

## Syllabus

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Religion**  
**RELIGION 01:840:202:B6**  
**NEW TESTAMENT**  
**Summer 2012**

**Introduction to the New Testament**  
**Class Schedule: Mon./Wed. 6:00 -10:20 p.m.**  
**Douglas Campus**  
**Scott Hall**  
**Rm. #205**

**Prof. Gregory L. Wallace, Ph.D.**  
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**Office Hours: Wed. 5 - 6 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 - 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*, 4<sup>th</sup> 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**

**Wednesday, May 30:** Introductory Class, The Early Christians and their Literature

**Monday, June 4:** The Greco-Roman World: The Gospel of Mark;  
**Reading assignment:** Ehrman, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 29

**Wednesday, June 6:** The Gospel of Matthew; The Gospel of Luke;  
**Reading assignment:** Ehrman, Chs. 6, 7, and 8

**Map Assignment Due**

**Monday, June 11:** The Acts of the Apostles; The Gospel of John;  
**Reading assignment:** Ehrman, Chs. 9 and 10

**Wednesday, June 13:** Gnosticism and other varieties of early Christianity  
**Reading assignments:** 1 John, 2 John, 3 John ("the Johannine Epistles")  
Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*  
Ehrman, Chs. 11-14

**Monday, June 18:** **MIDTERM EXAM**

**Wednesday, June 20:** 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians;  
Philemon;  
**Reading assignment:** Ehrman, Chs. 15-21

**Monday, June 25:** Romans, and James (and faith); Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1  
and 2 Timothy, Titus  
**Reading assignment:** Ehrman, Chs. 22-24

**Wednesday, June 27:** Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter; James, Jude, The Revelation of John, and The  
Shepherd of Hermas;  
**Reading assignment:** Ehrman, Chs. 25-28

**Monday, July 2:** **Final Exam**

### **Map Assignment**

**Due Wednesday, June 6** - Draw map on unlined 8 ½ x 11 paper

