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***Religion 205 010 MC New Testament Survey***

**Three credit hours: Fall Semester, 2023**

**MWF 12:00 PM-12:50 PM (8/14/2023 - 12/3/2024) Location: MC, George M. Lawson Academic Center, Room 120**

**Instructor Information:**

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**Course Description:**

A panoramic view of the content, main characteristics and message(s) of the Christian scriptures in light of their social context and as a literary expression of the faith, life, and history of the Church, and those who call themselves Christians.

**How Much Time Will I Spend on This Course?**

For this 3-credit hour course expect to spend a minimum of 150 minutes per week in lectures, class discussions, and examinations (37.5 hours for the semester). Instructional time includes a 3-hour final exam. Out-of-class work includes writing papers, posting on our discussion page, and preparation for exams and is estimated at around 300 minutes per week.

**Textbook and Other Materials Needed:**

There is no textbook for this class. ***You are required to have access to a Bible containing the books of the New Testament.*** If you do not own a Bible or if you prefer reading online you may use one of the following websites:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

<https://www.biblica.com/bible/>

We will read parts of the entire New Testament. I will also give you handouts.

***There is a list of suggestions for further research on the last pages of this syllabus.***

**Electronics Policy:**

***Devices will be used for class participation only and entirely at my discretion.*** If you are listening to music, surfing, doing work for other classes, or texting I will ask you to leave the classroom and you will be marked with an unexcused absence for the day. No devices will be allowed on your desk or in view during exams.

**Attendance Policy:**

Your complete attention is required in this class. I expect you to attend and be prepared for each class period. ***Unexcused absences will cause a reduction in your participation grade.*** If for some (excellent) reason you cannot attend you must notify me before the scheduled class period.

**Evaluation of Learning Outcomes and Grade Computation:**

Grading is based on a 1000 point scale. The crucial grade is the accumulation of points throughout the semester.

*Points Assignments*

**Points and Assignments:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **900-1000** | **A** |
| **800-899** | **B** |
| **700-799** | **C** |
| **600-699** | **D** |
| **Below 600** | **F** |

There may be multiple readings, videos, and handouts each week. Some of these will be to familiarize you with the time and culture that produced the New Testament writings. I will tell you from which of these your test material will cover and post a study guide on Canvas.

The best possible score for the class is 1000 points distributed as follows:

**1.** There will be **four exams** for 400 total points (including the final.) These exams will cover information from the current topic and may consist of multiple choices, true/false, and short answers of one to two sentences or paragraphs. Some essay questions might be included that would require that you write at least a page. ***Make-up exams will be given only in cases of death or documented illness or emergency***. If you are traveling for school activities, I will ask that you take the exam before the scheduled date. Early and make-up exams will be different in context from the exam given in class.

**2. Research Presentation Project w**ill be worth 200 points. In the New Testament, we are given the briefest glimpses of characters and situations. You will select one minor character from the New Testament. Read the passage about the character and event, imagine what has happened before and after the scene in that characters life, research several Bible commentaries, and present your interpretation to the class in a ten-minute performance. You make act out the scene, create a video, or PowerPoint. I will give you more information in class.

**3. Reflections on your involvement with the New Testament thus far in your life.** Thiswill be a formally written three-page paper (200 points) and is due 9/26/19. See Canvas for specifications of the paper details***. Late papers for reasons other than death or documented emergencies will be marked off 50 points for each day late.***

**4. Class Discussion & Participation** (200 points.) I will keep a class list on the lectern and place a check mark beside the name of each student who participates during that period. Each check mark will represent 20 points. So, please, ask a relevant question, make an informed comment, make an appropriate suggestion, or express an opinion!

