American Baptist Churches of New York State
Lay Study Program

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

A Brief Course Description

This course is designed to introduce the student to:

- the historical and cultural context of the New Testament
- the concepts of scriptural inspiration and canon
- the types and characteristics of the literary genre and corresponding methods of interpretation of the books of the New Testament
- the purposes for writing the various books of the New Testament
- the theories of authorship of each of the books of the New Testament
- the major themes of the books of the New Testament.

Expected Outcomes

Students will have developed their own understanding of the inspiration of scripture and the nature of canon.

Students will have an understanding of the importance of knowing the Old Testament background from which the New Testament emerges.

Students will have an overview of the significant historical events that occur in the intertestamental period and understand their impact on the setting of the New Testament.

Students will have an understanding of the significant historical events that occurred during the period of time in which the books of the New Testament were composed and be able to place the likely times of composition of each book in appropriate places on a timeline of New Testament events.

Students will have an overview of the Greek, Roman, and Jewish Cultures present during New Testament times and will have a basic understanding of how those cultures impact our understanding of the New Testament.

Students will have a basic understanding of the development of the church in both structure and theology, over the period of time covered during the writing of the New Testament.

Students will have a basic understanding of all the types of literary genre found in the New Testament and what methods of interpretation are appropriate for each type of scripture encountered.

Students will have a basic understanding of the major theological themes presented in the New Testament.

Students will have a basic understanding of the various theories of authorship, purpose, and themes of each of the books of the New Testament.

Students will have become acquainted with the various resources and tools that are available for deepening our understanding of the New Testament.

Those students who are gifted and called to lead in teaching and preaching will have become more confident and capable in presenting the Word of God in their present context of ministry.

Class Expectations

Students will read the assigned readings and participate in class discussions.

Students taking the course for credit will attend at least eight out of ten classes.

Students who are taking the course for credit will create and hand in the written assignments and/or completed projects, designed by the teacher, which may include paper/s on particular subjects, etc.

Classes

The expectation is there will be 20 hours of class time. The course is usually set up as ten classes which are two hours long. A short break may be included in the middle of the class time. Classes may be designed to include a variety of learning experiences, including but not limited to: interactive lectures, presentations, and group discussions. Modifications to this structure may be done at the discretion of the instructor.

Suggested Resources

Texts

Encountering the New Testament, 3rd Edition *A Historical and Theological Survey* by Walter A. Elwell, Robert W. Yarbrough

An Introduction To The New Testament - (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library) by Raymond E Brown

Introduction to the New Testament Second Edition by D.A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo (Zondervan. 2005)

Introduction the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, & Ministry Formation, 2nd Edition by David A. deSilva (IV Press. 2004)

Other Resources (a starting place)

How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth: Fourth Edition – June 24, 2014 by Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart

For Scripture: a good student Bible. Bible Hub, Bible Gateway   1/2021