

**ELEMENTARY NEW TESTAMENT GREEK**  
**GRK 3351–3352**

The Scriptures of the New Testament were composed in the *koinê dialektos*, the development of the Attic dialect “common” (*koinê*) to the Athenians, Macedonians, Thessalians, and other members of the later Delian League. Alexander’s conquests established this dialect as the language of governance and elite commerce in Syria and Egypt, a role the Koinê continued to play when Alexander’s fractious successors in empire yielded to Rome. The conquered peoples who adopted and adapted the language of the Greeks not only used it to conduct business with their superiors and with one another (whence the non-literary papyri) but also read Greek literature and retold their own national sagas in the new tongue, enriching the Koinê in the process (or debasing it, as Attic purists ancient and modern would have it).

Most important in the subsequent history of Western civilization was the saga of the Jews, which was first translated from Hebrew and Aramaic originals to produce the Septuagint (LXX); then interpreted according to the methods of Hellenistic literary criticism originated in the study of Homer and the Greek poets; then reclothed in the Greek literary dress of drama, history, treatise, and oracle; and finally appropriated by the adherents of Jesus called Messiah (Greek *Christos*) for their proclamation that the God of Israel has brought the salvation promised in the Scriptures to Israel and the nations through Jesus. This course introduces the student to the scripturally colored Greek in which the New Testament was written.

**BA EDUCATIONAL GOAL SUPPORTED BY THE COURSE:** The student will show mastery of the biblical story and familiarity with various genres of biblical literature (law, wisdom, gospel, epistle, etc.) and basic methods and principles of biblical exegesis.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. The student will acquire a basic knowledge of the formation of Greek substantives and verbs and of Greek sentence structure.
2. The student will acquire a Greek vocabulary representative of the Johannine Epistles and the first eighteen verses of the Gospel.
3. The student will become familiar with the aids for exegetical study incorporated in the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, including the use of the apparatus for textual criticism, and with the use of the lexicon as an exegetical resource.
4. Through translation of passages in the Epistles and Gospels the student will gain an increased understanding of the witness of these writings to the Christian faith.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** In the main, two things are required of the student: (1) regular participation in class sessions (on campus or via Zoom), where new material can be assimilated, material previously introduced can be reinforced, questions asked and answered, and mistakes corrected; (2) daily study; a good rule of thumb is to review material presented in class and prepare assignments for a minimum of one hour each day, including weekends.

The course is supported with materials available via an LMS (“Learning Management System”) developed on the Canvas platform; I believe you will find Canvas intuitive, but a guide is available at <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701-canvas-student-guide-table-of-contents>.

Quizzes (or “encouragements to persevere in your study”) will be of two kinds: 1) multiple-choice and true/false reading quizzes covering the assigned chapters in Countryman, to be administered via the Canvas LMS; and 2) memorization and translation quizzes, which will be administered on a regular basis in our sessions. (Students participating in the class via Zoom will need to 1) print out memorization and translation quizzes before the 11 AM session; 2) sign a statement affirming that you have not consulted any books or notes in completing the quiz except those expressly allowed by the instructor for that quiz; and 3) scan the completed quiz and return to me via Canvas message or email for grading. Please let me know immediately if this presents a difficulty.) Each quiz will focus on material specified in advance but may include material learned for previous quizzes (i.e., quizzes are cumulative). A student who notifies the instructor or the AGST receptionist in advance of an absence from class will have opportunity to make up a quiz given on the date of the absence; a quiz missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up. Grading will be based on the quizzes (60%), attendance and participation (20%), and oral translation in class (20%).

The basic text for the the course, which will introduce the student to essential matters of Greek word formation (“accidence,” in grammarian’s jargon), sentence structure (“syntax”), and Greek passages for reading and translation is:

L. William Countryman, *Read it in Greek* (Eerdmans; also sold as *The New Testament is in Greek*).

The student should become familiar with Countryman’s Table of Contents and the book’s special features: the paradigms of substantive forms (pp. 177– 185), verbs (pp. 185–188), and participles (pp. 188–195), principal parts of common irregular verbs (pp. 196–197), and especially the glossary and index (pp. 203–205). This last feature of Countryman’s grammar is useful in locating grammatical explanations needed for the translation of a particular passage — especially on those rare occasions when the instructor does not respond to email as quickly as the student desires.