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| --- | --- |
| ***Week 1***  ***8/21 - Last day of Drop/Add period.***  Course Introduction  What is the New Testament?  ***Before third class read the first chapter of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John***  ***Before Week 4 read the last chaper of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.*** | ***Week 2***  New Testament Background – The World of the Greeks and Romans  Read:  1 Maccabees Chapter 1  <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Maccabees+1&version=NRSV>  1 Maccabees Chapter 8  <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Maccabees+8&version=NRSV>  2 Maccabees 4:7-17  <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Maccabees+4&version=NRSV>  4 Maccabees 4:15-26  <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=4+Maccabees+4&version=NRSV>  Mark 7:24-30  John 19:16-20  Acts 6:1-6  Romans 1:8-14  Revelation 9:11  Handout – ***Antiquities of the Jews*** (Flavius Josephus) Translated by  William Whiston |
| ***Week 3***  New Testament Background – The World of the Greeks and Romans  continued | ***Week 4***  EXAM 1  The Judaism of Jesus |
| ***Week 5***  The Synoptic Gospels  Matthew, Mark, and Luke  Read:  The Gospel According to John and the Johannine letters – John 1, 2, and 3. | ***Week 6***  The Synoptic Gospels  Matthew, Mark, and Luke continued |
| ***Week 7***  ***10/1 & 10/3***  Moreover, then there was John | ***Week 8***  EXAM 2  ***No class - Fall break 10/4 – 10/6*** |
| ***Week 9***  Acts of the Apostles  Peter and Paul | ***Week10***  Paul and his letters |
| ***Week 11***  Paul and his letters | ***Week 12***  EXAM 3 |
| ***Week 13***  Hebrews and the “catholic” Epistles | ***Week 14***  Revelation |
| ***Week 15***  ***11/21 Last Day of class***  Summation and Review for Final | ***Week 16***  ***Presentations as Final Exam***  ***12/3 11:15-2:15*** |

**Class Participation and Discussion Guidelines:**

**A portion of your course grade depends on your active and timely participation in discussions and exchanges of ideas, personal observations, and questions among all the students and the instructor.**

The following guidelines will apply to these discussions. If we agree to the same ground rules, we might feel at liberty to express our ideas without worry of ridicule or discomfiture. It is hoped that by the end of the course you will be thinking about the New Testament writings in a very different way - one that might make you more confident in your ability to express your thoughts and more interested in how these ancient books really can be relevant to university students in the 21st Century.

In the exchanges, we, the class, agree:

**To participate and stay on track with the topic.**

To politely challenge the ideas of others without becoming personal.

To respect one another’s ideas.

**To avoid slang and non-academic styles of expression.**

That our discussions need to be built on our interpretation of the readings, videos, and lectures which mean that we must be knowledgeable of that evidence; be able to **support our opinions with facts** which means **diligently reading and engaging in the discussions.**

**The Center for Student Success (CSS):**

If at any time you need extra help with composing your discussions or papers please use the available assistance offered in The Center for Student Success (CSS) which is located on the lower floor of Lawson, room 035. **CSS provides free peer and faculty tutoring for all subjects**. For appointments, go to Reinhardt web page and click Center for Student Success.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities.  This legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Reinhardt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Therefore, if you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the **Academic Support Office (ASO).** ASO is located in the basement of Lawson Building. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper ASO letters.

***General Education Learning Outcomes:[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Reinhardt University's courses do not stand alone. Each session is linked to various learning outcomes. To help students understand the significance of what occurs in the class.

The General Education Learning Outcomes are expected of every student who graduates from Reinhardt University. In this course, the following learning outcomes are emphasized and required:

1. ***Effective communication of ideas through writing*** demonstrated through discussion posts, reading responses, a paper, and essays on tests. **Course Learning Outcome 1; Arts & Humanities Outcome 1**
2. Integrative, critical thinking and inquiry-based learning using evidence, logic, reasoning, described in discussion posts, reading responses, papers, and tests. **CLO 2; A&H0 2**
3. Knowledge of ***various research methodologies*** demonstrated through research for the final paper. **CLO 3; A&HO 3**
4. ***Independent thought and imagination*** demonstrated through discussion posts, reading responses, essays on tests, a final paper, written analysis of scripture, and the class discussion forum. **CLO 4; A&HO 4**
5. ***Integrity and ethical responsibility*** demonstrated in the attribution and citation of the source material. **CLO 7; A&HO 7**

**Religion Program Learning Outcomes (RPOs):[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**RPO 1.** To enable students to understand the five major religions of the world (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)

**RPO 2.** Understand the Judeo-Christian traditions.

**RPO 3.** To assist students to understand the Christian tradition.

**RPO 4.** To enable students to think critically and be able to express those ideas in writing, speech, and visual media.

**RPO 5.** To help students become familiar with a variety of research methods appropriate to the field of religion, particularly those relevant to the study of primary sources.

