



REL 112
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Spring 2019

Instructor: Richard Newton, PhD

Teaching Assistant: Matthew McCullough

(1/10/19)

Class Meetings: Gordon Palmer Hall 232, T/R 12:30-1:45pm

Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 2:30-3:30pm and By Appointment

Office Location: Manly Hall 204

Phone Number: 205-348-9994

Email: rwnewton@ua.edu

Prerequisites: n/a

Course Description and Credit Hours:

Introduction to the Hellenistic world of early Christianity, examining the early traditions about Jesus that were organized into the Gospels and the letters of Paul. **HU, 3 Credit Hours**

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to do the following:

- (1) *Identify the principle methods advanced by the historical-critical approach to Biblical Studies.*
- (2) *Recognize the various writing genres presented in the New Testament.*
- (3) *Identify the rhetorical strategies of the different epistle and gospel writers.*
- (4) *Describe how the New Testament is structured and how this is related to the structure of the Hebrew Bible.*
- (5) *Explain the development of Hebrew Bible material in the New Testament*

(6) *Explain the historical spread of Christianity beyond the confines of Palestine during the first century (CE).*

Required Course Materials

Bibliography

The following resources are required purchases. Please bring all of these materials to class with you everyday!

The HarperCollins Study Bible: NRSV, Fully Revised and Updated, ed. Harold W. Attridge (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006).

This scholarly study Bible will act as our course standard. You are responsible for reading not only the main text, but also the critical commentary at the beginning of each chapter and in the footnotes.

Daniel Lynwood Smith, *Into the World of the New Testament: Greco-Roman and Jewish Texts and Contexts* (New York: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2015).

This book provides a look into the broader world in which the New Testament took shape. You'll be using this as a resource to help you tie together the geography and history with the literature.

Interactive Notebook

Each student will need a College Rule Composition Book (i.e. 9.75 in x 7.5 in bound notebook). These are available at the SupeStore and other school supply retailers. This is the raw material out of which you will be creating your “interactive notebook,” a guided course learning journal that you will be using regularly.

Blackboard

This learning management software will house all of our assignments and where you will submit your completed work—barring the interactive notebook. Through it, I will also share an array of e-resources to enrich your understanding of the New Testament. See this site as a digital representation of our classroom community. Since we will be making use of Blackboard as our main learning hub outside of class time, make sure that you're in the habit of checking it daily.

*Pro Tips: You can set Blackboard to email or text you all updates. Also since we will be using Blackboard for exams, make sure that your web browser and computer hardware are fully compatible. When taking tests, make sure to review University's guidelines here: https://frc.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/student_recommendations_for_blackboard_tests_spr_2018.pdf. Failing to do so may inhibit your ability to successfully complete assignments (for which there will be no retake barring extreme situations determined at the instructor's discretion).

Outline of Topics:

Below you'll find a course calendar. Each box notes the content for the day and the materials you need to prepare prior to class. So you will see the assigned reading and the title of the interactive notebook assignment (designated "IN"). These correspond to a page on Blackboard that details how to accomplish them. In class, you will complete the interactive notebook assignment listed at the top of the square. On Blackboard, the modules are divided by weeks for your convenience.

Unit Focus	Tuesday	Thursday
<p>Week 1</p> <p><i>Orientation</i></p>		<p>1/10</p> <p>Syllabus Day</p> <p>*Please bring an accessible and amendable copy of the syllabus with you to class.</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p><i>What is the New Testament?</i></p>	<p>1/15</p> <p>What is this Strange Thing?</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: "What is the Academic Study of Religion?"</p> <p>Read: McCutcheon, n.d., "An Introduction to the Study of Religion"</p> <p>Watch video: "Maya Cares about Religion, ep.1."</p> <p>**1/16 is the last day to drop w/o a grade of "W."</p>	<p>1/17</p> <p>In Situ: The Historical Critical Method</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: "It's all new to me!"</p> <p>Read: Powell (2019), "How do Biblical Scholars Study the New Testament?"</p> <p>Watch video: Henry (2014), "How did the New Testament Form?" <i>Religion for Breakfast</i>.</p>

