

1. BIBLICAL STUDIES

1.1 OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

The Old Testament merits study both in its own right, and as essential background for understanding the New Testament. All our Old Testament courses aim to give students a better understanding of the Old Testament and the world in which it originated. We offer both general surveys of the entire Old Testament and detailed studies of specific books and topics. In addition, we want our students to see Old and New Testaments as forming an organic whole in which God's plan of salvation is set out in its entirety. In other words, we take the Old Testament seriously as part of *Christian* Scripture. Finally, we believe that the Old Testament addresses issues of vital concern for Christians today, and hope that through our courses students will be better able to apply the Old Testament to their own lives and circumstances.

OT101 OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS I

(3 credits, offered annually in Semester 1)

This course surveys the contents of the OT and seeks to do justice to two aspects of the OT: (i) the specific historical, geographical and cultural contexts in which the OT originated; (ii) the fact that the OT is now part of Christian scripture. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the OT and its world, and to some of the resources available for understanding the OT, and to help students to see how the OT and NT fit together to form one coherent account of God's dealings with humankind. The Pentateuch and all the Historical Books are covered in this course.

OT102 OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS II

(3 credits, offered annually in Semester 2)

This course is a continuation of OT101, but it can be taken before OT101 if desired. OT102 covers most of the prophets, the Psalms and wisdom literature.

OT160 THE OLD TESTAMENT and ARCHAEOLOGY

(3 credits, available for Private Studies)

This course introduces students to the world of the ancient Near East, which is the historical and geographical context of the OT. It then describes the methods of archaeology, explaining both its potential for Biblical Studies and also its limitations. The rest of the course is taken up with discussion of particular issues in OT studies which illustrate the role archaeology can play: the question of writing and literacy in the ancient Near East and in Israel and Judah; and the question of historicity as it relates to key people and events in Israel's history.

OT260 WRITINGS AND BOOKS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WORLD

(1.5 credits, available for Private Studies)

The course will survey the origins and development of writing in the OT world, with final focus on Israel. It will then consider the uses of writing in the ancient cultures and the extent of literacy, the making and transmission of books and the relevance of ancient Hebrew inscriptions for textual criticism. The second half of the course will be devoted to descriptions of various genres of ancient texts and comparison of them with biblical writings.

OT261

KNOWING CHRIST THROUGH THE PSALMS

(1.5 credits, offered bi-annually)

The idea of the Messiah in the Old Testament has been one of the important topics for study because many Christians believe that the Old Testament bears the promise of Christ. Therefore, Christian study of the Old Testament should consider how the Old Testament promises are fulfilled in the person of Jesus. But this does not necessarily mean adopting an interpretive approach of reading Christ back into the Old Testament texts. This course examines pertinent questions through a study of the so-called 'Messianic Psalms': what are these psalms about in their own terms, what is role of the Messiah, and in what way Jesus fulfilled the role of the Messiah.

OT351

DEUTERONOMY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOSES

(3 credits, offered bi-annually)

Just as Paul's epistle to the Romans is to the New Testament, so also is the book of Deuteronomy is to the Old. Cast in the form of Moses' farewell address to the people of Israel, this book constitutes the definitive statement of Israelite theology. Moses' final sermon provided the nation with a full-blown exposition of the special relationship that existed between them and God and provided the framework for later Israelites to evaluate the fluctuating fortunes of the nation. Through a study of this 'Gospel According to Moses', we can not only revolutionise our perception of the ancient Israelite's walk of faith but also transform our understanding of the New Testament gospel.

OT353

ECCLESIASTES: WISDOM FOR CONTEMPORARY LIFE

(1.5 credits)

Ecclesiastes, one of the most philosophical of the books of the Bible, also seems to be one of the most contemporary. Many today believe that life is essentially futile; Ecclesiastes seems to have reached the same conclusion thousands of years before: 'Vanity, vanity!' the book begins, and it seems to continue in the same spirit. But on closer inspection Ecclesiastes is a puzzling book. Though philosophical in tone, it handles its ideas in a loose and unsystematic way, often seeming to set contradictory statements alongside one another. What, in the end, is the book saying? Does the writer really declare that everything is 'vanity' or 'meaningless'? If that truly is what he means, how can he end by urging his readers to fear God and keep his commandments? The aim of this course is to shed light on a difficult text and make plain its relevance for Christian thinking and living today. The course will include class exercises on four topics central to Ecclesiastes and to the contemporary world: Wealth; Wisdom; Knowledge; Power.

