

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Session 1, Course Introduction Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 1, Course Introduction, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mathewson's lecture introduces his New Testament History and Literature course. He outlines the course's approach, which balances a broad survey of all New Testament books with deeper examinations of selected texts. **The course will emphasize the historical and cultural contexts of the New Testament writings**, examining them both as historical documents and as Scripture, while addressing their relevance for contemporary Christians. **Students will need the syllabus, a course notebook, a Bible, and three textbooks: *Introducing the New Testament*, *Making Sense of the New Testament*, and *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*.** The course grade relies on regular textbook reading quizzes, four exams covering lecture material and Bible reading, and a comprehensive final exam. **Optional extra credit is available through review sessions led by teaching assistants.**

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Daniel).



**Mathewson_NTLit_S
ession01.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 1, Course Introduction

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. Mathewson's New Testament Literature Lecture 1:

Briefing Document: New Testament Literature Course Introduction

Main Themes:

- **Course Overview and Approach:** Dr. Mathewson outlines the structure and goals of his New Testament Literature survey course. He aims to strike a balance between covering all the New Testament books broadly and delving into specific texts and issues in detail.
- **Historical and Theological Context:** A core theme is understanding the New Testament documents as *both* historical documents written in specific cultural contexts *and* as Scripture, the Word of God, with enduring theological relevance.
- **Course Requirements and Expectations:** The lecture covers essential course components like required readings (Bible, textbooks, and lecture notebook), unannounced quizzes, exams, and extra credit opportunities.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Course Objective:** The goal is to provide an introduction to every book in the New Testament while also exploring significant and/or problematic texts in greater depth.
- "So hopefully, we can combine the best of both worlds, giving you at least something, an introduction to every book so you have an idea of what each of the books is about and what they're doing in the New Testament, but at the same time giving you a flavor of some of the texts, again, that are problematic or that are interesting or crucial for you to understand."
- **Historical Context is Paramount:** The New Testament books are not theological textbooks but responses to specific situations and problems within the first-century church. Understanding these historical and cultural contexts is crucial.
- "So, in one sense, we want to understand the New Testament in its historical context. These are living, breathing documents written in specific historical context to very specific needs, problems, and situations that the author is aware of, and he writes to address those."

- **Theological Significance:** While emphasizing the historical context, the course will also consider how these documents function as Scripture and the Word of God for contemporary readers.
- "However, at the same time, the New Testament comprises what God's people have always held to as nothing less than the Scriptures or the Word of God. And so, we have to understand how is it that these historical documents continue to have abiding validity."
- **Required Materials:** Students need a Bible (any translation), the textbook "Introducing the New Testament," "Making Sense of the New Testament," "The Lost Letters of Pergamum," and a downloadable lecture notebook from Blackboard.
- **Grading Components:** The course grade is based on:
 - Six unannounced quizzes on textbook readings.
 - Four exams covering Bible reading and lecture material (from the notebook).
 - A comprehensive final exam (covering the material on the four exams).
 - Extra credit is available by attending review sessions led by a TA, where active participation is expected.
- **Textbook Reading:** Students are expected to keep up with the textbook reading schedule in the syllabus.
- "On each week, I have listed what you are required to read, Introducing will be the main textbook, and you'll read the chapters corresponding to what we're discussing that day. And by the way, please keep up with the textbook reading."
- **Computer Usage:** Students are expected to use computers respectfully and not distract others.
- "If you're playing a computer game, there's someone right behind you that's trying to pay attention. So please if you want to play games or email or play on Facebook or whatever, go ahead and do it but just stay in your room, don't do it here in class."

Quotes Illustrating Key Points:

- On the nature of the New Testament writings: "None of the New Testament books even come close to being a theological textbook that tells you, here's everything Paul thinks about the Lord's Supper. Here's everything Paul thinks about spiritual gifts. Here's everything Paul thinks about Jesus and everything he thinks about the Holy Spirit."
- On the goal of "The Lost Letters of Pergamum:" "But what Longenecker is doing, is simply trying to come up with an interesting and compelling way to relate to you important historical and cultural information. What was it like to live as a Christian in a culture dominated by Roman rule? And dominated by pagan religion and pagan religious practices, et cetera, et cetera."

This briefing document should provide a clear overview of Dr. Mathewson's course introduction and highlight the essential information for students.

4. Study Guide: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 1, Course Introduction

New Testament Literature: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Mathewson, what are the two ways a New Testament survey course is often taught?
2. What is Dr. Mathewson's approach to teaching this New Testament survey course, and why did he choose this method?
3. According to Dr. Mathewson, what is the primary focus when studying New Testament documents?
4. Why is it important to understand the historical and cultural context of the New Testament documents?
5. Besides historical documents, what does the Church believe the New Testament documents to be?
6. What are the two documents that students need, besides the textbooks and the Bible, and where can they be found?
7. What are the three primary textbooks required for this course?
8. What is *The Lost Letters of Pergamum* about?
9. How many unannounced quizzes will there be, and what is the primary purpose of those quizzes?
10. From what course material will the four exams primarily be taken?

