

## Course Outline: Winter 2019

### The New Testament Writings

BS 5116b/RS2124g

Location: W4

Days & Time: Tuesdays 11:30-2:20

Instructor: Dr. N. Meyer

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**Huron**  
THEOLOGY

*An introduction to the New Testament writings in their historical and religious/cultural contexts.*

### Course Prerequisite

Prerequisites: Bib Studies 5110a/b (formerly 5103A/B) or permission of the instructor

NOTE: Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### Course Description

Cherished by Christians, viewed as an object of loathing or curiosity by others, the New Testament, or parts of it, is a familiar document to many. Much less familiar is the world in which it was produced and the conditions of its production—an ignorance that contributes to a wide array of contradictory opinions and beliefs about the New Testament. This course, therefore, explores what can be known about the origins of the New Testament, both the parts and the whole; it introduces the New Testament writings with an emphasis on their historical and cultural contexts; and it aims to give voice to their individually and collectively distinct claims. Reading the New Testament without anachronism means allowing each part to have its own historically conditioned voice; reading each part, in turn, as part of the New Testament means attending to what these texts possess, or were *thought* to possess, in common to one another, in complementarity to one another, and in distinction to other writings. Thus, while our emphasis will be on the diversity of the New Testament writings, we shall also pose the question of their unity.

### 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 subject matter
- describe the major issues of contention in understanding the New Testament and the factors contributing to a diversity of perspectives
- recognize and engage in historically responsible interpretation of the New Testament texts

### Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: 10% Attendance and participation in class is critical. Since we meet only once a week, for three hours, a single absence is worth, in effect, two. Therefore, if you miss more than two classes you will receive a *maximum* of 4 percent in this category. (The Synoptic Comparison Exercise [due Jan 29] will be considered part of your participation.)

Pop Quizzes: 25% Six pop quizzes will be administered at the beginning of classes on that day's readings, emphasizing (but not exclusive to) the material introduced in Ehrman. Key Terms found at the end of each chapter of Ehrman should be learned for these and for the final exam. Missed quizzes cannot be made up, but the lowest score will be dropped.

Minor Essay: 15% Students will write a 6-8 page analysis of a text from the Synoptic Gospels. They will choose from one of the following texts, conduct a synoptic comparison (which will be attached to the final essay; pdfs on OWL), and produce an essay discussing the significance of the pericope in the context of either Matthew or Luke's Gospel, after consulting 2-3 scholarly commentaries on that particular Gospel. Students should describe how the text differs from Mark; 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 that particular Gospel. Due: February 12<sup>th</sup>

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

Major Essay: 25% Students will write a 10-12 page argumentative essay on a text of their choosing from the letters of the New Testament or the Apocalypse of John. The essay should be an academically engaged investigation into the meaning of a New Testament text in its first-century setting, addressing matters of linguistic, historical, and theological concern, particularly those which may not be apparent to the modern reader. In preparation for this assignment, students will be required to submit an annotated bibliography (see below). Students must discuss their choice of text with the professor.

Due: April 9<sup>th</sup>

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

Reference style: Chicago, Footnotes/Bibliography Method. For samples, see: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/files/styleguides/ChicagoNotesBibliography.pdf>

Annotated Bibliography: 5% In preparation for their major essay, students will submit an annotated bibliography, prefaced by a summary statement of their topic and/or research question and perhaps a tentative thesis. (Remember to clear your choice of text with the professor.) The bibliography should include at least *five sources of various types*, including at least two peer-reviewed journal articles, two academic biblical commentaries, and either one academic monograph or essay in an edited volume. (Course material is not permitted for this assignment, although—of course—it may be used in the essay itself, where it will have to appear also in the final bibliography.) Each entry will be annotated with a brief 2-3 sentence statement of the argument or perspective of that source.

Due: March 19<sup>th</sup>

Final Exam: 20% 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 Accessed Online

Neufeld, Dietmar, and Richard E. DeMaris, eds. *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*. London: Routledge, 2010. In the Course Schedule, readings from this source are marked with an asterisk (\*). Access this source on the school library website here: <http://alpha.lib.uwo.ca/search~S20?/tunderstanding+the+social+world/tunderstanding+the+social+world/1%2C2%2C2%2CB/frameset&FF=tunderstanding+the+social+world+of+the+new+testament&1%2C1%2C> (Look for the instructions: “Click on the following links for online access”; sign in if necessary; scroll down and click on “Part 1” or “Part 2” to locate particular chapters which can then be downloaded as a pdf.)

### Books Recommended

A Gospels Synopsis, for any serious study of the Gospels:

Crook, Zeba A. *Parallel Gospels: A Synopsis of Early Christian Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

An Academic Study Bible. 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. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

### Course Schedule

#### January 8: What Is this Course & What Is the New Testament?

Read (*before* the first class): Ehrman, Chapter 1 + Ancient Manuscripts, pp. 1-13

#### January 15: The Worlds of the New Testament, Greco-Roman and Jewish

Read: Matthew 1-2; Acts 16:11-40

Ehrman, “Master Timeline” and map, pp. xxvii-xxxi  
Ehrman, Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 14-45

Malina, Part 1, “Collectivism in Mediterranean Culture”  
Rorhbaugh, Part 2, “Honor: Core Value”

## January 22: Traditions about Jesus and the Gospel of Mark

Read: The Gospel of Mark  
 Ehrman, Chapters 4 & 5, pp. 46-76 [emphasis on ch. 5]  
 Ehrman, Insert, “The Material World” btwn pp. 167 & 168

Rollens, “Did the Authors...”