OT367

INTERPRETING EZEKIEL

(1.5 credits, offered bi-annually)

Ezekiel is often considered the lunatic of the Old Testament because of the bewildering opening vision, his strange street-theatrical performances, and his bizarre retelling of Israel's story. This has often discouraged many from reading, let alone studying the book. Yet, the message of this exilic prophet was God's instrument for penetrating the hardened hearts of his audience and to wake them out of their spiritual lethargy. The aim of this course, therefore, is to help students understand the book in its historical-cultural setting so that they see its relevance and spiritual value for contemporary Christianity.

OT391 OLD TESTAMENT GUIDED STUDY

(1.5 credits)

This guided study is for students who wish to explore a specific area of study within the field of Old Testament. Upon approval of a topic, the student will engage in independent research under the supervision of a faculty member. For students planning to write a MCS Thesis it is compulsory to take a guided study on the thesis topic first.

1.2 BIBLICAL HEBREW

A working knowledge of Biblical Hebrew helps those who wish to engage in serious study of the Old Testament. The student needs go beyond a knowledge of the elements of Biblical Hebrew to acquire some fluency in reading the Old Testament in Hebrew, along with an understanding of issues relating to Hebrew exegesis. This is the level to which we hope to bring students of our Hebrew courses.

BH111 BIBLICAL HEBREW I

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

BH111 and BH112 together cover the elements of Biblical Hebrew. At the end of these two courses students should be able, with the help of reference tools, to tackle most OT narrative texts and some of the simpler poetic texts. We use as a textbook C.L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (2nd, rev. ed.; Nashville, Abingdon, 1995); BH111 will take students approximately half-way through the book. The course includes frequent practice in the reading and translation of texts taken from the Hebrew Bible, and introduces some standard reference works.

BH112 BIBLICAL HEBREW II

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

Prerequisite: BH111

BH211 BIBLICAL HEBREW READINGS AND EXEGESIS I

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

This course aims to develop skills in understanding and interpreting Old Testament narrative texts. A significant part of the course will be taken up with class reading of a selection of Old Testament narrative texts, with the aim of improving students' knowledge of Biblical Hebrew. Emphasis will be placed on developing a working exegetical method, learning how to use reference tools and commentaries, and translating the fruits of exegesis into sermon and Bible study outlines. Particular attention will be paid to the syntax and distinctive literary techniques of Old Testament narrative.

Prerequisite: BH111 & BH112.

BH212 BIBLICAL HEBREW READINGS AND EXEGESIS II

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

This course introduces students to a selection of Old Testament poetic texts. Class reading of Old Testament poetic texts will be an important part of the course: Psalms, prophetic texts and wisdom texts will all be covered. Attention will be paid to the distinctive literary features of the different types of Old Testament poetry in wisdom and prophetic texts, in particular to the varieties of poetic parallelism and its significance for interpretation. By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to do independent work in Hebrew exegesis. They

will be encouraged to exercise a critical use of commentaries and make profitable use of the Hebrew-based reference tools.
Prerequisite: BH211.

1.3 NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

The documents which make up the New Testament are foundational to the Christian faith, for they testify to God's Final Word, His Son. They are also some of the most influential documents ever written. As with our Old Testament courses, our New Testament courses aim to give students a better understanding of the New Testament and the world in which it originated. We offer both foundational studies of the whole of the New Testament and detailed studies of specific books and topics. Since we believe that the New Testament addresses issues of vital concern for Christians today, we hope that through our courses students will be better able to apply the New Testament to their own lives and circumstances.

NT101 NEW TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS I

(3 credits, offered annually in Semester 1)

NT Foundations I and II survey the entire contents of the NT in two semesters. Students will be drawn into the world of the NT and encouraged to interact with the themes and message contained within each piece of writing in the NT. In so doing, students can better examine the implications of the NT's message for Christians and for the Church today. NT101 is a general introduction to the Four Gospels and Acts. Students can expect a survey of major interpretive approaches, as well as a consideration of historical and cultural issues. These include the Synoptic Problem and the literary relationship of the Gospels; the problem of the historical Jesus; the genre, historical setting, message and structure of each of the Gospels and Acts.

NT102 NEW TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS II

(3 credits, offered annually in Semester 2)

This is a continuation of NT101. Students may begin with NT102 and finish with NT101. NT102 covers the Epistles (Pauline and Catholic) and Revelation. Students can expect to learn about: a) the introductory issues pertaining to each document (author, date, occasion, genre, content, etc.), including factors in the first century (e.g. social, political, religious) that influenced the life and ministry of the first readers/hearers; b) the theological message of each document; and c) their relationships to, and differences from, each other.

NT311 ROMANS: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

(1.5 credits, offered occasionally)

The Apostle Paul wrote one third of the New Testament. His explanation of the essence of the Christian Faith in his Epistle to the Romans is fundamental to a correct understanding of the preaching of the apostles. This preaching stands solidly upon the foundation of the teaching of Jesus Christ. A firm continuity exists between the teaching of Paul and Jesus and indeed also between them and the Old Testament. This course is an attempt to understand the apostle Paul's theological thinking, allowing him to speak to us as far as possible from his own writings.