**RPO 6.** To help students develop their understanding of moral and spiritual issues.

***Course Learning Outcomes:***

This course will introduce you to the fundamental characteristics that define the collection of ancient Christian documents we know as the New Testament. You will be able to describe the Early Christian Movement and its cultural and historical development within the land of Palestine in the first centuries of the Current Era amidst its Jewish and Greco-Roman ancestries. Specifically, after completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the atmosphere, evolution, and purpose of the New Testament as a whole through knowledge of ***the traditions of early Christianity*** demonstrated through an understanding of literary texts and their historical background in discussion posts, reading responses, essays, tests, and an analysis paper. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**
2. Discuss, in depth, the relevance of this body of scripture in the postmodern era. You will have an awareness of the role of the New Testament in modern life, demonstrated in the understanding of the human condition with its aspirations as presented in works of literature through reading responses, papers, tests, analysis, and forum discussions. This course will help you to understand the New Testament writings and assist students to comprehend the foundation literature of Christian tradition as it relates to their present-day lives. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**

1. Understand the origin and evolution of the New Testament scripture. **RPO 4 & 5**

1. Discuss the compiling methods and the primary units of this body of scripture. **RPO 4 & 5**

1. Discuss the major themes and the lives of people in the New Testament, their time and place and to understand the historical profile of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus and to describe some of the ways in which the Early Church interpreted Jesus. To absorb how the earliest followers of Christ lived their faith in turbulent and sometimes dangerous social circumstances. To describe briefly the social context in which Jesus and the Early Church lived and out of which the New Testament emerged. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**
2. Discuss the scriptures’ impact upon, Christianity, Western civilization, and the World and to be able to talk about the momentous impact the New Testament has had in the realms of Judaism, Christianity, and Western Civilization as a whole. The student will attain knowledge of the diversity of societies and cultures in the Ancient Near East and gain the ability to view oneself and others in different cultural and historical perspectives demonstrated through an understanding of literary texts and their cultural and historical background in reading responses, papers, tests, analysis, and forum discussions. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**
3. Discuss significant transitions and elements in the history of Christianity. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**
4. Recognize significant events in the New Testament and discuss the effect these events had on the lives of the first followers of Jesus of Nazareth. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**
5. Recognize significant passages of scripture and their significance in the lives of both Jews and Christians. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**

**The Need for Academic Honesty:**

Education thrives in an atmosphere of honesty and trust. *Students who do not do their own work degrade education, demonstrate a lack of respect for themselves and the college, and rob themselves of the opportunity to improve their own thinking and writing.* In this course, all work must be your own. ***Cheating will not be tolerated.*** Plagiarism, the use of someone else’s ideas or words without acknowledging them as such, is a serious academic offense. Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be dealt with severely, *usually resulting in a failing grade in the course*. ***If you are ever uncertain about whether or not your actions are academically honest, please consult your instructor, who will be glad to advise you.***

The ***Academic Catalog of Reinhardt University*** details what constitutes academic dishonesty. All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and to abide by the ***Reinhardt Honor Code***. Also, all students are expected to be familiar with the Reinhardt policy on academic dishonesty stated in the University Catalog and the Student Handbook. Plagiarism (using the ideas and phrases of others without crediting them, therefore claiming those ideas and expressions as your own) will not be tolerated in this course or on this campus. To avoid such academic dishonesty, you must use a citation (footnote) for all ideas drawn from your reading and research, including research in encyclopedias and online, even when you have restated those ideas in your own words.

Consequences for cheating or plagiarizing are stiff, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will be notified of actions taken against students who violate the academic integrity policy, which may result in further consequences, including designation of “academic warning” on your official transcript, academic suspension, or expulsion for academic reasons.

*Evaluation of Learning Outcomes and Grade Computation*

**Suggestions for further reading and research on New Testament Topics**

***Some websites for the study of religions and the Bible:***

*Abrahamic Family Reunion.org* [*http://abrahamicfamilyreunion.org/ethics-pro-social-values-in-judaism-christianity-and-islam/*](http://abrahamicfamilyreunion.org/ethics-pro-social-values-in-judaism-christianity-and-islam/)

*Bible Gateway* https://www.biblegateway.com/

*Bible Odyssey.org* [*http://bibleodyssey.org/*](http://bibleodyssey.org/)

*Bible Research.org* [*https://www.bible-research.org/*](https://www.bible-research.org/)

