**CL 2401 Introduction to the New Testament:**

**History and Literature**

**T. Th. 1:00 – 2:15 p.m.**

Professor XXX

Department of Greek and Latin

College of Arts and Sciences

The Ohio State University

**Professor's Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00–10:00 a.m.**

Oval Mall 226

Phone:

E-mail:

Web: (includes Essay Writing Guidelines)

**The Course and its Goals.** This course provides students with a basis for critical thinking about the most influential writings in the intellectual and cultural history of Western civilization.

The "New Testament" is a not a single book but an anthology reflecting the work of various ancient authors. This course introduces students to the strictly historical study of this assorted literature, in the ancient context of first-century Jewish and Greco-Roman society that shaped its composition. We will examine how a small group of Jews connected to a prophet named Jesus of Nazareth became a separate religion with its own rituals and literature about a "Son of God." To this end, we will study the earliest known Christian literature, the letters of the Apostle Paul, the production of "gospels" about the life of Jesus, and the formation of early churches. We will also explore biblical scholarship as an academic field of the humanities, and why every educated person ought to know about its findings.

Students will read the *entire* New Testament, as well as the *Coptic Gospel of Thomas*, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, and the *Acts of Thecla*. At the end of the course, the student should have acquired a basic knowledge of the letters of Paul, the Gospels, and their diverse images of Jesus, as well as the Jewish roots of Christianity in the context of ancient Mediterranean religions. The course presupposes no previous study in Religious Studies.

**General Education (GE) Report and General Assessment Plan**

The course addresses the learning outcomes of two categories within the General Education: Breath (Arts and Humanities: Literature); and Historical Study.

**Goals/Rationale for GEC Requirments**

The University’s Goals and Learning Outcomes for **Historical Study** are as follows:

**Goals:**

Students develop knowledge of how past events influence today’s society and help them understand how humans view themselves.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity.

2. Students display knowledge about the origins and nature of contemporary issues and develop a foundation for future comparative understanding.

3. Students think, speak, and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts.

The General Education Goals and Learning Outcomes for **Arts and the Humanities** are as follows:

 Goals: Students evaluate significant writing and works of art. Such studies develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

 Expected Learning Outcomes:

 1. Students develop abilities to be informed observers of, or active participants in, the visual, spatial, performing, spoken, or literary arts.

 2. Students develop an understanding of the foundations of human beliefs, the nature of reality, and the norms that guide human behavior.

 3. Students examine and interpret how the human condition and human values are explored through works of art and humanistic writings.

For **Literature** the learning outcomes are as follows:

 (1) Literature Expected Learning Outcomes:

 1. Students learn to analyze***,*** appreciate, and interpret significant literary works.

2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students learn to understand and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and

other cultures.

The course readings and assignments address the learning outcomes of Literature in the following ways:

The New Testament, part of the Christian Bible, is a significant literary work having a huge impact upon the development of Western civilization and beyond. The New Testament in particular continues to hold religious authority on morality, personal and social values, and contemporary belief systems. Through reading, discussing, and writing about the New Testament writings in their ancient context, the student will learn essential critical thinking skills––how to analyze a text about which he or she may have considerable preconceived notions and beliefs. The course does not aim to promote or undermine any particular religion our worldview. Rather, its Religious Studies approach seeks to examine the Bible from outside the framework of any particular belief system. In the end, the main learning goal is to show the New Testament not to be a monograph but a collection of writings reflecting different literary styles, genres, and authors.

The course readings and assignments address the learning outcomes of Historical Study in the following ways:

The expected historical learning outcomes of this course are the acquisition of foundational knowledge in (1) the social and religious environment in which early Christianity was born, (2) the evidence for and characteristics of the early Jesus movement, (3) Paul's career, thought, and communities, (4) the diverse images of Jesus and his followers found in the Gospels, (4) how institutional Christianity emerged, (5) the historical context and basic themes of each New Testament writing. These specific course goals aim to move the student toward critical thinking, having a multicultural perspective and an appreciation for multiple worldviews (ancient Jewish, early Christian, and Greco-Roman). The course emphasizes reflectiveness and value consciousness, especially as they develop from a critical reading of religious texts such as the Bible. This exploration invites the student into a historical understanding of biblical scholarship as an academic field of the humanities, and why every educated person ought to know about its findings.