NT312

UNDERSTANDING GALATIANS

(1.5 credits, offered bi-annually and on private studies)

Paul's provocative Letter to the Galatians captures all the key issues of New Testament interpretation. A careful study of the text brings the student into contact with history, theology, and hermeneutics. We shall pay close attention to important passages without losing sight of the main message of this Letter.

NT314

DISARMING YOUR CRITICS: 'DOING GOOD' IN 1 PETER

(1.5 credits)

This is a study of 1 Peter, with particular emphasis on the dilemma which first-century Christians in Asia Minor faced in their different relationships with non-Christians. In these relationships, Christians were in a subordinate position: Christian citizens to non-Christian governing authorities, Christian slaves to their non-Christian masters, and Christian wives to their non-Christian husbands. These Christians faced criticism and hostility from non-Christians. It is in this context that Peter encourages his readers to 'do good' to disarm their critics and win them over to Christ. 'Doing good' is an important theme in the letter, but Peter is silent on the meaning of 'doing good'. We will examine how Peter's readers would have understood 'doing good', and how 'doing good' could silence their critics and even win them over to Christ. At a time when Christians in Singapore face criticism and even hostility, can 'doing good' be a way to disarm our critics? If so, how would this work out in our social relationships?

NT364

READING REVELATION ETHICALLY: THE LAST WORD ON EMPIRE, ECONOMICS, ECOLOGY

(3 credits, offered bi-annually)

Christians have responded to Revelation in one of two ways: some admit that they do not understand it, finding its many visions disturbing, and so avoid reading it altogether. At the other extreme are those who claim that they do understand it, treating it as an inexhaustible mine for the wildest 'end-time' speculations, and so become utterly fixated on the latest theories for every detail. In this course, we place Revelation in its first-century historical context, and thus open a window into the political, economic, social challenges that affect the early Christian communities living under Roman rule in what is now modern Turkey. We will read Revelation as 'an apocalyptic prophecy in the form of a circular letter,' an alternative vision of reality which transcends everyday space and time in order to motivate specific responses from these Christians. In this way, Revelation is a book of discipleship, calling for ethical responses be it in the area of empire, economics or ecology.

NT365

THE FIRST URBAN CHURCHES: PAUL'S VISION OF COMMUNITY, MISSION AND LEADERSHIP

(1.5 credits)

This course investigates the way the earliest Christian communities were founded, nurtured and governed in cities in the first century. It will focus on key images, gifts and qualities, the significant role of meals and conversation, and their innovative approach to gender and ethnic issues. We will also examine the consensual approach to decision-making and the way all members undertook pastoral, educational, and evangelistic responsibilities. During the course we will relate our findings to the situation of churches in urban centres like Singapore today. The course aims to provide students with an understanding of (1) how the early churches functioned and multiplied in their urban setting; (2) the basic principles and structures upon which community is built and mutual ministry encouraged in the church; (3) a collegial, servant, and relational model of leadership relevant to mission organizations and local churches.

**NT282/
IC282**

**JESUS ON THE SILVER SCREEN: PORTRAYAL OF JESUS AND
CHRIST FIGURES ON FILM**

(3 credits, offered bi-annually)

Through our viewing of some Jesus films, as well as clips from other movies, we will explore the portrayals of Jesus in modern films. By comparing these portrayals to those found in the New Testament Gospels and their modern interpreters, we examine how modern biblical scholarship may (or may not) influence contemporary cinema. Furthermore, we will observe what these films tell us about their makers, their expectations of the audiences, and what roles these films play in shaping them.

NT391

NEW TESTAMENT GUIDED STUDY

(1.5 credits)

This guided study is for students who wish to explore a specific area of study within the field of New Testament. Upon approval of a topic, the student will engage in independent research under the supervision of a faculty member. For students planning to write a MCS Thesis it is compulsory to take a guided study on the thesis topic first.

1.4 NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

A working knowledge of New Testament Greek helps those who wish to engage in serious study of the New Testament. The student needs go beyond a knowledge of the elements of New Testament Greek to acquire some fluency in reading the New Testament in Greek, along with an understanding of issues relating to exegesis of the Greek New Testament. This is the level to which we hope to bring students of our Greek courses. In BGST, students will be taught Modern (ethnic) Greek pronunciation rather than Erasmic pronunciation.

