

RELIGION 840:202:01
JEWISH STUDIES 563:223:01
NEW TESTAMENT
SPRING 2011

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Office hours: Wednesday 11-2; **appointments available at other times—just ask!**

In this course, we will study the origins and development of the New Testament, which is historically important for two major reasons. First, it is the fundamental book of faith for a world religion, Christianity. Second, it is an important source for understanding the history of the time in which it was written. We will learn about the background of early Christianity, the history of the various writings in the New Testament, and the questions and debates that occupy scholars who study the history of early Christianity.

Our questions will be along the following lines: What can we know about Jesus of Nazareth and his earliest followers? What happens to stories and ideas about Jesus of Nazareth in the first three centuries after his death? Who wrote the New Testament books? When? Why? Where? In response to what needs? Given its origins in a Jewish land, its foundation by a Jewish teacher and his Jewish followers, and its early roots in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world, how does 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?

That, of course, is a lot to chew. We cannot comprehensively cover a large body of scholarship and a profoundly important set of historical sources in one term, but we will survey many issues. The fundamental aim is to give students a sense of the great variety of New Testament texts and the great variety of approaches to them, with the hope that some students will be intrigued enough to delve deeper. Perhaps most importantly: everyone in the course will read big chunks of the New Testament (assuming, of course, that everyone follows the syllabus).

In a world where Jesus is continually invoked, everyone should at the very least have done that.

The following pages contain essential information related to the course. They are, so to speak, your Bible, your fundamental guide to passing the course. **If you lose or misplace them, they are available on the companion site for this course. Point your browser to www.rutgersonline.net for copies of all course documents, announcements, and a variety of other useful information.**

Attendance:

students are required to attend lectures and discussions. Aware, however, that illnesses, family crises, and such can make even the most diligent student miss class, **the professor allows 3 absences without penalty.** The 3 absences are not recommended, **should be used only when you NEED to, and are NOT negotiable.** Do not use up three absences just because they seem like a free pass and then expect a fourth absence to be excused when you are ill or have an emergency. For every absence beyond three, **your total grade for the course will drop** 1/3 of a grade-point (e.g., from A to B+, from B+ to B, from B to C+, and so on).

Promptness:

You are allowed to be *moderately late up to three times during the semester without penalty.* Your fourth late arrival will be treated as an absence, as will any subsequent late arrivals. Please note that **I will not make exceptions for late arrivals caused by work schedules, campus bus schedules, or parking problems.** If you arrive after the roll has been called, you must talk to me after class is over. If you arrive more than 40 minutes after the class begins you are welcome to attend but you will be marked down as absent rather than late for that class. **IF, BECAUSE OF OTHER COMMITMENTS, YOU CANNOT MAKE IT TO CLASS ON TIME, YOU SHOULD DROP THE COURSE.**

Books (available at the RU Bookstore, online, and lots of other places...; try www.addall.com – a clearinghouse for online booksellers):

- *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with Apocrypha/deuterocanonical Books*. ISBN 0-06-065580-1 [You may already have a Bible, and you may use it if you wish. Nevertheless, this particular Bible is especially valuable. It contains all of the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books, extra commentary, maps, and a canon table. If at all possible, you should buy and use it.]
- Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). ISBN-10: 195322592, ISBN-13: 978-0195322590
- Karen King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala*, ISBN-10: 0944344585, ISBN-13: 978-0944344583

Grading:

Map quiz = 5% 3 examinations @ 25% = 75% Participation = 20%

Please go through this syllabus as soon as possible and put the quiz and examinations on your calendar!!!! While the professor will try to remind you about upcoming exams, the professor is herself absentminded about such things and relies on a DETAILED, WRITTEN calendar. She recommends that you do the same.

Reading assignments:

NOTE: ALL READING ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE CLASS PERIOD FOR WHICH THEY ARE ASSIGNED.

The New Testament does not lend itself to equal distribution as reading assignments. Different books are of vastly different lengths. You will notice, then, that some weeks have many, many pages of reading, while others have very little. I highly recommend that you use the weeks with less reading to get ahead in reading for future weeks.

We will often discuss the assigned readings in class. The standards by which I grade participation are posted on the course website at www.rutgersonline.net . Please familiarize yourself with these standards. Participation is an active and rewarding process which requires more than mere attendance.

Jan. 18: Introductory class; no reading. But it wouldn't hurt to get started on the Gospel of Mark.

Jan. 20: Ehrman, Chapter 5; Gospel of Mark chapters 1-6

Jan. 25: Ehrman chapter 6; Gospel of Mark chapters 7-11.

Jan. 27: **Map quiz!!**

Ehrman chapter 7; Gospel of Mark chapters 12-16.

Feb 1: Ehrman chapter 8; Gospel of Matthew chapters 1-7.

Feb. 3: Gospel of Matthew chapters 16, 22, 24, 26-28.

Feb. 8: Ehrman chapter 9; Gospel of Luke chapters 1-4, 9-11, 14-16, 21-24.

Feb. 10: No new reading. Review synoptic gospels and synoptic problem for exam.

Feb. 15: First in-class examination

Feb. 17: NO CLASS

Feb. 22: Ehrman chapters 1-2

Feb. 24: Ehrman chapters 3-4

March 1: Ehrman chapter 10, Acts of the Apostles chapters 1-8

March 3: Acts of the Apostles chapters 9-28

March 8: Ehrman chapter 11, Gospel of John chapters 1-12

March 10: Gospel of John 13-21, *Gospel of Mary of Magdala* pp. 1-34

March 14-18 Spring Break

March 22: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John

Ehrman chapter 12; *Gospel of Mary* pp. 93-118, 129-133

March 24: review

March 29: 2nd in-class examination

March 31: Ehrman chapters 19-20, 1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians is short. 1 Corinthians, assigned for next week, is very long. You might want to start reading 1 Corinthians after you have finished 1 Thessalonians.

April 5: Ehrman chapter 21, pages 324-339(sections on 1 and 2 Corinthians); 1 Corinthians

April 7: Ehrman chapter 21, pages 339-355 (sections on Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon); Galatians,
Galatians is short. Romans, assigned for next week, is very long. You might want to start reading Romans after you have finished Galatians.

April 12: Ehrman chapter 22, Romans chapters 1-11.

April 14: Romans chapters 12-16; *Gospel of Mary* pp. 119-127

April 19: Ehrman chapter 23, James

April 21: Ehrman chapter 24, 2 Thessalonians

April 26: Ehrman chapter 25, *Gospel of Mary* pp. 83-90, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus

April 28: Ehrman chapter 26, Hebrews

Final Exam scheduled by Registrar's Office—TBA. Check the website: <http://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>