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**GUIDELINES FOR PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS
NEW TESTAMENT AREA
GRADUATE PROGRAM IN RELIGION
DUKE UNIVERSITY**

These guidelines, approved by the faculty in New Testament, concern preliminary examinations in this field at Duke University. They presuppose the wider framework of the Preliminary Exam Procedures and Guidelines adopted in Duke's Graduate Program in Religion.

A student who has finished both coursework and language examinations can prepare for the preliminary examinations. The language examinations are of two sorts: modern and ancient. The modern languages will normally be German and French, and these examinations will be administered according to the general rules of the Graduate Program. The ancient languages are Greek and biblical Hebrew. Competency in Greek will normally be demonstrated by passing a two-hour translation examination set by the chair of the student's prelim committee and consisting of passages from both the New Testament and extra-New Testament Greek texts. Students will be allowed to take a Greek lexicon into the exam. Competency in Hebrew will be demonstrated by passing an oral examination administered by a faculty member in the New Testament or Hebrew Bible/Old Testament field and consisting of on-sight translation of selected biblical passages from Genesis and Micah, and explanation of grammatical structures occurring therein.

Preparation for preliminary examinations will take place in consultation with the advisors who have agreed to serve on the Preliminary Examination Committee. The Preliminary Examination Committee will normally be made up of two or three professors from the major field and one from each minor field, for a total of four or five faculty members. At least three of the members must be faculty in the Graduate Program in Religion. The preliminary examinations will normally be taken in the third year (fourth year if the student enters without a Master's degree).

The student will begin preparation for the preliminary exams by developing a reading list in consultation with his or her advisors. This reading list will include titles chosen from the comprehensive reading list, which is attached and which will be updated periodically by the New Testament faculty. The decision on the individual titles for this reading list will be left to the collaborative labor between the student and his/her advisors and will reflect a balance between the student's own scholarly interests and the effort to attain a comprehensive grasp of the New Testament field.

The reading list includes the following areas:

- General works on New Testament history
- Synoptics and Acts
- Johannine literature
- Historical Jesus
- Pauline literature
- Catholic epistles and Revelation
- New Testament theology
- Textual criticism and canon formation
- Greco-Roman environment
- Jewish environment

The Preliminary Examinations

The preliminary examinations will consist of five parts:

- (1) New Testament introduction (history, authorship, chronology, etc.),
- (2) New Testament thought/theology,
- (3) Internal minor,
- (4) External minor,
- (5) Oral defense.

Exams 1 and 2 will normally be four hours long and may include a question on the student's dissertation area. Also, if one of the student's minors is not Judaism or Greco-Roman religion, questions on one of those areas may appear on Exams 1 and 2. Exams 3 and 4 will normally be three hours long. Students will answer two or three questions on exams 1 and 2 and two questions on exams 3 and 4. Questions to be answered will be chosen out of a larger number asked. The four written exams will usually be taken in a two-week period. The oral defense lasts about one-and-a-half hours, and is administered by all faculty members who are a part of the student's Preliminary Examination Committee.