

**RLST 205 Introduction to the New Testament**  
**Spring Semester 2014**  
**MWF 12:00-12:50 PM**

Instructor: Dr. Susan Cohen  
Office: 2-161 Wilson Hall  
Office hours: MW 10:30-11:30 AM  
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- Learning outcomes:**
- 1) to become acquainted with the major themes of the New Testament.
  - 2) to become acquainted with some of the critical scholarly tools used in the interpretation and study of the New Testament in an academic setting.
  - 3) to become acquainted with the historical backgrounds and cultural settings out of which the religion and views presented in the New Testament emerged.
  - 4) to learn to read, examine, and discuss the New Testament as an academic text and as a means of examining the development of western religious thought.

**Required texts:** *Bible*. New Revised Standard Version, Harpercollins edition.  
*The New Testament*. Fifth edition. Ehrman, B.  
*The Historical Figure of Jesus*. Sanders, E.P.  
*Reinventing Paul*. Gager, J.  
Additional readings on D2L.

<b>Course requirements:</b>	4 short writing assignments	20%
	take home midterm exam	20%
	1 paper	20%
	final exam	40%

The specific days and times that each assignment is due are listed below in the weekly schedule. There will be **no extensions** on papers or assignments unless arrangements have been made at least one week in advance.

There are **FIVE short writing assignments** throughout the semester; only **FOUR** of them will count toward your final grade—you may choose to not write one of them; if you write all of them the lowest grade for the semester will be dropped.

A half a letter grade will be deducted per day for late papers and assignments; no assignment more than two days late will be accepted.

The **final exam** for this course will be in two parts. A **take-home essay question** will be handed out in class and due on. In addition, there will be an **in-class final exam**, written during regular class time on. The final will be comprehensive for the semester.

## Course Policies:

- 1) This is a course about religion as an academic subject and the development of religious thought. This is **NOT** a class that teaches religion, faith, or religious doctrine nor is it a class that is taught from a religious and/or faith-based perspective. In this class, we will be examining the New Testament in **an academic and secular setting**, and **treating the biblical text as material open to questioning, examination, criticism, and interpretation**. An open mind and a willingness to examine new ideas and new methods of examining the biblical text are essential. **This class is not a forum for expressions of personal theology.**
- 2) Plagiarism – the presentation of others’ work as your own – is an offense punishable by expulsion. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and all references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited correctly. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the *Student Academic and Conduct Guidelines*, or make an appointment to see the instructor to discuss the problem. **Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification or any other form of academic dishonesty will fail this course and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students.**

## Course Schedule:

### Week One:

Jan. 8: Introduction: the academic study of the New Testament

Jan. 10: The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) as background to the New Testament

### Week Two:

Jan. 13: Formation of the New Testament, language and canon  
Read: Ehrman, Chapters 1 and 2.

Jan. 15: The New Testament in Context: the Greco-Roman world  
Read: Ehrman, Chapters 3 and 5.  
Sanders, *Jesus*, Chapter 3.

Jan. 17: **Assignment 1 due**  
The New Testament in Context: the first century Jewish world  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 4.  
Sanders, *Jesus*, Chapter 4.

### Week Three:

Jan. 20: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

Jan. 22: The New Testament in Context: apocalyptic traditions  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 18.

Jan. 24: The Gospels in Context.  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 6.  
Sanders, *Jesus*, Chapter 6.

**Week Four:**

Jan. 27: The Gospel According to Mark  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 7.  
Mark 1-10

Jan. 29: The Gospel According to Mark  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 7.  
Mark 11-16

Jan. 31: The Gospel According to Matthew  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 9.  
Matt. 1-20

**Week Five:**

Feb. 3: **Assignment 2 due in class**  
The Gospel According to Matthew  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 9.  
Matt. 21-28

Feb. 5: The Gospel According to Luke  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 10.  
Luke 1-18

Feb. 7: The Gospel According to Luke  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 10.  
Luke 19-24

**Week Six:**

Feb. 10: The Gospel According to John  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 12.  
John 1-11

Feb. 12: The Gospel According to John  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 12.  
John 12-21

Feb. 14: **TAKE HOME MIDTERM PAPER DUE 12:00 PM (NOON) VIA D2L**

**Week Seven:**

Feb. 17: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

Feb. 19: The other Gospels  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 14.  
The Infancy Gospel of Thomas, D2L.  
The Coptic Gospel of Thomas, D2L.

Feb. 21: The historical Jesus  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 15.  
Sanders, *Jesus*, Chapters 7-9.

**Week Eight:**

- Feb. 24: The problem of miracles ....  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 16.  
Sanders, *Jesus*, Chapter 10
- Feb. 26: Interpretations of Jesus  
Read: Ehrman, Chapters 17 and 19.  
Sanders, *Jesus*, Chapters 14-17.
- Feb. 28: The Acts of the Apostles  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 11.  
Acts 1-5, 9-15, 19-28

**Week Nine:**

- Mar. 3: Paul in context  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 20.  
Gager, Introduction and Chapter One.
- Mar. 5: 1 Thessalonians  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 21.  
1 Thess, all.
- Mar. 7: **Assignment 3 due**

**March 10-14      SPRING BREAK****Week Ten:**

- Mar. 17: Corinthians  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 22, pp. 340-354  
I Cor. all; II Cor. 1-4, 10-12  
Gager, Chapter Two.
- Mar. 19: Galatians  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 22, pp. 354-363.  
Galatians, all.  
Gager, Chapter Three.
- Mar. 21: Philippians and Philemon  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 22, 363-370.  
Philippians, all  
Philemon, all.

**Week Eleven:**

- Mar. 24: Romans  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 23.  
Romans 1-14.  
Gager, Chapter Four.

Mar. 26: **Assignment 4 due in class**  
Jesus and Paul, comparisons  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 24.  
Sanders, *Jesus*, Chapters 11-13.

Mar. 28: Colossians and Ephesians  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 25.  
Colossians, all.  
Ephesians, all.

**Week Twelve:**

Mar. 31: Women in Paul and the early Christian traditions  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 26.  
1 and 2 Timothy, all.

Apr. 2: Jew and Gentiles in Paul and the early Christian traditions  
Read: 1 Peter, all.  
Ehrman, Chapters 27:436-437 and 445:451, and Chapter 28, all.

Apr. 4: **PAPER DUE 12:00 PM (NOON) VIA D2L**

**Week Thirteen:**

Apr. 7: Hebrews  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 27:438-445  
Hebrews, all.

Apr. 9: 2 Peter and Jude  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 29  
2 Peter, all.  
Jude

Apr. 11: Revelation  
Read: Ehrman, Chapter 30.  
Revelation, all.

**Week Fourteen:**

Apr. 14: **Assignment 5 due in class**  
New Testament themes: sin and salvation, death and resurrection

Apr. 16: From the New Testament to Christianity  
Read: Freeman, "A Crowd that Lurks in Corners ..." D2L.

Apr. 18: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

**Week Fifteen:**

Apr. 21: Conclusion: uses and abuses of the New Testament

Apr. 23: **IN CLASS PORTION OF FINAL EXAM**

**Week Sixteen:**

Apr. 28 : **TAKE-HOME PORTION OF FINAL EXAM DUE BY 1:07 PM**