Our initial Greek passages for reading and translation will include selections from Seumas Macdonald’s *Lingua Graeca Per Se Illustrata* and from Ernest Cadman Colwell and Ernest W. Tune, *A Beginner’s Reader-Grammar for New Testament Greek* (Harper and Row; reprint, Hendrickson). We will then read passages from the Johannine Letters and the Gospels. At that point, the student will need access to the standard manual critical edition of the New Testament (also valuable for its references and study aids):

Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28<sup>th</sup> ed., American Bible Society; available on line at <https://www.nestle-aland.com/en/read-na28-online/>).

In addition to Countryman and Nestle-Aland, you will also need to consult a Greek-English “lexicon” (i.e., dictionary) regularly after the first month or two of the course. The most affordable print lexicon for the New Testament is:

Mark A. House, *A Compact Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Hendrickson).

While not as convenient as a printed lexicon for our purposes, G. Abbott-Smith's lexicon is freely accessible in PDF: [https://books.google.com/books?id=E-kUAAAAYAAJ&printsec=titlepage&source=gbs\\_v2\\_summary\\_r&hl=en#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=E-kUAAAAYAAJ&printsec=titlepage&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&hl=en#v=onepage&q&f=false):

If you plan to continue study of Greek, I recommend this more current and informative lexicon:

Frederick William Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (University of Chicago Press);

or its massive and even more informative parent volume, in print or electronic form:

*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich (often referred to as "BDAG"; University of Chicago Press).

Students preferring a systematic guide to vocabulary acquisition are encouraged to employ:

R. E. Van Voorst, *Building Your New Testament Greek Vocabulary* (3rd edition; Society of Biblical Literature).

You may also wish to consult the following works on specific topics as the course proceeds:

Samuel Lamerson, *English Grammar to Ace New Testament Greek* (Zondervan);

Mark L. Strauss, *The Biblical Greek Companion for Bible Software Users* (Zondervan).

LEARNING AIDS: A selection of "fireside chats" on topics we will consider is available at <https://jeffpeterson1.bandcamp.com/>. A number of handouts presented in the course of the class will be provided via Canvas (and in person if needed); be sure to watch for the coveted "Verbamatic" handout (and ask about the T-shirt).

For drilling on vocabulary, you may wish to employ <http://www.flashcardmachine.com/p/1e4n2b> (if that link doesn't work, cut and paste it into your browser). When we begin reading 1 John, you will find useful the vocabulary guide and self-directed quizzes supplied by Murray Vassar (Ph.D. candidate at Asbury Theological Seminary): <https://www.murrayvassar.com/g>.

Other online aids to the study of the Greek New Testament can be accessed through Mark Goodacre's "Greek New Testament Gateway" (<http://ntgateway.com/greek/>); in particular, you may find some of William Mounce's learning aids helpful (<https://www.teknia.com/greek>), although pronunciation and grammatical explanations may differ from those in our class and text.

SCHEDULE: We will learn the elements of Greek grammar in the order below, typically at the rate of one topic per week of class, while we also read in Macdonald, Colwell and Tune, the Johannine epistles, and then other NT passages as announced. Memorization and translation quizzes, usually on Monday, will be announced at least one week in advance.

<u>Topic</u>	
Alphabet & c.	Countryman, 1–6
<u>The Clause</u>	Countryman, 9–13
<u>The Substantive:</u>	
Cases	Countryman, 15–19
Case Endings: 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Declensions	Countryman, 22–27, 180 #2
Prepositions with Nouns	Countryman, 31–34
Agreement of Nouns and Adjectives	Countryman, 38–40
Case Endings: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Declension	Countryman, 44–46
<u>The Verb:</u>	
Tenses	Countryman, 55–56
Formation of Tenses	Countryman, 64–65
Personal Endings	Countryman, 50–52
Augment & Reduplication	Countryman, 57–59
Infixes	Countryman, 61–63
Moods	Countryman, 69–72
Participles	Countryman, 69–70, 78–81
Infinitives	Countryman, 114–116