Department of Theology

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Summer 2014 (Sess. 2)
Instructor: Christopher Brenna
Course #: THEO 2100
Section: 101
Course Title: New Testament Overview

Description:

The New Testament is not a large book according to today's standards, but it is so densely packed with big ideas that to cover it in just one semester, much less in six weeks of summer, is implausible. We're going to keep things simple and read parts of the New Testament and we're going to read it in order to understand representative concepts. The New Testament writers had lots of different goals in writing each individual book, but there are some common theological themes running through the New Testament as a collection of books. We're going to examine some of the most important themes in such a way that we have less work to do but hopefully have a more profound and meaningful experience of the text together.

We'll begin with a brief overview of the New Testament to get a broad sense of what it's about. We'll talk about Jesus' ministry, his miracles and his death and resurrection. We'll talk about the early Church and its structure and values. We'll also discuss what the New Testament has to say about things like wealth and poverty, war and peace, and the relationship between the Church and the world.

The New Testament is a work of biblical interpretation. That is, it interprets the Hebrew Bible, what Christians call “the Old Testament.” Because of that, we'll spend time trying to understand how the New Testament appropriates the Hebrew Bible. We also need to understand the New Testament as it has been interpreted. That means we'll read the New Testament through the lens of the Catholic tradition.

Grades will be based on attendance (a goodly portion! showing up to a summer class is challenging!), a few short (one-page) essay assignments, a final project, midterm and final exams. No quizzes, no daily reading reports or check-ins. The atmosphere of the class will be appropriate to a 2000-level summer class: casual and comfortable, but somewhat challenging.