The course will be assessed in the following ways:

1. Class Attendance and participation, with class participation and/or use of office hours improving final grade. The goal of rewarding class participation is to encourage active rather than passive learning.
2. *Two essays*. One is a short (2–3 page) essay. The second is a longer (5–7 page) exegesis paper on a specific Synoptic Gospel parallel. Each paper will have a different focus, but both have the shared goal of evaluating students' abilities to identify and critically assess the particular themes and theological goals of particular biblical authors. These abilities include explaining the similarities and differences between the gospels, identifying sources in the sequence of stories, and obtaining mastery of the method of biblical interpretation known as redaction criticism. A sample assignment might be: "Compare and contrast the demeanor and portrayal of Jesus' death in Mark and Luke."
3. Two tests, and a Final Examination. The examinations will contain objective questions (multiple choice, identification of passages), vocabulary terms to define, and essay questions. A sample essay question might be: "What evidence is there that the Gospel of John used written sources for his work? Did the author of John know the other Gospels? What other sources can be detected behind his narrative?"

**Required Textbooks** (at bookstores; also on reserve in Library).

1. The HarperCollins Study Bible, Revised Edition. Edited by H. W. Attridge and W. A. Meeks et al. HarperCollins, 2006. This is the Bible used in religious studies courses at IU. I will assume that you have it with you in class and are reading its introduction and annotations. **You must have this translation.**

2. Bart D. Ehrman, A Brief Introduction to the New Testament. 2d edition. Oxford University Press, 2009.

3. Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels. 5th edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992.

**Helpful Library Resource**: When you want to understand something in depth from the readings and lectures, see The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 6 vols., edited by David Noel Freedman (New York : Doubleday, 1992). This encyclopedia the standard academic reference work on the Bible. Located in the Library, in the Reference Department **BS440 .A54 1992**.

**Requirements:**

1. Class Attendance and participation, with active participation and/or use of office hours improving final grade.
2. *Two essays*. One is a short (2–3 page) essay. The second is a longer (5–7 page) exegesis paper on a specific Gospel parallel. The essays should be typed with 12-point font and double-spaced. Details to follow in class. Note: E-Mail attachments or FAX are not acceptable options for submitting papers in this course.
3. Two tests, and a Final Examination.

**Due Dates:**

Short Essay Jan. 27

Test #1 Feb. 8

Test #2 March 10

Final Exam May 3, May 3 2:45–4:45 p.m. (Tues.)

For the *Gospel Parallels paper*, you have the option of meeting any of three deadlines:

**Deadline I** (re–write option). April 5 If you turn in your paper by this date, I will return it with criticisms and suggestions on April 12 so that you can submit a revised paper (along with your first draft) by Deadline III (April 14).

**Deadline II.** April 12. If you turn in your paper by this date, I will grade it and make comments and criticism. There is no re–writing with this option.

**Deadline III.** April 14 If you turn in your paper by this date, I will grade it *without* comments and criticism. There is no re–writing with this option. Late penalties start to apply for papers submitted after the end of class.

The purpose of this system is to allow each student as much feedback from me as she or he wants. The criteria for evaluating the papers are the same for each deadline. Your paper will not be graded more or less strictly depending on which deadline you meet. That is, a Deadline II paper could get an A, a Deadline I paper a C.

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| **Grading:** | 1/3 Both essays combined 1/3 Both unit tests combined 1/3 Final Exam |

**Homework.** The schedule on the following pages indicates the required reading assignments. Read the assignment by the date indicated, before the class session, and take notes on the reading.

**Electronic Reserve** Reading marked with **an asterisk (\*)** are on Electronic Reserve.

**How to Use the Textbooks for this class:**

HarperCollins Study Bible. Read the assigned biblical book and its brief introduction in the Study Bible before the relevant lecture; use the notes at the bottom of the page to help you understand confusing parts in the text. Always bring this book to class.

A Brief Introduction to the New Testament (Ehrman). Read the assigned pages before the relevant lecture. Always read Ehrman with your Bible next to you: look at the passages that he discusses. There is no need to bring this book to class.

Gospel Parallels. This book is a tool for the study of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Bring it to class on the days we discuss synoptic comparisons.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND LECTURES

An asterisk (**\***) indicates a reading in Electronic Reserves.

BRING YOUR BIBLE TO EVERY CLASS.

On days we do Synoptic Comparisons, bring your Gospel Parallels.

