

HRS 122 (GE Area C4)
“INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT”
SUMMER 2009
DR. NYSTROM
LIBRARY 53 (MTW 10:30-12:50)

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.

ATTENDANCE:

Although I expect that most students will watch lectures via streaming and archived video, everyone is welcome to attend class MTW 10:30-12:50 in Library 53. You will be required to come to campus only for the midterm and final exams. These exams will be given in Library 53 at 10:30 a.m. on June 22 and July 8. I will also arrange for alternative evening sessions for each exam on these days.

MAKE-UP POLICY:

Do not take this course if you anticipate being absent on the dates of the midterm and final exams. Make-ups for these exams will be given only if you can supply documentation of a very good reason for missing them.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office: 2024 Mendocino
E-mail: nystromb@csus.edu (please use this address and not the email function on SacCT)
Telephone: 278-5334
Office Hours: Library 53 before and after class

TEXTS:

S.L. Harris, *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction* (6th edition)
The New Testament of the Jerusalem Bible

GRADES:

Your course grade will be based on your midterm and final exam grades. Each of these exams is worth 100 points and will consist of two parts: multiple-choice (50 points; 25 two-point questions) 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%

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.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND EXAMS:

June 1:	Introduction; New Testament Backgrounds
June 2:	New Testament Backgrounds
June 3:	The Gospel Genre and Synoptic Problem
June 8:	The Gospels
June 9:	The Gospels
June 10:	The Gospels
June 15:	Gnosticism and Non-Canonical Gospels; The Historical Jesus
June 16:	The Historical Jesus
June 17:	Acts of the Apostles; Paul and his Letters

Note: For the midterm, you are responsible only for lectures up to and including June 16. The June 17 lecture will be covered on the final. The midterm has been scheduled for June 22 in order to give ATCS time to post the June 16 lecture and to give you additional time for study.

June 22:	Midterm (100 points; 50 points multiple choice questions and 50 points for the essay section). You are responsible for all lectures through June 16; Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; and Harris, chapters 3-12.
June 23:	Paul and his Letters
June 24:	Paul and his Letters

- June 29: The Late Pauline Tradition (Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus)
Catholic Epistles (Hebrews, James)
- June 30: Catholic Epistles (1 and 2 Peter, Jude)
- July 1: Catholic Epistles (1, 2, and 3 John)
- July 6: Revelation
The Making of the New Testament
- July 7: **Free Day for Study.** No lecture can be given on this day because ATCS is unable to make lectures available on SacCT until 24 hours after their live delivery.
- July 8: **Final Exam** (100 points; 50 points multiple choice questions and 50 points for essay section). Multiple-choice questions will be based exclusively on lectures given since (and including) June 17; all New Testament texts other than the Gospels; and Harris, chapters 13-20. The essay section will also be based on this material. The only exception is a possible question on the literary genres found in the New Testament (see “The Big Issues” below). In order to answer this question, you would need to discuss the “gospel” (covered prior to the midterm) as a literary genre.

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. In what ways are they similar? How do they differ?
4. 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 four genres of NT literature: gospel, acts, epistle, and apocalypse. What are the main characteristics of each of these genres (types) of literature? For what purpose/s was each employed by the writers of the NT?
3. Similarities and differences between the teachings of Jesus (as represented in the Synoptic Gospels) and the teachings of Paul.
4. The problems faced by Paul, how he dealt with them, and how his solutions reflect his theology.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES:

HRS 122 is a lecture/discussion course with no prerequisites. It may be applied to the HRS major requirements. It is also a GE course (Category C4).

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the campus policy on academic dishonesty at www.csus.edu/admbus/manual/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 for examinations should contact me during the first week of the semester.