Quiz Answer Key

1. One way is to cover every book quickly, introducing the author, time written, background, and theme. The other is to start with Matthew and progress as far as possible, potentially not covering the entire New Testament.
2. Dr. Mathewson combines both approaches, providing a broad overview of all books while occasionally slowing down to examine problematic or crucial texts in detail. He chose this method to balance breadth and depth in the survey course.

3. The primary focus is to understand the New Testament documents as a combination of historical documents. They were written to address specific problems that arose in the first-century church, so that context is important.
4. Understanding the historical and cultural context allows us to see these documents as living, breathing texts produced in a specific environment. It helps us grasp why they were written and how they were received by first-century Christians.
5. Besides historical documents, the Church has always held the New Testament documents to be the Scriptures or the Word of God. Because they're considered theological documents, the church believes them to be divinely inspired.
6. The two documents are the syllabus and the New Testament notebook. Both can be downloaded from Blackboard.
7. The three primary textbooks are *Introducing the New Testament*, *Making Sense of the New Testament*, and *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*.
8. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum* is a fictional collection of letters that relay important historical and cultural information about the first century. It offers insight into the life of Christians living under Roman rule and pagan religious practices.
9. There will be six unannounced quizzes. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure students are completing the assigned reading for the textbooks.
10. The four exams will primarily be taken from the lecture material and Bible reading. The lecture material will be based on the New Testament notebook available on Blackboard.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the importance of understanding the historical and cultural context of the New Testament documents, providing specific examples of how this context informs our interpretation of the texts.
2. Explain Dr. Mathewson's rationale for combining a broad survey with in-depth analysis in his New Testament Literature course. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?
3. Analyze the different approaches presented in *Making Sense of the New Testament* to reading and applying the New Testament in a modern context. Which approach do you find most compelling, and why?
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of *The Lost Letters of Pergamum* as a tool for understanding the historical and cultural context of the New Testament. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using a fictional narrative for this purpose?
5. Describe the relationship between the historical and theological dimensions of the New Testament documents. How can we appreciate both aspects in our study of the New Testament?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **New Testament Survey:** A course that provides an overview of the books, authors, and major themes of the New Testament.
- **Historical Context:** The social, cultural, political, and economic environment in which a text was written.
- **Cultural Context:** The values, beliefs, customs, and practices of a society or group of people.
- **Theological Documents:** Texts that address religious beliefs, doctrines, and practices.
- **Scripture:** Writings regarded as sacred or divinely inspired by a religious community.
- **Syllabus:** A document outlining the course requirements, schedule, and grading policies.
- **Blackboard:** A course management system used to distribute materials and communicate with students.
- **Epistles:** Letters, particularly those written by apostles in the New Testament.
- **Gospels:** Accounts of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Canon:** A list of books considered authoritative scripture.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 1, Course Introduction, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

FAQ: New Testament History and Literature Course

- **What is the primary goal of this New Testament course?**
- The primary goal of this course is to understand the New Testament documents as a combination of historical and theological texts. The course will explore the historical and cultural context in which these books were written, addressing specific problems and situations within the first-century church. Additionally, the course seeks to understand how these historical documents continue to function as Scripture and the Word of God for believers today.
- **How will this course approach the study of the New Testament books?**
- The course will aim for a balance between breadth and depth. It will touch upon all the books of the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation, providing an introduction to each. However, it will also delve into specific texts, passages, or interpretive issues in certain books, allowing for a more detailed look at crucial or problematic areas.
- **What resources are required for this course?**
- Students are required to have a Bible (any translation of the New Testament), the textbook "Introducing the New Testament," "Making Sense of the New Testament," and "The Lost Letters of Pergamum." Additionally, students will need to download the course syllabus and a New Testament notebook from Blackboard.
- **What is the purpose of the New Testament notebook, and how will it be used?**
- The New Testament notebook, available on Blackboard, serves as the outline for lectures and class discussions. It will be used to guide the course's progression through the material. Exams will be based on the content of the notebook.

- **How will textbook readings be assessed in this course?**
- Textbook readings will be assessed through six unannounced pop quizzes. These quizzes are designed to ensure students are keeping up with the assigned reading material and will focus on key points and emphases from the texts. Quizzes will usually be held on Mondays, but sometimes on Wednesdays.
- **How will the lecture material and Bible reading be assessed?**
- There will be four exams throughout the semester that primarily cover the lecture and discussion material, which is outlined in the New Testament notebook. These exams will also draw from the assigned New Testament reading. There is also a comprehensive final exam, but it will not introduce new information.
- **Is there any extra credit available in this course?**
- Extra credit is available through attending review sessions held by the teaching assistants (TAs). There will be four review sessions held throughout the course, one before each exam. Active participation in these sessions, through asking questions or engaging in discussions, is required to receive extra credit.
- **What is the professor's policy on computer usage in class?**
- Students are welcome to bring computers to class for note-taking and accessing course materials. However, the professor expects students to be respectful and not engage in distracting activities such as playing games or using social media during class.