**COURSE TITLE:** “Introduction to the New Testament”

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Study of the New Testament literature in its historical and cultural setting. Topics covered include the literary relationships of the four Gospels, the historical Jesus, the evolution of early Christianity, and the diverse theologies represented in the letters of Paul and other canonical and non-canonical writings.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Students who successfully complete this course will: understand the contributions of various ethnic and religious groups to the formation of early Christianity; be able to explain what contemporary scholarship says about the date, authorship, purpose, and literary features of each of the New Testament texts; be able to weigh the merits of contemporary arguments concerning issues such as the historical Jesus, the theology of Paul, and early Christian beliefs and practices; and identify the principal beliefs, values, and institutions that constituted the Christian tradition in its earliest stage.

**TEXTS:**

The New Testament of the Jerusalem Bible

**ATTENDANCE:**

There is no formal attendance policy for this course. It is your responsibility to arrange your schedule so that you can attend class.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND EXAMS:**

January 26: Introduction; NT Backgrounds (Read Harris, chapters 3-5)

February 2: NT Backgrounds (Read Harris, chapters 3-5)
February 9: Quiz #1 (50 points, multiple-choice) You are responsible for material presented in lectures and Harris, chapters 3-5.

The Making of the NT
The Gospel Genre and the Synoptic Problem
The Gospels

(Begin reading Harris, chapters 6-10, and Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

February 16: The Gospels

February 23: The Gospels; Gnosticism and Non-Canonical Gospels

March 2: Gnosticism and Non-Canonical Gospels; The Historical Jesus

(Read Harris, chapter 11)

March 9: The Historical Jesus

March 16: Quiz #2 (50 points; multiple-choice) You are responsible for material presented in lectures; Harris, chapters 6-11; and Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Midterm Exam (100 points; essay). You are responsible for all lectures and readings assigned since the beginning of the semester. You will be asked to respond to one essay question.

March 23: SPRING BREAK

March 30: Acts of the Apostles; Paul (Read Acts and Harris, chapter 12)

April 6: Paul (Begin reading 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon; read Harris, chapters 13-16)

April 13: Paul

April 20: QUIZ #3 (50 points; multiple-choice) You are responsible for all lecture material since the midterm; Harris, chapters 12-16; Acts, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

The Late Pauline Tradition (Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus)

(Begin reading Harris, chapters 17-19; begin reading Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, 1-3 John, Revelation)
April 27: Hebrews; Catholic (General) Epistles (James; 1 and 2 Peter; Jude; 1, 2 and 3 John)

May 4: Catholic (General) Epistles (James; 1 and 2 Peter; Jude; 1, 2 and 3 John)

May 11: Revelation; Review

May 18: Quiz #4 (50 points; multiple-choice) You are responsible for all lecture material since the last quiz; Harris, chapters 17-19; Ephesians; 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Hebrews; James; 1 and 2 Peter; Jude; 1, 2, and 3 John; Revelation.

Final Exam (100 points; essay) You are responsible for all lectures and readings assigned since the midterm.

GRADES:

Your course grade will be based on your scores on the quizzes, midterm, and final. Each of the quizzes will consist of 25 two-point questions. Only your three highest quiz scores will count in the calculation of your course grade. This means you can miss one quiz without penalty. There will be no make-up quizzes. The midterm and final exams are worth 100 points each. You will be asked to write a response to one essay question on the midterm and final exams.

Grades will be based on the percentage you earn of the 350 points possible in the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please do not tell me at any point during the semester the grade you need in the course.

THE BIG ISSUES

You will be well prepared for the midterm and final essay exams if you can demonstrate a thorough knowledge of what the New Testament texts, lectures, and the Harris book have to say about the following big issues.

Prior to the midterm:

1. The teachings of Jesus as presented in the Synoptic Gospels
2. The teachings of Jesus as presented in the Gospel of John
3. The portrayals of Jesus in the gospels.
4. What do scholars mean by the “historical Jesus”? On what sources do they rely in trying to understand the historical Jesus? What difficulties do these sources present? What are scholars saying about the life and teachings of the historical Jesus?
Prior to the final:

1. Paul’s teachings on human nature, sin, faith, salvation, Torah, and the Christ.
2. The problems faced by Paul, how he dealt with them, and how his solutions reflect his theology. Consider the problems addressed in all thirteen of the letters attributed to Paul.
3. The problems faced by the authors of the General (or Catholic) Epistles and how they dealt with them.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES:

HRS 122 is a GE course (Category C2)

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the campus policy on academic dishonesty at www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm.

Students who leave the room during exams will not be allowed to return. If this policy creates a difficulty for you, please make necessary arrangements with the Testing Center.

Students with disabilities who require special arrangements will need an accommodation letter from Services for Students with Disabilities.