



Course Syllabus
NTS 501 L1
New Testament Introduction I
Fall 2025

Class Information

Day and Time: Tuesdays 7:30 PM – 10:00 PM

Room Number: E206

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Dien To

Instructor Email: dto@criswell.edu

Instructor Office Hours: By email/through Zoom

Course Description and Prerequisites

An advanced study of the books of Matthew through Acts, emphasizing problems of interpretation and the contribution of these books to biblical theology and godly Christian living.

Course Objectives

1. Discuss the introductory issues of the Gospels and Acts, such as their authorship, date, occasion, purpose, and other relevant critical issues.
2. Summarize and chart the contents of the Gospels and Acts.
3. Identify the primary theological emphases of the Gospels and Acts.

Required Textbooks

Thielman, Frank S., *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2005. (ISBN: 978-0310211327)

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020. (ISBN: 978-0310528678).

Kruger, Michael J. (ed). *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament (The Gospel Realized)*. Crossway, 2016. (ISBN: 978-1433536762),

Wright, N. T. *The Challenge of Acts: Rediscovering What the Church Was and Is* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024). (ISBN: 978-0310167990).

Recommended Reading

deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, & Ministry Formation*. Second

Edition. Downers Grove: IVP, 2018. (ISBN: 978-0830852178)

McKnight, Scot, and Nijay K. Gupta. *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. (ISBN: 978-0801098796)

Wright, N.T., and Michael T. Bird. *The New Testament in Its World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019. (ISBN: 978-0310499305)

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Lecture Viewing/In-Person Attendance (15%): For in-person attendance, participating in the lectures (asking/answering questions) accounts for 15% of the grade.
2. Weekly Quizzes (15%): Weekly quizzes. The content of the weekly quizzes will consist of theological/critical issues of the scriptural text on Canvas
3. Textbook/Scripture Reading (35%): Students are expected to complete all assigned reading. Additionally, the students are required to read the biblical books Matthew through Acts per the schedule on the syllabus. The reading of each week is in preparation for the following week. Reading has to be done by the Tuesday of the following week before the lecture. The reason for this is so that the students would have a working understanding of the material covered in class. Submission will be on Canvas
4. Synthetic Chart (20%): Students are expected to create two synthetic charts. Students will create one synthetic chart for one of the following books Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. Students will create another synthetic chart of a different book. For example, if the student created a synthetic chart for the Gospel of Matthew, the second synthetic chart must be from either Mark, Luke, John or Acts. Submission will be on Canvas.
5. Final Exam (15%): The final exam will be a combination of the weekly quizzes, multiple choice, Scripture identification/memorization.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

LATE WORK: Late work will not be accepted unless otherwise approved by the professor. If approved, there will be a 20% reduction on the overall assignment. The highest possible grade earned, if late work is approved, would be a B- (80%).

PLAGIARISM: Carefully note the paragraph below on “Academic Dishonesty.” Students are expected vigilantly to avoid plagiarism of any kind and therefore to seek out information and ask questions as needed to maintain unquestionable academic integrity. No credit will be given for assignments deemed to be the work (in part or whole) of someone (or something, e.g. AI) other than the student or, for particular assignments, other than the collaborating team.

Video Recording

To ensure FERPA compliance when a course is live-streamed or recorded, students can opt out of video recordings by requesting seating in a designated area off camera. Students who sit outside of this area are giving implicit permission to be recorded.

Class Attendance:

Students should only enroll in courses they are able to attend regularly.

- **On-campus** students are expected to attend class **in person** according to the course syllabus.
- Students enrolled in the **online section** must pay any applicable online course fees.
- Online students are expected to attend class **synchronously** at the scheduled time via the designated video conferencing platform, Zoom, found in the left-hand global menu in Canvas.
- Online students must have their **cameras turned on with sound muted** during class, and actively participate in discussions and activities. In order to be properly identified, students must upload a picture ID to their Canvas Account Profile *prior to the first online meeting*. For instructions on how to upload a profile picture, [click here](#).

Missed Classes:

- Each instructor may decide how attendance impacts your grade and learning objectives. Details are provided within the course syllabus.
- Students are responsible for catching up on any material missed due to absence or tardiness.
- Instructors are **not required** to allow make-up work for missed classes.

Attendance & Financial Aid:

- Students receiving **grants, loans, or scholarships** must meet participation requirements set by the college.
- It is the student's responsibility to:
 - Review relevant sections of the Academic Catalog.
 - Contact the **Financial Aid Office** for details on how attendance affects aid.
 - Understand the consequences of non-participation.

Census Period Attendance Requirement:

- Though Criswell College does not officially take attendance, it must verify that students **begin their courses** to meet federal aid regulations.
- **During the census period** (first two weeks of a 16-week semester or first week of shorter terms), students must participate in **academically related activities**, or they may be dropped from the course.

Examples of Qualifying Activities:

- Attending class in person or via live video with the instructor present
- Submitting an assignment, quiz, or exam
- Taking part in assigned tutorials, study groups, or discussion boards
- Having documented communication with the instructor about course content

Important Note:

Simply logging into Canvas or a Zoom session without participating (e.g., camera off, no interaction) **does not count** as attendance.

Canvas:

- Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based Learning Management System (LMS).
- **For online courses** at Criswell College, instructors use Canvas to:
 - Organize course content on a module basis using organizational tools within Canvas
 - Control the timing of course requirements through module control or assignment due dates to ensure that students are engaged for the full length of the semester or term
 - Accept assignments from students only inside the Canvas course (emailed assignments are not acceptable)
 - Provide written feedback on assignments only within Canvas, preferably through Speedgrader
 - Use the Announcement or e-mail feature in Canvas to communicate with the students rather than by broadcasting to a class email listserv outside of canvas
 - Use Zoom in Canvas for all "live" (synchronous) class sessions

Important Note:

Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at 844-358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day.

Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

Grading Scale

			Grade Definitions (optional)
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be

removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the “I” will become an “F.”

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Course Policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Examples of AI-related functions you **may not use** without permission:

- Text Generation – You may not use AI to generate text for use in an assignment.
 - AI can be used for research purposes, but the student must consult the actual source(s) to confirm the research. No AI generated answer(s) or texts should be submitted as part of an assignment.
- Outline Generation – You may not use AI to generate an outline for an assignment.

AI-related tools you **may use** without permission:

- Spellcheck and grammar – built into Word, Pages, and Google Docs
- AI re-writing tools – tools that take what you’ve written and help make it clearer, such as what Grammarly offers. However, you must cite Grammarly or other sources in your assignment/paper and submit both original draft of paper and the final paper.
- AI research and summarize – tools that help you find sources to cite, such as the new AI tools built into Logos Bible Software.)

Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college’s academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student’s course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student’s work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

Resources and Supports

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More

information is located on the college website at [Criswell College Mental Health Resources](#), and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access a wide range of academic resources and receive research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, located on the second floor of the Education Building.

Login credentials for accessing the library’s databases are emailed to students near the beginning of each semester.

For more information or assistance, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu or visit www.criswell.edu/academics/wallace-library/.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to enhance their skills and build confidence. All tutors are recommended by faculty to ensure they are qualified to support the student body. To meet with a tutor, students can schedule an appointment through Calendly at <https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>. The Tutoring Center is located in room E203 of the Education Building.

For questions, email tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Outline/Calendar

Tuesdays	Topic	Reading	Exams/Assignments
8/19	Introduction to the course/Syllabus/New Testament Canon/New Testament Studies	Thielman: Chapter 1; Strauss: Chapter 2–3	Reading (due 8/26 by 7:30 PM on Canvas)
8/26	Study of the Gospels; Synoptic Problem	Kruger (Appendix A, B); Thielman: Chapter 2; Strauss: Chapter 1 & 12	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 9/1 by 11:59 PM); Reading (due 9/2 by 7:30 PM on Canvas)
9/2	Jesus and His Message	Strauss: Chapters 11; 13–20	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 9/8 by 11:59 PM); Reading (due 9/9 by 7:30 PM on Canvas)
9/9	Mark’s Gospel and Its context/biblical/theological	Mark 1:1–10:52; Thielman: Chapter 3; Strauss: Chapters 4–6	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 9/15 by 11:59 PM); Reading (due 9/16 by 7:30 PM on Canvas)
9/16	Mark’s Gospel and Its context/biblical/theological	Mark 11:1–16:8; Strauss: Chapter 7; Kruger: Chapter 2	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 9/22 by 11:59 PM); Reading (due 9/23 by 7:30 PM Canvas); Gospel of Mark’s chart due (if choosing to do Mark on Canvas by 9/23 by 11:59 PM)

9/23	Matthew's Gospels and its context/biblical/theological	Matthew 1:1–11:1; Kruger: Chapter 1	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 9/29 by 11:59 PM); Reading (due by 9/30 by 7:30 PM on Canvas)
9/30	Matthew's Gospels and its context/biblical/theological	Matthew 11:2–20:34; Strauss: Chapter 8	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 10/6 by 11:59 PM Canvas); Reading (due by 10/7 by 7:30 PM on Canvas)
10/7	Matthew's Gospels and its context/biblical/theological	Matthew 21:1–28:20; Thielman: Chapter 4	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 10/20 by 11:59 PM Canvas); Reading (due by 10/21 by 7:30 PM on Canvas); Gospel of Matthew's chart due (if choosing to do Matthew on Canvas by 10/21 by 11:59 PM)
Development Week: 10/13–17 (No classes/No Course work)			
10/21	Luke's Gospel and its context/biblical/theological	Luke 1:1–9:50; Kruger Chapter 3; Strauss: Chapter 9	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 10/27 by 11:59 PM); Reading (Canvas by 10/28 by 7:30 PM)
10/28	Luke's Gospel and its context/biblical/theological	Luke 9:51–24:53; Kruger: Chapter 3; Thielman: Chapter 5	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 11/3 by 11:59 PM); Reading (Canvas by 11/4 by 7:30 PM); Gospel of Luke's chart (if choosing to do Luke on Canvas by 11/4 by 11:59 PM)
11/4	Acts and its context/biblical/theological	Acts 1:1–12:25; Kruger: Chapter 5; Wright: Chapters 1–4	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 11/10 by 11:59 PM); Reading (Canvas by 11/11 by 7:30 PM)
11/11	Acts and its context/biblical/theological	Acts 13:1–28:31; Wright: Chapters 5–9	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 11/17 by 11:59 PM); Reading (Canvas by 11/18 by 7:30 PM); Acts' chart due (if choosing to do Acts on Canvas by 11/18 by 11:59 PM)
11/18	John's Gospel and its context/biblical/theological	John 1:1–12:50; Thielman: Chapter 6	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 12/2 by 11:59 PM); Reading (Canvas by 12/2 @ 7:30 PM)
Fall Break/Thanksgiving Holiday: 11/24–27			
12/2	John's Gospel and its context/biblical/theological	John 13:1–21:25; Strauss: Chapter 10	Weekly exam (Canvas, due by 12/9 by 11:59 PM); Reading (Canvas by 12/9 by 7:30 PM); Gospel of John's chart (if choosing to do John Canvas by 12/9 by 11:59 PM)
Finals week: 12/9–12/12: Final exam (due by 12/12 on Canvas by 11:59 PM).			

