

The New Testament

Religious Studies 2NT3: Syllabus
Lecture: Mo/Th 3:30-4:20 ETB 238
Tutorial: Wed 2:30-3:20 ETB 238

Dr. N. Meyer, UH 124, Wed 1:15-2:15

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An introduction to the writings of the New Testament in their historical setting, to their role as scripture in the Christian tradition, and to various methodologies used in their modern academic study.

Course Description

Revered, reviled, and everything in between, the New Testament, or its reputation, is familiar to many. Much less familiar is the world in which it is set and the conditions in which the New Testament took form, a combined deficit that contributes to much confusion and error. This course, therefore, will seek to acquaint students with what can be known about the world, the origins, and the contents of the New Testament. Students will be introduced both to the historical-critical and other methods of study brought to bear on these texts by biblical scholars as well as to their theological content, for which they have been prized in the Christian tradition.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to

- describe the contents of the New Testament and identify the distinguishing features of its parts
- describe the major historical and cultural factors which shaped its production and subject matter
- describe the major issues of contention in understanding the New Testament and some of the factors contributing to a diversity of perspectives
- recognize the distinct methodologies and reading strategies brought to bear on the interpretation of the New Testament

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Attendance and participation in class and tutorials is expected. You should demonstrate your familiarity with course material by engaging in dialogue in a way that shows respect for all members of the classroom environment and that recognizes the limitations of class time.

Synoptic Comparison Exercise: 5%

Students will underline Mark 1:7-8 and parallels in colour-code. Details and parallel texts will be made available on Avenue.

Due: Thursday, Jan 23

First Essay: Gospels in Synopsis 15%

Students will choose from one of the following texts, conduct a synoptic comparison (which will be attached to the final essay; pdfs on Avenue), and—after consulting 2-3 scholarly commentaries—produce a 4-5 page essay discussing the significance of the pericope in the context of either

Matthew's or Luke's Gospel. Students should describe how the text differs from Mark, both in its setting and in the verbal details; they should note what impact these differences have on the level of the meaning or significance of the story; and they should relate these findings to the broader concerns/patterns of the Gospel under discussion.

Texts: Stilling the Storm: Mark 4:35-41 parallels

The Transfiguration: Mark 9:2-10 parallels

The Death of Jesus: Mark 15:33-39 parallels

Format: 12 pt Font, Times New Roman, Double Spaced, 1-inch Margins. No title page. Include bibliography.

Reference style: Turabian/Chicago, Footnotes/Bibliography Method. For samples, see: <http://libguides.mcmaster.ca/Turabian>

Due: Monday, February 24th

Mid-Term: 20%

The mid-term will consist of multiple-choice questions, a map of the first-century Mediterranean world, and identification questions on key terms, themes, and texts discussed in lectures, tutorials, and readings. *It will be written during tutorial on Wednesday, February 26th*

Second Essay: Paul on Film 15%

Watch the movie, *Paul, Apostle of Christ* (Affirm Films, 2018), and write a 4-5 page review from the perspective, primarily, of modern biblical scholarship rather than film criticism per se. Put on the hat of one such as Bart Ehrman (the author of our textbook) and describe how the film handled its biblical material. In particular, discuss aspects of the portrayal and reconstruction of Paul's life, the community at Rome, and the figure of Luke which would be a point of discussion or debate among critical scholars. Provide some sense of the nature of the scholarly discussion on these points: what is the range of views and why? Finally, briefly discuss whether you think the film serves as an effective portrayal of the apostle. As of the writing of this syllabus, the film is available to stream with a subscription on Crave+; it can also be rented from GooglePlay or YouTube for \$3.99 (and at greater price elsewhere).

Due: Monday, March 30th

Final Exam: 35%

The final exam will be similar in format to the mid-term, with the addition of essay questions.

Date: TBD

Books for Purchase

Ehrman, Bart D. *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament*. 4th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-19-027639-3

Books Recommended

An Academic Study Bible with Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and Apocrypha. Preferably, one of the following:

Attridge, Harold, et al. eds. *The Harper Collins Study Bible*. NRSV translation. Revised ed. San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 2006.

Coogan, Michael, et al. *The New Oxford Annotated Reference Bible*. NRSV. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Course Schedule

Note: Readings followed by (OT/HB) are from the Old Testament in the Christian Bible, also known as the Hebrew Bible; those followed by (NT) refer to the text of the New Testament in the Christian Bible. These are the primary readings for the course and must be completed in addition to those from Ehrman, etc. Brief reading assignments may be given out on Mondays for tutorials. All readings from Ehrman should be completed before the class for which they are assigned; readings from the NT should commence before class and be completed by the final day on which they are discussed. Students are strongly encouraged to begin to read (and perhaps to re-read) the NT in its entirety (an estimated 18-hour task) beginning on the very first week of class and to do so patiently, on a schedule.

Introduction: The World of the New Testament

Mon, Jan 6: What Is the New Testament?

