, double spaced). You need to document your sources using APA format.

1. Explain the structure and contents of Hebrews. From your reading of this book, what teachings are most relevant for your own life? Why?
2. Describe the use of the Old Testament in the book of Hebrews.
3. Explain the structure and contents of James. From your reading of this book, what teachings are most relevant for your own life? Why?
4. How is the theme of persecution developed in 1 Peter? Give specific examples from the book.
5. Why does God cause or allow suffering? What purposes does God accomplish through our suffering? Give personal examples where appropriate.
6. Why do some people view Revelation as such a confusing book? Discuss the various ways scholars have interpreted Revelation throughout the centuries.

7. Explain the structure and contents of Revelation. From your reading of this book, what teachings are most relevant for your own life? Why?
8. Distinguish between Jesus' first coming and his second coming. What happened at his first coming? What will happen at his second coming?
9. Explain how the final chapter of Revelation relates to Genesis chapters 1 and 2.
10. At the beginning of this course, we asked you this question: "How do you think the New Testament is relevant for your own life?" In light of what you have learned in this course, answer it again!
11. What percentage of the required reading from the textbook and the Bible did you complete prior to class?

