

HRS 122 (GE Area C4)  
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT  
SUMMER 2008  
DR. NYSTROM

**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 (Jews, Greeks, Romans, Stoics, Platonists, etc.) 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:**

S.L. Harris, The New Testament: A Student's Introduction  
The New Testament of the Jerusalem Bible

**GRADES:**

Your grade will be based on your performance on the midterm and final exam. The exams will consist of two parts: multiple choice (50 points) and essay (50 points).

Grades will be based on the percentage you earn of the 200 points possible in the course:

A	93-100%	C	73-77%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	88-89%	D+	68-69%
B	83-87%	D	63-67%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	78-79%	F	below 60%

Participation in class discussions may raise your grade by one-half (e.g., from a B to a B+).

Please do not tell me at any point during the semester what grade you might need, whether to get into graduate school, keep your financial aid, or avoid academic probation.

### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS:**

- Week 1: Introduction; Graeco-Roman and Judaic backgrounds to Christianity
- Week 2: “Gospel” as a literary genre; the Synoptic problem; the gospels of Matthew and Mark
- Week 3: The “historical Jesus”
- Week 4: Midterm exam; Acts of the Apostles; Paul and his letters
- Week 5: Paul and his letters; “the catholic epistles”
- Week 6: The “catholic epistles”; Revelation; final exam

### **SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND EXAMS:**

- August 4: MIDTERM (100 points; multiple-choice and essay) on Harris, chapters 3-12; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
  
- August 20: FINAL EXAM (100 points; multiple-choice and essay). The multiple-choice portion of the exam is on Harris, chapters 13-20 and all of the New Testament texts except the gospels. The essay portion of the exam may be based on all assigned readings and lectures for the entire course.

NOTE: In fairness to others, I cannot allow students who leave the room during exams to return and resume writing. If this policy is likely to create difficulties for you, you may make necessary arrangements with the Testing Center.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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