

Syllabus

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Department of Religion
RELIGION 01:840:202:03
NEW TESTAMENT
Spring 2014

Introduction to the New Testament
Class Schedule: Mon./Thurs. 9:15 -10:35 a.m.
Douglas Campus
Hickman Hall
Rm. #119

Prof. Gregory L. Wallace, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Mon. 10:35 a.m.-
12:00 p.m.

Course Objective

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the origins and development of the New Testament. The New Testament is the second half of the Christian Bible. It is important for students to study because it has stood at the center of Western civilization and, thus, it has affected all of us - whether or not we consider ourselves Christians. This course utilizes a historical approach to the New Testament and other early Christian writings. We will study the historical situation in which Christianity began, the history of the New Testament writings, and various questions and debates which are fundamental to scholarship in the history of early Christianity.

Our study of the New Testament will seek answers to the questions: Who was Jesus of Nazareth? Who were the earliest followers of Jesus of Nazareth? What was the process by which the stories and ideas about Jesus of Nazareth circulated in the first three centuries after his death? Where did this collection of books in the New Testament come from? Who wrote these books. When? Why? Where? What were the needs which gave rise to these New Testament writings? Why were the writings in the New Testament included in the Scriptures, but other Christian books - some of them written at the same time - not? Who made the decisions? On what grounds? And When? How did Christianity come to be a separate religion from Judaism? What does the New Testament tell us about politics, social issues, Jesus and society, the church (es) and the rest of society? Greco-Roman Philosophy? What is unique about Christianity and what is shared with other religions or philosophies?

Textbooks

1. Bible. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with Apocrypha/deuterocanonical Books*. This college edition is available in the bookstore in a paperback version. Other translations that are acceptable for this class include the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New International Version

(NIV), and the New American Bible (NAB). I will teach from the *HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with Apocrypha/deuterocanonical Books*. It is always helpful to consult two versions, since translation is never an exact science.

2. Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
3. Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage, 1979, 1989).

Course Requirements

Course attendance and participation in discussions are expected and necessary in order to accomplish the course goals. This course will emphasize class participation and discussion; consequently, I will take attendance each day. In addition to critical interaction with the class lectures, contributions from the assigned readings and your own reflections enrich the course and provide part of the basis for grading. This is 10% of your final grade.

Reading. You are expected to read all required readings from the Bible and the text book on time. For our purpose, “on time” means “before class on the day of the week for which the reading was assigned.” At the end of the course you will submit a reading report estimating the percentage of the required reading you have done on time. Your grade on this assignment will constitute 5% of your final grade.

Map assignment. You will draw and label a map on Palestine in the New Testament Times. You must do all your own work on this assignment. Your grade on the map will constitute 10% of your final grade.

Examinations. Two exams, a Mid-Term (25%) and a Final (50%) will comprise approximately (75%) of the course grade. These exams will not be cumulative. The Mid-Term exam will include readings and lecture material from the beginning of the course until the date of the Mid-Term exam. The Final exam will include only readings and lecture material following the Mid-Term exam to the end of the course. The exams will consist of multiple choice questions.

Course Schedule and Readings

Thursday, Jan. 23: Introductory Class—no reading

Monday, Jan. 27: The Early Christians and their Literature
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters 1 and 29

Thursday, Jan. 30: The Greco-Roman World
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters 2-3

Monday, Feb. 3: The Gospel of Mark
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters. 4-5 and Mark's Gospel
Map Assignment Due

Thursday, Feb. 6: The Gospel of Matthew
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters. 6-7 and Matthew's Gospel

Monday, Feb. 10: The Gospel of Luke
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 8 and Luke's Gospel

Thursday, Feb. 13: The Acts of the Apostles
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 9 and Acts of the Apostles text

Monday, Feb. 17: The Gospel of John
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 10 and the Gospel of John

Thursday, Feb. 20: Gnosticism and other varieties of early Christianity
Reading assignments: 1 John, 2 John, 3 John ("the Johannine Epistles")
Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*

Monday, Feb. 24: Continue Gnosticism
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters 11

Thursday, Feb. 27: Gnostic Gospels
Reading assignment: Chapter 12

Monday, March 3: The Historical Jesus
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 13

Thursday, March 6: Continue with the Historical Jesus
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 14

Monday, March 10: Early Christianity and Jesus
Reading assignment: Chapters 15-17

Thursday, March 13: MIDTERM EXAM

Spring Recess: March 15th - March 23rd

Monday, March 24: The Apostle Paul and his Letters
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters 18-19 and I Thessalonians

Thursday, March 27: Continue Paul's Letters

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 20 and I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon

Monday, March 31: Romans

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 21 and the letter to the Romans

Thursday, April 3: The Letter of James

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 22 and the letter of James

Monday, April 7: Deutero-Paul

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters 23-24 and the letters of Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians

Thursday, April 10: Continue Deutero-Paul

Reading assignment: Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians

Monday, April 14: Pastoral Epistles

Reading assignment: The epistles of I and II Timothy and Titus

Thursday, April 17: Hebrews

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 25 and the letter of Hebrews

Monday, April 21: 1 Peter

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 26 and the epistle of 1 Peter

Thursday, April 24: 2 Peter, James (again), and Jude

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 27 and the letters of 2 Peter, James, and Jude

Monday, April 28: The Revelation of John

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapter 28 and the biblical text of Revelation

Thursday, May 1: Continue Revelation

Monday, May 5: The Shepherd of Hermas, The Apocalypse of Peter

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 13th, 2014, 8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. (Hickman, 119)