**I: The Environment of Early Christian Literature**

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| Jan 11 | Introduction to the course: "What is the New Testament?" |
| Jan 13 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 1–26. Note the Glossary, pp. 349–360. |
| Jan 18 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 27–44, 181–200. From the Old Testament: Genesis 17; Exodus 19–20; 2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 1; Daniel 7–12.**Student Open House in department office. 2:30–3:30 p.m.** |

**II: Christian Origins: The Letters of Paul. Mark, the First Written Gospel.**

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| Jan. 20. | **Read:** In the New Testament: Philemon, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians.Ehrman, pp. 201–215, 246–248, 264–269. |
| Jan. 25 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 216–235. 1 Corinthians; 2 Corinthians |

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| **Jan. 27** | **Short Essay due in class.** |
| Feb. 1 | **Read:** Galatians. Philippians. Ehrman, pp. 233–245. |
| Feb. 3 | **Read:** Letter to the Romans. Ehrman, pp. 250–263.  |
| **Feb. 8** | **Test #1** |
| Feb. 10 | **Read:** Gospel of Mark, stop reading at Mark 16:8 (read in one sitting).  |
| Feb 15 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 45–75 |

**III: The Further Production of "Gospels" about Jesus**

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| Feb. 17 | **Read:** The Gospel of Matthew (read in one sitting).*Bring Gospel Parallels* *to class* *from this day on.* |
| Feb. 22 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 76–93 |
| Feb. 24 | **Read:** Gospel of Luke (in one sitting) |
| March 1 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 94–110. |
| March 3 | **Read:** Acts of the Apostles (in one sitting) |
| March 8 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 163–180. |
| March 10 | **Test #2** |
|  | **Spring break**  |
| March 22 | *Special Focus: Miracle Stories***Read:** Throckmorton, Gospel Parallels, parr. §13, 14, 45, 46, 52, 56, 70, 71, 79, 107, 116, 117 (found on pp. 21–22, 38–40, 42–43, 46, 59–61, 67, 83–85, 94–95). |
| March 24 | *Special Focus: Parables***Read:** Throckmorton, Gospel Parallels, parr. §65, 88, 90, 91, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 133, 158, 164, 170, 172, 195, 201, 204, 205, 220, 222, 225, 226, 228 (found on pp. 55–56, 73–79, 109, 126, 129, 132–135, 151–152, 156–161, 174–179). |
| March 29 | **Read**: **\***The Gospel of Thomas *(on e-Reserve)*, and **\***The Infancy Gospel of Thomas (*on e-Reserve*).Throckmorton, Gospel Parallels, parr. §170, 205 and §134, 172 (found on pp. 132–33, 160–61, and 108–109, 134–35). Ehrman, Box 5.5 (p. 72), Box 7.4 (p. 101), and Box 9.1 (p. 130) |

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| March 31 | **Read:** The Gospel of John (in one sitting) |
| April 5 | **Deadline I** **Read:** 1–3 John. Ehrman, pp. 111–126, 326–332. |
| April 7 | **Read:** Ehrman, pp. 127–162. |

**IV. The Emerging Church as an Institution**

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| April 12 | **Deadline II****Read:** Colossians, Ephesians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus.Ehrman, pp. 269–283. |
| April 14 | **Deadline III** |

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| April 19 | **Read:** \*The Acts of Thecla *(on e-Reserve)*Ehman, pp. 284–296 |
| April 21 | **Read:** Hebrews. 1 Peter.Ehrman, pp. 297–319. |
| April 26 | **Read:** James, Jude, 2 Peter Ehrman, pp. 320–326. |
| April 28 | **Read:** Revelation (the Apocalypse)Ehrman, pp. 334–348 |
| Final Exam | 2:45–4:45 p.m., Tues., May 3  |
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**Absences from Scheduled Classes or Exams:**

Illness is usually the only acceptable excuse for absence in class. Other absences must be explained to the satisfaction of the professor, who will decide whether omitted work may be made up. ***If there will be a problem with the exam dates, you must let me know NOW during the first week of class.***

**NOTE: No use of laptop computers or cell phones in class.**

**Acceptance of Late Papers.**

Written work is to be submitted on time, that is, handed to the instructor in class the day it is due. An essay assignment submitted after the end of class is late (by one day). Late papers will result in the loss of a step in grade for every day after the due date (e.g., a paper with the grade of B will become B– if one day late, C+ if two days late, and so forth). All essays must be submitted before the date of the final examination.

**Grading Policy.**

A 100-point scale is used, 10 points for each letter grade. An "A" indicates excellence of the highest quality. A "B" indicates above average work, meeting more than the minimum. A "C" indicates minimally doing the requirements of the course. In grading papers, I give a grade in the “B” range to papers I judge basically successful, and a grade in the “C” range to papers I judge basically unsuccessful. A paper will have to impress me strongly, one way or the other, to get a higher or lower grade. An “A” paper therefore will be a paper that is not merely good, but genuinely outstanding.

*Academic Misconduct*: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct

(http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\_for\_students/csc.asp).

**Disability Statement:** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Ave., tel. 292-3307, www.ods.ohio-state.edu