

**BS425OL Reading Early Christian Literature**  
**Meadville-Lombard Theological Seminary**  
**Online course, Spring 2010**

**Rev. Dr. Nicole Wilkinson Duran, instructor**  
**nicole.duran@villanova.edu**

**Course description:** In this course we will read and analyze the variety within Christian scripture, known to most Christians as the New Testament. Extremely influential in western culture historically and currently interpreted with great passion and immediacy in the southern hemisphere, the stories of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection told by the gospels and the story of the earliest church told in the epistles and in Revelation are of crucial cultural, economic, and political significance in the contemporary world. We will discuss the pre-history of the documents and the ever-tantalizing Jesus of history, as well as the historical forces that shaped the canon, as we take a look at some of the extra-canonical material. Students will become familiar with critical methods of reading and converse with the great diversity of perspectives on the text that we find in scholarship, in the church, and in popular culture.

**Course Objectives:**

- To become familiar with the variety within the Christian scriptures and the more important extra-canonical Christian literature.
- To be able to follow grasp the significance of readings from a variety of perspectives.
- To be able to articulate one's own interpretation so that it makes sense to others with differing beliefs.
- To develop an appreciation for the variety of ways in which the Christian scriptures have been and continue to be used and understood around the world.

**Course Requirements**

Informed and regular participation in online discussion	20%
midterm gospels quiz	10%
past-midterm quiz	15%
2-page first impressions paper	10%
5-page history of interpretation paper	20%
5-page exegesis paper	25%

**Required Textbooks:**

- Cartlidge, David R. and David L. Dungan, eds. *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Moore, Stephen D. and Janice Capel Anderson, eds. *Mark and Method*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.
- Patte, Daniel et al, eds. *The Global Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.

Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2009.

**Recommended textbooks:**

Blount, Brian K. et al, eds. *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007.

De Young, Curtis Paul et al, eds. *The People's Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.

Ringe, Sharon and Carol A Newsome, eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Sugirtharajah, R.S. *The Postcolonial Bible*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.