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/tools/bible-basics/did-the-authors-of-the-canonical-gospels-know-each-other>

## January 29: The Gospels of Matthew and Luke

Read: Either Matthew or Luke’s Gospel, but read chs 1-2 in each  
 Ehrman, Chapters 6 & 7, pp. 77-111

Moxnes, Part 1, “Landscape and Spatiality”\*

Synoptic Comparison Exercise: Mark 1:7-8 parallels (details on OWL)

## February 5: The Gospel of John

Read: The Gospel of John  
 Ehrman, Chapter 8, pp. 112-130

Stewart, “The Spiritual Gospel”

<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/2018/04/ste428025.shtml>

## February 12: The Jesus of History and the Jesus of the Gospels

Read: Either Matthew or Luke’s Gospel (whichever was not read previously)

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

Alan Kirk, Part 1, “Memory Theory”\*

Smith, “The Trouble with Q”

<http://bibleinterp.com/opeds/smi368026.shtml#sdfootnote5sym>

Bond, “Ten Things I Learnt”

<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/bon368024.shtml>

Powell, “Historical Jesus Studies Today”

<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/2014/06/pow388006.shtml>

## February 19: *Reading Week*

## February 26: The Acts of the Apostles

Read: The Acts of the Apostles  
 Ehrman, Chapter 11, pp. 168-184

*Minor Essay Due***March 5: Paul the Apostle and His Mission: 1 Thessalonians**

Read: 1 Thessalonians  
Ehrman, Chapters 12 & 13, pp. 185-219

Stewart, Part 2, “Social Stratification and Patronage”\*

Hart, “Everything You Know about the Gospel of Paul is likely Wrong”  
<https://aeon.co/ideas/the-gospels-of-paul-dont-say-what-you-think-they-say>

**March 12: Paul and the Crisis of His Churches: Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians**

Read: 1 & 2 Corinthians; Galatians; Philippians; Philemon  
Ehrman, Chapters 14 & 15, pp. 220-253

Osiek and Pouya, Part 1, “Constructions of Gender”\*

**March 19: Paul and His Gospel: Romans**

Read: Romans  
Ehrman, Chapter 16, 254-267

Duling, Part 1, “Ethnicity and Paul’s Letter to the Romans”\*

*Annotated Bibliography Due***March 26: In the Wake of Paul and the Status of Women: The Deuto-Paulines and the Pastorals**

Read: Ephesians; Colossians; 1-2 Timothy; Titus  
Ehrman, Chapters 17-18, pp. 268-300

MacDonald, Part 1, “Kinship and Family”

**April 2: Christian Interactions: Jews, Pagans, and Other Christians in the Latter Epistles**

Read: Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, 1-3 John  
Ehrman, Chapters 19-20, pp. 301-337

**April 9: Christians and the Cosmos: The Book of Revelation & Wrap-up**

Read: The Book of Revelation  
Ehrman, Chapter 21, pp. 338-352

*Major Essay Due*

Exam: TBD

## Additional Statements

1. **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices during Tests and Exams:** It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.
  
2. **Statement on Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html>.
  
3. **Plagiarism-detecting Software/Computer Marking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).
  
4. **Support Services:**
  - UWO Registrar's Office: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
  
  - Huron's Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean:  
[http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\\_of\\_theology/info\\_for\\_current\\_students](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_of_theology/info_for_current_students)
  
  - Faculty of Theology office: [srice@uwo.ca](mailto:srice@uwo.ca), 519-438-7224, ext. 289
  
  - Bachelor's Academic Advising at Huron:  
<http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/AcademicAdvisorsandServices>
  
  - Huron's Writing Skills Centre: [http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student\\_life/writing\\_services](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services)
  
  - UWO's Mental Health website: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to this website for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
  
  - UWO Student Support and Development Services:  
[http://communications.uwo.ca/current\\_students/student\\_services.htm](http://communications.uwo.ca/current_students/student_services.htm)
  
  - Services provided by Western University Student Council: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>
  
5. **Accommodation for absences:**  
*If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to your Faculty's Dean's office (or academic counselor), and not to the instructor. For the Faculty of Theology, all such documentation must be submitted to room A227. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.*
  - a) **Non-medical absences:**  
Non-medical absences which result in missing a quiz or a chance to turn in a summary will not be accommodated. These absences will also result in a deduction from your participation mark.

- b) **Medical absences:** See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness  
—Undergraduate Students, at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>)

**For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course,** a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean's office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean's office in consultation with the instructor(s.) Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) and Request for Relief are available at the Student Centre website (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>), Huron University College Academic Counselling website ([www.huronuc.on.ca](http://www.huronuc.on.ca)) or from the Dean's Office or Academic Services Centre at Huron.

**For work representing less than 10% of the overall grade for the course:** Students will be accommodated for one missed quiz due to a non-documented medical absence.