*Biblica The International Bible Society* https://www.biblica.com/bible/

*Codex Sinaiticus* [*http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/*](http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/)

Frontline *From Jesus to Christ* [*https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/*](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/)

*The Jewish Virtual Library* [*https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/pharisees-sadducees-and-essenes*](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/pharisees-sadducees-and-essenes)

*The Matheson Trust for the Study of Comparative Religion* [*https://themathesontrust.org/*](https://themathesontrust.org/)

*The Pluralism Project* Harvard University[*http://pluralism.org/*](http://pluralism.org/)

*The Religious Literacy Project* Harvard University[*https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/*](https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/)

*The World Council of Churches* [*https://www.oikoumene.org/en*](https://www.oikoumene.org/en)

Tufts University *Perseus Digital Library* Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews[*http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=J.+AJ+20.105&redirect=true*](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=J.+AJ+20.105&redirect=true)

***Some books and articles for the study of religions and the Bible:***

Anderson, R. Dean. Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul. Revised Edition. Leuven: Peeters, 1999.

Appadurai, Arjun, ed. The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Ascough, Richard S. Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012.

Bagnall, Roger S., and Rafaella Cribiore. Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt: 300 BC-AD 800. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Brakke, David. “Scriptural Practices in Early Christianity: Towards a New History of the New Testament Canon.” In Invention, Rewriting, Usurpation: Discursive Fights over Religious Traditions in Antiquity. Edited by Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and David Brakke. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012, 263-280.

Church, F. Forrester. “Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul’s letter to Philemon.” Harvard Theological Review 71 (1978): 17-33.

Cribiore, Rafaella. Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Deissman, Adolf. Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History. Translated by William E. Wilson. New York: Harper, 1957 [1912], esp. 1-26.

Elliot, Neil and Mark Reasoner, eds. Documents and Images for the Study of Paul. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011, esp. 66-86.

Epp, Eldon J. “New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts and Letter Carrying in Greco-Roman Times.” In The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester. Edited by B. A. Pearson, et al. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991, 35-56.

Foucault, Michel. “What is an Author?” In The Foucault Reader. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, 101-120.

Friesen, Steven J. “Second Thessalonians, The Ideology of Epistles, and the Construction of Authority: Our Debt to the Forger.” In From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikê: Studies in Religion and Archaeology. Edited by Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen. Harvard Theological Studies 64. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010, 189-208.

Harland, Philip A. Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

Hock, Ronald F. “Writing in the Greco-Roman World.” SBL Forum. Society of Biblical Literature.

Koester, Helmut. “Writings and the Spirit: Authority and Politics in Ancient Christianity.” Harvard Theological Review 84.4 (1991): 353-372. (Available on JSTOR)

Koester, Helmut. Paul and His World: Interpreting the New Testament in Its Context. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Luijendijk, AnneMarie. Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Harvard Theological Studies 60. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Malherbe, Abraham J. Ancient Epistolary Theorists. Sources for Biblical Study 19. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988.

Miller, Anna. "Not with Eloquent Wisdom: Democratic Discourse in 1 Corinthians 1-4." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 35 (2013): 323-354.

Mouritsen, Henrik. The Freedman in the Roman World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Rhodes, Peter J. “Ekklesia.” Brill’s New Pauly. Brill Online, 2013. Accessed 10 June 2013.

Rosenmeyer, Patricia. Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Rosenmeyer, Patricia. Ancient Greek Literary Letters: Selections in Translation. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. “Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism.” In Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999, 83-102.

Stendahl, Krister. Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Stowers, Stanley K. Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity. Library of Early Christianity 5. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.

Stowers, Stanley. "Does Pauline Christianity Resemble a Hellenistic Philosophy?" In Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians. Edited by Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011, 219-244.

Stowers, Stanley. “The Concept of Community and the History of Early Christianity.” Method and Theory in the Study of Religion 23 (2011): 238-256.

Trobisch, David. “The Oldest Extant Editions of the Letters of Paul.” In Paul’s Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

1. For more information see pages 3 & 4 in the Undergraduate Catalog

   <https://www.reinhardt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-19-Undergraduate-Catalog-10032018-update-2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See page 106 for further information on the Religion Program Outcomes in the Undergraduate Catalog <https://www.reinhardt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-19-Undergraduate-Catalog-10032018-update-2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)