

Syllabus

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Department of Religion
RELIGION 01:840:202:02
NEW TESTAMENT
Spring 2010

Introduction to the New Testament
Class Schedule: Tues/Th 3:20 - 4:40 p.m.
Livingston Campus
Lucy Stone Hall
Rm. B269

Prof. Gregory L. Wallace, Ph.D.
Office: Loree Building, Rm. # 110
Email: Gwal801645@aol.com
Office Phone: 732-932-3291
Home Phone: 215-224-4723
Office Hours: Mon. 1 - 2 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 collections 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? What is the relationship between Christianity and Greco-Roman religion? 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*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
3. Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage, 1979, 1989).

Course Requirements

Class 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 grade.

Map assignment. You will draw and label a map on Palestine in 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 include essays and short definitions. The exam will be discussed approximately one week prior to the scheduled exam date. The students will be furnished with material that may appear on the exam, but will not know how many or which particular questions will be asked. I will select the questions for the exams on the test day.

Course Schedule and Readings

Tuesday, January 26: Introductory Class, no reading

Thursday, January 28: The Early Christians and their Literature
Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chapters 1 and 29

Tuesday, February 2: The Greco-Roman World

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chs. 2 - 3

Thursday, February 4: The Gospel of Mark;

Reading assignment: The Gospel of Mark; Ehrman, Chs. 4 - 5

Map assignment due

Tuesday, February 9: The Synoptic Problem

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Ch. 6

Thursday, February 11: The Gospel of Matthew;

Reading assignment: The Gospel of Matthew; Ehrman, Ch. 7

Tuesday, February 16: The Gospel of Luke

Reading assignment: The Gospel of Luke; Ehrman, Ch. 8

Thursday, February 18: The Acts of the Apostles

Reading assignment: Acts; Ehrman, Ch. 9

Tuesday, February 23: The Gospel of John

Reading assignment: The Gospel of John; Ehrman, Ch. 10

Thursday, February 25: Gnosticism and other varieties of early Christianity

Reading assignment: 1 John, 2 John, & 3 John ("the Johannine Epistles")
Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels

Tuesday, March 2: Continue Gnosticism

Readings assignment: Ehrman, Chs. 11- 12

Thursday, March 4: The Historical Jesus

Reading assignment: Ehrman, Chs. 13-14

Tuesday, March 9: Continue Historical Jesus

Thursday, March 11: **MIDTERM EXAM**

March 13 - March 21: **Spring Break**

Tuesday, March 23: Jesus in the context of first century Palestine

Reading assignment: Ehrman Chs. 15-17

Thursday, March 25: The apostle Paul

Reading assignment: I Thessalonians; Ehrman, Chs. 18-19

Tuesday, March 30: Paul's mission and letters

Reading assignment: I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon; Ehrman Ch. 20

Thursday, April 1: Continue Paul's letters

Reading assignment: Romans; Ehrman, Ch. 21

Tuesday, April 6: Continue Romans

Reading assignment: Continue Romans; Ehrman, Ch. 21

Thursday, April 8: Paul and James

Reading assignment: James; Ehrman, Ch. 22

Tuesday, April 13: Deutero-Paul

Reading assignment: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians; Ehrman, Ch. 23

Thursday, April 15: Continue Deutero-Paul

Reading assignment: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians; Ehrman, Chs.

Tuesday, April 20: The Pastoral Epistles

Reading assignment: I & II Timothy, Titus; Ehrman, Ch. 23-24

Thursday, April 22: The Epistle to the Hebrews

Reading assignment: Hebrews; Ehrman, Ch. 25

Tuesday, April 27: Peter

Reading assignment: 1 Peter; Ehrman, Ch. 26

Thursday, April 29: Continue Epistles

Reading assignment: 2 Peter, James (again), Jude; Ehrman, Ch. 27

Tuesday, May 4: Revelation of John, Shepherd of Hermas, and Apocalypse of Peter

Reading assignment: Revelation; Ehrman, Ch. 28

Map Assignment

Due Monday, Feb. 4, 2010 - Draw map on unlined 8 ½ x 11 paper.

Final Exam: Friday, May 7, 2010, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m., Lucy Stone Hall, Rm. B269