

Ashland Theological Seminary

Prof: Pablo A. Jiménez

E-mail: profpablojimenez@gmail.com

Introduction to the New Testament

A Postcolonial Perspective

Course Description

This course introduces students to the New Testament through a postcolonial lens, exploring the biblical texts in light of the Roman Empire's colonial rule and its implications for the early Christian movement. We will examine how power, empire, and resistance shape the writings of the New Testament, and how postcolonial theory can offer new insights for interpreting these texts today.

Students will critically engage with the sociopolitical context of the New Testament and consider how early Christian voices responded to imperial authority, marginalization, and cultural hegemony.

Goal and Objectives

The primary goal of this course is to equip students with the tools to read and interpret the New Testament in its historical and political context, particularly focusing on how the texts engage with imperial power structures. The course highlights voices of resistance, liberation, and solidarity within the Christian scriptures, fostering a deeper understanding of their relevance in postcolonial contexts today.

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

1. **Contextual Analysis:** Analyze the New Testament texts within the context of Roman imperialism and early Christian responses to colonial rule.
2. **Postcolonial Critique:** Apply key concepts of postcolonial theory, such as hybridity, resistance, and subalternity, to New Testament passages.
3. **Critical Reflection:** Develop a nuanced understanding of how historical contexts influence biblical interpretation, particularly for marginalized groups, and reflect on how these texts speak to modern postcolonial contexts.

Required readings

Segovia, Fernando y R. S. Sugirtharajah (2009). *A Postcolonial Commentary of the New Testament Writings*. New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2009.

Suggested readings

Elliott, Neil. *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle*.

Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2006.

Horsley, Richard A, editor. *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*. Horsham, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.

Horsley, Richard A. And Neil Asher Silberman. *The Message and the Kingdom*.

NewYork: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1997.

Sugirtharajah, R. S. *The Bible and Empire. Postcolonial Explorations*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Course Structure and Topics

Week 1: Introduction to the New Testament's Historical Context

Week 2: Principles of Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation

Week 3: Empire and Resistance in the Roman World

Week 4: Paul and Empire: Letters from the Margins

Week 5: A Postcolonial View of the Gospels

Week 6: A Postcolonial View of the Book of Acts

Week 7: Revelation as Resistance Literature

Main Assignment

Students will maintain a reflective journal throughout the course, documenting their thoughts, reflections, and critical responses to the readings, lectures, and discussions. The journal should demonstrate engagement with the course materials and an evolving understanding of how postcolonial theory illuminates the New Testament texts.