<p>Week 3</p> <p><i>From Whence Does the New Testament Come?</i></p>	<p>1/22</p> <p>Hellenists, Romans, and Jews</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: Free Notes</p> <p>Read: Chapter 2</p>	<p>1/24</p> <p>Jesus of Galilee: A Son of Man, A Son of God</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: “The Kingdom(s) of God”</p> <p>Read: Chapter 3</p> <p>*Exam 1 Due by Sunday 1/27 at 11:59pm</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p><i>Gospels I</i></p>	<p>1/29</p> <p>What’s Good?</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: “Hey, Mark! What’s Good?”</p> <p>Read: The Gospel of Mark (in its entirety, focused on narrative)</p> <p>*Seminar Sign-Up Due by Noon.</p>	<p>1/31</p> <p>Synoptic Gospels</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: “Sign Prophets”</p> <p>Read: Chapter 4</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p><i>Gospels II</i></p>	<p>2/5</p> <p>The Good News in Contexts</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: “In the Name of Jesus-es”</p> <p>Read: Chapter 6</p>	<p>2/7</p> <p>The Gospel of Mark</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: “Mark—Sitz im Leben”</p> <p>Read: Mark 1-4; 8-16 (read in light of Second Temple history)</p>

<p>Week 6</p> <p><i>Gospels III</i></p>	<p>2/12</p> <p>The Gospel of Matthew</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: Free Notes</p> <p>Read: Chapter 1-5, 21-28</p>	<p>2/14</p> <p>Preach It!</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: “Sermon on the Mount”</p> <p>Read: Matthew 5-7</p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p><i>Gospels IV</i></p>	<p>2/19</p> <p>The Gospel of Luke</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: Free Notes</p> <p>Read: Luke 1-6, 19-24</p>	<p>2/21</p> <p>“What’s a Prodigal Anyway?”</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: “Write Your Own Lost Parable”</p> <p>Read: Luke 15</p>
<p>Week 8</p> <p><i>Gospels V</i></p>	<p>2/26</p> <p>Politics of Diversity in the Bible</p> <p>IN: “The Social Ladder”</p> <p>Read: Chapter 5</p>	<p>2/28</p> <p>The Jewishness of Jesus?</p> <p>IN: Doing Jewish</p> <p>Read: Chapter 8</p>
<p>Week 9</p> <p><i>Here’s What We Know...</i></p>	<p>3/5</p> <p>Connecting the Dots</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: Students of the Way</p> <p>Read: Chapter 7</p> <p>*Exam 2 Due by Friday 3/8 at 11:59pm</p>	<p>3/7</p> <p>The Church as Collective</p> <p><u>Have Prepared:</u></p> <p>IN: A Long Time Ago in a Land Far, Far Away</p> <p>Read: Acts 1-7</p>

<p>Week 10</p> <p><i>Spring Break</i></p>	<p>3/12</p> <p>No Class</p>	<p>3/14</p> <p>No Class</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p><i>Acts</i></p>	<p>3/19</p> <p>Acts: Peter</p> <p>IN: __</p> <p>Read:</p>	<p>3/21</p> <p>Acts: Paul</p> <p>IN: __</p> <p>Read:</p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>History of the Christian Mission</p>	<p>3/26</p> <p>The Historical Paul</p> <p>IN: The Letter Campaign</p> <p>Read: Chapter 9</p> <p>3/27 last day trop</p>	<p>3/28</p> <p>Honor/Shame and Identity</p> <p>IN: The Cross Way</p> <p>Read: Chapter 10</p> <p>*Exam 3 Due by Sunday 3/31 at 11:59pm</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p><i>Epistles I</i></p>	<p>4/2</p> <p>To the Collective in Thessalonica, Macedonia (Greece)</p> <p>IN: To Thessalonica</p> <p>Read: 1 Thessalonians</p>	<p>4/4</p> <p>To the Collective at Galatia, Anatolia (Asia [Minor])</p> <p>IN: To Galatia</p> <p>Read: Galatians</p>