Read Ehrman, Chapter 1 + Ancient Manuscripts, pp. 1-13

Wednesday Tutorial: None

Thurs, Jan 9: The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament

Read Ehrman, “Master Timeline” and map, pp. xxvii-xxxi
Ehrman, Chapter 2, pp. 14-27

Mon, Jan 13: The Jewish World of the New Testament

Read Ehrman, Chapter 3, pp. 28-45
Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 15:1-21; Genesis 17:1-27; 2 Samuel 7:1-17; Psalm 2; Psalm 110;
Daniel 7:1-28 (OT/HB); Selections from the Pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls (Avenue)

The Gospels and Acts: Traditions about the Beginnings

Wednesday Tutorial: Traditions about Jesus

Read beforehand Ehrman, Chapter 4, pp. 46-59

Thurs, Jan 16: The Gospel of Mark: The Apocalyptic Messiah

Read The Gospel of Mark (NT)
Ehrman, Insert, “The Material World,” btwn pp. 167 & 168

Mon, Jan 20: The Gospel of Mark, cont’d

Read Ehrman, Chapter 5, pp. 60-76

Wednesday Tutorial

Thurs, Jan 23: The Gospel of Matthew: The Jewish Messiah

Read The Gospel of Matthew (NT)

Synoptic Comparison Exercise Due

Mon, Jan 27: The Gospel of Matthew, cont'd

Read Ehrman, Chapter 6, pp. 77-94

Wednesday Tutorial

Thurs, Jan 30: The Gospel of Luke: The Suffering Prophet-Messiah

Read The Gospel of Luke (NT)

Mon, Feb 3: The Gospel of Luke, cont'd

Read Ehrman, Chapter 7, pp. 95-111

Wednesday Tutorial

Thurs, Feb 6: The Gospel of John: The Divine Messiah

Read The Gospel of John (NT)

Mon, Feb 10: The Gospel of John, cont'd

Read Ehrman, Chapter 8, pp. 113-130

Wednesday Tutorial

Thurs, Feb 13: The Jesus of History and the Jesus of the Gospels

Read Ehrman, Chapters 9-10, pp. 131-167

Feb 17-23 Mid-Term Recess

Mon, Feb 24: Mid-Term Preparation

First Essay Due

Wednesday Tutorial: Mid-Term

Thurs, Feb 27: The Acts of the Apostles: The First “Christians”

Read The Acts of the Apostles (NT)

Mon, Mar 2: The Acts of the Apostles, cont'd

Read Ehrman, Chapter 11, pp. 168-184

Ehrman, Insert, “Cities and Roads of Paul,” btwn pp. 267 & 268

Wednesday Tutorial

The Letters of Paul: Early Christian Communities

Thurs, Mar 5: Paul the Apostle and His Mission: 1 Thessalonians

Read 1 Thessalonians & 2 Thessalonians (NT)

Ehrman, Chapters 12-13, pp. 185-219 **and** pp. “2 Thessalonians” pp. 270-273

Mon, Mar 9: Paul and the Crisis of His Churches: 1 & 2 Corinthians

Read 1 Corinthians & 2 Corinthians (NT)

Ehrman, Chapter 14, pp. 220-236

Wednesday Tutorial

Thurs, Mar 12: Paul and the Crisis of His Churches: Galatians, Philippians, Philemon

Read Galatians, Philippians, Philemon (NT)

Ehrman, Chapter 15, pp. 237-253

Mon, Mar 16: Paul and His Gospel: Romans

Read Romans (NT)
Ehrman, Chapter 16, pp. 254-267

Wednesday Tutorial

Thurs, Mar 19: In the Wake of Paul: The Deutero-Pauline and the Pastoral Epistles

Read Colossians, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus (NT)
Ehrman, Chapter 17, pp. 268-287

Mon, Mar 23: The Status of Women in Early Christianity

Read 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus (NT)
Ehrman, Chapter 18, pp. 288-300

Wednesday Tutorial

The General Letters and Revelation: Early Christian Networks

Thurs, Mar 26: Christian Interactions with Outsiders

Read Hebrews & 1 Peter (NT)
Ehrman, Chapter 19, pp. 301-323

Mon, Mar 30: Christian Interactions among Insiders

Read James, Jude, 2 Peter, 1-3 John (NT)
Ehrman, Chapter 20, pp. 324-337

Second Essay Due

Wednesday Tutorial

Thurs, April 2: Christians and the Cosmos: The Book of Revelation

Read Revelation (NT)
Ehrman, Chapter 21, pp. 338-352

Mon, April 6: Wrap-up

Final Exam: TBD

Additional Statements

1. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

2. AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

In this course we may be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. Undergraduate Course Management Policies December 13, 2017, effective September 1, 2018 Page 11 of 12

3. ON-LINE ELEMENTS

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn (A2L). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

4. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

5. REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

6. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

7. EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.