



# NT Survey: Epistles/Revelation

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## Syllabus

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## Course Description

Correct theology is inseparable from correct living. The New Testament epistles reinforce this concept as they demonstrate both the why and how of Kingdom living. This course surveys the New Testament epistles and the Book of Revelation, examining both the introductory issues and the basic content each book. Students will wrestle with significant and challenging passages by exploring the major issues and then interacting with specific passages through inductive Bible study. The goal of the course is to gain an increased commitment to and capacity for applying these portions of God's Word to the world and Christian living today.

## Course Objectives

*The course aims at enabling the student to have:*

1. Familiarity with the contents of the biblical books studied, including the ability to identify the texts' outlines, chronology of events, major teachings, sequence of topics, and most theologically significant chapters.
2. Ability to summarize the most important items of historical background for each book studied.
3. Acquaintance with the major critical views concerning introductory questions (i.e., authorship, date, settings, etc.).
4. Appreciation of the complexities of the more exegetically and theologically controversial passages surveyed: (a) via discussion of the major options held and arguments for each, and (b) via the opportunity to wrestle in detail with one such passage through an inductive Bible study.
5. Commitment to and capacity for applying these portions of God's Word in a fair and relevant manner to the world and Christian living today.

## Course Texts

*The New Testament* (in a modern version); e.g., NRSV, NASB, NIV, or NCV (best choice--NIV).

Carson, D. A.; Moo, Douglas, J.; Morris, Leon. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Second edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Longenecker, Richard N. *The Ministry and Message of Paul*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971.

Metzger, Bruce M. *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Participant's Book). Nashville: Abingdon, 2006.



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**NOTE:** Where these works are not available, readings comparable in perspective and scope may be substituted.

## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Whether you sit in a traditional classroom or study from a distance, you will benefit from interaction, collaboration, and spiritual formation (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 10.3.3.3; 10.3.4.3). In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ITS is developing structures and resources to encourage spiritual formation and community interaction in our courses. In this course, we have included three collaborative learning features:

1. ITS Online Interactivity Forum (see course requirements) – fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion (required for all students)
2. Spiritual Formation Project (see course requirements) – fosters mentor-to-learner interaction in a mentor-guided reflection, discussion and application (required for all students)
3. Learning Community Assignments (see end of syllabus) – fosters peer-to-peer collaboration in a group approach to assignments (optional but recommended where possible)

Go to [www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/](http://www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/) for the most up-to-date ITS resources.

## Course Assignments

### 1. Reading

- a. To accompany each taped lecture, read the corresponding portion of the New Testament covered in that lecture, along with the introductory material for each New Testament book in the appropriate chapters of Carson, Moo, and Morris, or the equivalent.
- b. Read Longenecker in preparation for the midterm and Metzger in preparation for the final.

2. **Study Questions:** Complete the study guide questions in the *Expanded Study Guide* to review each taped lecture.

3. **Inductive Bible Study Paper:** Each student will perform an inductive Bible study on an important passage from one of the books we will study in this course. **Students must secure approval for their passage from their seminary advisor**, who may also chose to recommend additional specialized bibliography on that passage (in addition to the commentary and IBS bibliographies provided in this notebook).



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Typically, a manageable length passage will consist of **5-8 verses**, following natural thought or paragraph divisions of the biblical text, and will be a passage of some theological or exegetical significance and controversy. Examples might include Colossians 1:15-20, Philippians 2:5-11, I Timothy 3:1-7, James 5:13-18, Hebrews 6:1-8, and 1 Peter 3:1-7. Also follow these additional guidelines:

- a. See *Inductive Bible Study* (by Dr. Craig Blomberg, et al) at the end of this syllabus for a full description of the process for this paper. Follow this method unless your school instructs otherwise.
- b. Use an approved academic form for writing the results (e.g., Turabian, MLA, etc.).
- c. Length must be **12-17 double-spaced typed pages** of text with standard one-inch margins.
- d. Demonstrate familiarity with all the major exegetical options concerning the principal interpretive questions. A good balance between lexical-contextual analysis of key words and interaction with secondary literature is essential.
  - i. List all relevant sources consulted in an alphabetized bibliography.
  - ii. Use proper footnotes or endnotes for all information directly obtained from sources other than your own initial study (not just direct quotations).

#### 4. ITS Online Interactivity Forum

Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of **two** major course topics. Go to [www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/](http://www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/) to register for and enter the ITS On-Line Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment **after** you have listened to **all** the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
- ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
- ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.



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**NOTE: Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.**

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

## 5. Spiritual Formation Project

**RATIONALE:** Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind**, ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. *Identify your mentor early in the course*, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

1. **Personal Reflection and Evaluation: *Reflect on the course*** – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.
  - a. Follow these steps in your reflection:
    - Step 1: What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?
    - Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?
    - Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?
    - Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what *specific steps* should you take to *concretely* apply what you have learned?
  - b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)
  - c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).



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**2. Community Reflection and Interaction: *Interview a mentor*** – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

a. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)

1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

NOTE: **Identify your mentor early in the course**, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

b. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:

- ♦ What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
- ♦ In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
- ♦ What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

**3. Synthesis and Application: *Draw your final conclusions*** – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.

b. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:

- ♦ What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
- ♦ What advice did he/she give?



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- ♦ How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
  - ♦ Include the person's name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
- c. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
- ♦ If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your "Personal Reflection and Evaluation", how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
  - ♦ Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor's insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
  - ♦ In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, *specific* changes need to occur in your life and what *concrete* steps will you take to implement them?

**NOTE TO STUDENTS:** Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

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- 6. Examinations:** Exams will test material from lectures by a variety of objective questions and readings from Longenecker and Metzger and by a selection of essay questions (see list of possible questions below). The midterm will contain 15 T/F questions, 35 multiple choice, and 20 fill in the blank items based on the details of the lectures. All are worth one point. In addition, five 2 pt. questions test the application of various books and themes. Two 10 pt. essay questions will be selected from a list of four possible questions, listed below. Because of its level of difficulty, an open-book, open notes format is encouraged. It presupposes the



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student will have taken considerable, detailed notes on each lecture. The final contains the same format, *covering only material not tested on the midterm*. It also contains fifteen 2 pt. questions asking the student to identify **from memory** (no notes) the correct book and chapter in which certain key topics and themes occur. A list of possible questions is supplied below.

## Course Grading

Expanded Study Guide Questions .....	10%
Inductive Bible Study Paper .....	25%
ITS Online Interactivity Forum .....	5%
Spiritual Formation Project .....	15%
Midterm Examination.....	20%
Final Examination.....	<u>25%</u>
	100%



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## Notes Regarding This Downloaded Syllabus

This downloadable syllabus is not exhaustive. It is designed to provide learners with a picture of the course, not a full outline of the course. Grader Guidelines, Appendixes, Bibliographies, Lecture Outlines, and Review Questions have been removed. The complete course syllabus is included with purchase of the course in either a digital or hard-copy format.

Likewise, individuals taking the class for credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to alter or change the syllabus as deemed necessary.