Week 14 <i>Epistles 2</i>	4/9 To the Collective at Philippi, Macedonia (Greece) IN: To Philippi Read: Philippians	4/11 Debates and Disputes in the Pauline Tradition, the Case of Titus IN: Faith-Filled Collectives Read: Chapter 11
Week 15 <i>The End is the Beginning is the End of Christianity</i>	4/16 Revelation I <u>Have Prepared:</u> IN: Jesus: The Same, Always Read: Chapter 12, pp. 181-187. Revelation 1:1-3:13	4/18 Revelation II <u>Have Prepared:</u> IN: Jesus Returns Read: Chapter 12, p. 188-195 Revelation: 3:14-22//3:11-18//15: 1-18// 21:1- 22:5. Exam 4 Due by April 19 at 11:59pm
Week 16 <i>Final Work Week</i> No new grades this week	4/23 TBD	4/25 Class Potluck and Final Project Conversation *Attendance is part of your Final Exam grade.
Final Exam	Monday, April 29, 2018 11:30am – 2:00pm Final Project Submissions Due at 2:00pm	

Exams and Assignments

The level to which you've met our Student Learning Outcomes will be measured by the following assignments.

PARTICIPATION:

Learning is an active process that requires preparation, practice, and questioning. While I will not be calling roll in this large-enrollment course, your presence is assumed. Points will be

assessed through “ticket out the door” completion assignments collected throughout the semester. I will also use this and other activities to take attendance for purposes of official University enrollment reporting.

INTERACTIVE NOTEBOOK:

Notetaking is not simply recording information, but also training your mind to process it so that you can retrieve and use it as needed. The interactive notebook will help you become your best tutor. They should be brought to each class and will be graded at random throughout the semester for completion. Note that I reserve the right to determine whether an attempted entry constitutes sufficient effort so as to count as “completed.”

EXAMS:

These short exams are your opportunity to demonstrate your handle of the course material. They will be taken via Blackboard within a designated window. The questions will be a combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and matching. The exams are not cumulative but skills and theories are scaffolded so you would do well to make sure you’ve mastered prior concepts. Should you take seriously the interactive notebook assignment and class participation, you will be ready to perform well on the exam. They are closed and timed exams. You may not use or have near any resources (i.e. handouts, cellphones, books, notes, online resources). Nothing should be open on your computer beside the exam on Blackboard. In accordance with The Capstone Creed, I am trusting that you take this exam with integrity. ProTip: See ProTip about using Blackboard above. I will drop the lowest exam grade should you have an A- or above on the Interactive Notebook and Participation.

SEMINAR GROUPS:

Group reading and discussion are principle part of Biblical Studies. To give you this opportunity, you will be assigned into seminar groups. You will work in these groups for various in-class activities.

Once a semester, you will attend a SEMINAR GROUP reading session with the teaching assistant to discuss a select issue/passage in the Bible. For these sessions, you will be required to individually prepare additional notes and readings so that you can contribute.

FINAL PROJECT— *Bible in Culture Magazine*.

Your SEMINAR GROUP will be responsible for creating an issue of *Bible in Culture* magazine. Each group will be given an electronic template with which to design their magazine. Your group’s issue will derive from your reading session. The teaching assistant and instructor will assign you a time for individual and group proposals for approval. More details will be provided later, but the preliminary outline is described below.

Groups will need to provide:

- (1) A Cover Image
- (2) A Issue Title
- (3) Introductory Essay (150-250 words)
- (4) Table of Contents

- (5) Soundtrack
- (6) Bibliography (most recent version of the *Chicago Manual of Style's* Author-Date formatting)

Each Individual will need to submit:

- (1) A 900-1000 word article pertaining to the issue (in-text citations according to the most recent version of the *Chicago Manual of Style's* Author-Date formatting)
- (2) [2] 50-word sidebars discussing a technical term/concept.
- (3) 1-2 images pertinent to the article, with captions.
- (4) Song with recording information, album cover, and 50-word max description of why it is emblematic (to you) of your group's issue.
- (5) Be present for Final Project Conversation

GENEROSITY POINTS (aka extra credit)

Throughout the semester, I may show generosity to those attending select Religious Studies Student Association or Department of Religious Studies events. Any extra credit points received may be designated toward your interactive notebook grade. In the case that you have completed this and all completion-based tasks at the A or A+ range, I will apply your points toward an exam or the final project.

The Department of Religious Studies has a very active social media presence. Should you produce knowledge of publishable quality related to "Studying Religion in Culture," you may receive additional extra credit toward any assignment. You must receive my approval should you want to take advantage of this opportunity and determine how it will impact your grade. So if you have ideas or questions, let's chat. Students have found this to be an especially worthwhile in their college experience.