BG111

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK I

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

BG111 and BG112 together cover the elements of New Testament Greek. At the end of these two courses, students will be expected to master the elements of the NT Greek (vocabulary and grammar) and be familiar with some basic reference tools important to the study of NT Greek. The course involves frequent practice in the reading and translation of texts taken from the Greek NT and the Septuagint. The reward is the thrill of being able to go directly to the biblical text and see its meaning and significance; and to develop a greater understanding of the decisions and conclusions made in commentaries and bible translations.

BG112

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK II

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

Continuation of BG111.

Pre-requisite: BG111

BG211

GREEK READINGS AND EXEGESIS I

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

BG211 and BG212 form the second year of the Biblical Greek curriculum. They build on the vocabulary and grammar (morphology and syntax) learned in BG 111-112, AND the exegetical method introduced in HE101 (Biblical Hermeneutics and Interpretation). Using various New Testament texts as 'learning sites', students will develop their ability to read NT Greek, and gain further experience in the methods and tools involved in Greek exegesis, such as phrasing

(outlining), textual criticism, grammatical analysis, word analysis, historical-cultural analysis. BG211 focuses on the literary genre of the epistle.

Pre-requisite: BG111 and BG112. For maximum benefit, students should have also completed HE101.

BG212

GREEK READINGS AND EXEGESIS II

(3 credits, offered once every 3 years) - *offered only for credit*

Continuation of BG211. BG212 focuses on the literary genre of the gospel. Adding to the tools learned in BG211, students will now use a synopsis of the Greek NT to examine the Synoptic Problem, and learn the methods involved in Form and Redaction Criticism.

Pre-requisite: BG211

BG214

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK – BASIC RESEARCH TOOLS AND METHODS

(1.5 credits, offered occasionally for audit)

This course is designed as an introduction to the study of New Testament Greek those who are absolute beginners and who have cherished a desire to learn New Testament Greek. It is a fun course with emphasis on acquiring enough Greek to enjoy reading, writing, speaking, singing and praying in Greek! Exegetical exercises from the Greek text by the lecturer introduce the use of important Greek reference tools. Students should be proficient enough after eight sessions to read and understand selected passages from the Greek New Testament. They will also be able to do simple word studies based on the Greek Text. Students wishing to just attend the course without doing the assignments may do so by audit.

BG253

NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

(1.5 credits, offered occasionally)

Before one can proceed with translation and exegesis, one must know if the particular text is the correct reading. This course attempts to spell out the method of textual criticism as well as highlight some of the issues affecting the recovery of the original NT Greek text.

Pre-requisite: BG112 and BG211

BG391

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK GUIDED STUDY

(1.5 credits)

Students who wish to conduct their own exegetical study of a passage from the Greek NT or who wish to include Greek exegesis as a part of a larger paper or thesis may do so under Greek Guided Study. This course can be taken only as a private study course.

Pre-requisite: BG212

1.5 BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The study of Biblical Archaeology holds a fascination for many, especially the laity. It is one of those disciplines that can be appreciated by both the specialist and the non-specialist. At BGST we want to focus on the non-specialist while at the same time laying the foundations for those who are persuaded by the excitement of the subject to proceed for serious archaeological studies elsewhere. Our courses are also helpful, we believe, for those who wish to focus on ‘pilgrimage studies’ with

reference to visits to the Bible Lands. They are suitable for the training of those aspiring to guide or lead a Bible Lands Study Tour.

OT/NT186 INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

(1.5 credits, offered occasionally as an audit course)

This course focuses on the value of archaeology in throwing light on the Bible and on biblical history. It deals with the link between biblical archaeology and the Old Testament, the New Testament and biblical theology. It shows that biblical archaeology gives corroborative evidence to support the reliability of the Bible as an accurate account of what actually took place in biblical times. It also discusses the development of archaeological methods.

1.6 HERMENEUTICS

Bible study is easy: you simply open your Bible and let God speak to you. Yes? Experience shows that it is not quite as straightforward as that. The more you know about the world the Bible came from and the more you reflect on what actually takes place when you read and apply scripture today, the more competent a reader of the Bible you will be.

HE101 BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS AND INTERPRETATION

(3 credits)

‘Inspired’; ‘infallible’; ‘authoritative’; ‘the Word of God’. Many Christians in Singapore would be happy to describe the Bible in those terms. But the Bible has to be interpreted and applied by men and women who are usually far from inspired, and who are all too prone to error (though they may still claim the authority of Scripture for what they say). The result can be that falsehood is propagated in God’s name, and that the Bible is turned from being the saving and healing revelation of God into something harmful and even destructive. It is not enough to have a ‘high’ doctrine of Scripture: we must also interpret Scripture accurately. The main subject of this course is the interpretation and application of Scripture. The course aims to help you reflect seriously on what is involved in interpreting the biblical text. During the course several necessary aspects of biblical interpretation (e.g., word studies, the relevance of the historical context) will be considered.