Assignment Type	Percentage
Participation	20%
Interactive Notebook	20%
Exams (I,II,III,IV)	30%
Seminar Group	15%
Final Project	15%

C. Grading Scale

- 59 > =F Unacceptable Performance
- 60-63 =D- Insufficient Performance
- 64-66 =D Needs Improvement
- 67-69 =D+ Adequate Performance
- 70-73 =C- Acceptable Performance
- 74-76 =C Satisfactory Performance
- 77-79 =C+ Promising Performance
- 80-83 =B- Good Performance
- 84-86 =B Commendable Performance
- 87-89 =B+ Great Performance
- 90-93 =A- Advanced Performance

94-96 =A Excellent Performance
97-100=A+ Superior Performance

Classroom Policies

ATTENDANCE

This course is taught from the perspective that higher education is a professional endeavor. Just as there are ramifications for missing a job, there are ramifications for missing class. The student learning outcomes for this course presume active class attendance, so personal expectations regarding grades should be revised in light of absences. You may miss 2 (two) classes without penalty. These are to help you account for those times when life just happens (family emergencies, serious illness, etc.). Any absence thereafter will result in a deduction of half your participation grade (i.e. 10% of your course grade) and discount you from all extra-credit opportunities—including generosity points and exam grade drops. If you know you're going to be absent/late/leaving early for a class, please email the teaching assistant and instructor (single email) as soon as possible (preferably 48 hours, but ASAP) so we can work out how to help you get credit.

MISSED EXAMS AND COURSEWORK

Anytime you miss class, you should take the following steps (in this order): (1) meet with a classmate to copy any notes, (2) schedule an appointment with the instructor or teaching assistant to get clarity on the notes, missed lesson, and any handouts, (3) study the material and come back ready to actively participate in class.

You are still responsible for submitting assignments by their deadlines. Late work and exams are only accepted in the most extreme circumstances—that is, matters of life and death, not pass or fail. Be aware that for me to justify this decision, I will likely require external documentation of the matter in consultation with campus administrative offices and reserve the right to make any deductions. I implore you to be proactive and keep me posted within in 24 hours of the issue or as soon as circumstances feasibly allow. Tardiness here will leave me less equipped to be gracious.

I do not permit incompletes except in the most extreme circumstances. Should you find yourself considering an incomplete or dropping the class, come see me first to discuss your profess. I can only work with you if you are doing your part to work with me and with the class.

OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNICATION

Office hours are an opportunity for you to get one-on-one assistance with the course. I invite you to come prepared with questions and to take advantage of the opportunity. I don't worry about students who come to office hours. I worry about those who never do. As I'm often on campus, please feel free to drop by if you see my office door open. Otherwise come by during my appointed office times or make an appointment. Do not be afraid to ask for help learning something you don't know well. That's precisely what we're here to do.

Online communication is a wonderful convenience, but it can give a false impression of engagement. Please note that I will generally respond to emails within 36 hours of receipt during the work week. I may not see emails during the weekend or otherwise noted occasions, so please be patient. Similarly, my communications with you will happen primarily during the work week.

DEVICE/TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Technology is a tool, and in world in which digital technologies are increasingly abundant, the classroom environment must take them into account. This class will use technology in a guided way. You will certainly be using computers/devices for homework activities and exams. And I may invite you to use technology for an in-class activity. That said, digital technology is prohibited during class except in those circumstances (or documentation for an approved device from the Office of Disability Services). If the instructor or teaching assistant sees you using digital technology (including but not limited to mobile devices and laptops) during a class session, you will lose participation points for that day.

Please make sure your devices are silenced or on vibrate for the duration of the class. If you need to answer a call, text, or email, quietly excuse yourself from the classroom to do so. Also note, that all PPT slides will be uploaded to class, so you do not (and should not) copy slides down. Your notes should be more engaging.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE POLICIES

Notification of Changes

The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the instructor will notify students in class and/or via Blackboard and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Code of Academic Conduct](#) provided in the Online Catalog.

Statement On Disability Accommodations

Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.

Pregnant Student Accommodations

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

Religious Observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

UAct Statement

The [UAct website](#) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.