CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office: 2024 Mendocino
Office Hours: MW 11-12, T 4-5, and by appointment
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Telephone: 278-5334

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

You may use another translation of the New Testament. I suggest that you stay away from the King James translation (which is 400 years old and written in archaic English) and from paraphrases (such as the Living Bible and the New Testament in Modern English), which are very “loose” translations.

ATTENDANCE:

Although I expect that most students will watch lectures via live-streaming and archived video, everyone is welcome to attend class Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. in ARC 1011. You will be required to come to campus only for the midterm and final exams. These exams will be given in ARC 1011 at 5:30 on March 29 and May 17.
**ALTERNATIVE EXAM DAYS/TIMES:**

In addition to the days/times for the midterm and final described above, I have arranged for alternative days/times for the midterm and final exams (rooms will be announced later):

Midterm: March 28 (M) 5:30  
March 30 (S) 5:30  
Final: May 16 (M) 5:15  
May 18 (W) 5:15

You do not need to sign up for an alternative exam session or inform me of your choice.

**Do not take this course if you cannot attend the scheduled exam sessions.**

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND EXAMS:**

January 25: Introduction; NT Backgrounds
February 1: NT Backgrounds; Genres of NT Literature
February 8: Making of the NT; The Gospel Genre and the Synoptic Problem

February 10-15: **Online Quiz #1** (15 points; 15 multiple-choice questions on the four gospels). Quiz is available 2/10 at 8:00 a.m. through 2/15 at 5:30 p.m. 12 minutes.

February 15: The Gospels
February 22: The Gospels
March 1: The Gospels; Gnosticism and Non-Canonical Gospels
March 8: Gnosticism and Non-Canonical Gospels; The Historical Jesus
March 15: The Historical Jesus
March 22: Spring Break
March 29: **Midterm** (100 points; 50 one-point multiple choice questions and 50-point essay section). You are responsible for all lectures; Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; and Harris, chapters 3-12. (See above for alternative sessions). Exam will be 1 hour and 45 minutes.

April 5: Acts of the Apostles; Paul
April 12: Paul
April 19: Paul
April 21-26: **Online Quiz #2** (15 points; 15 multiple-choice questions on Ephesians; 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Hebrews; James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; Revelation. Quiz is available 4/21 (8:00 a.m. through 4/26 at 5:30 p.m. 12 minutes.

April 26: Late Pauline Tradition; Catholic Epistles
May 3: Catholic Epistles
May 10: Catholic Epistles; Revelation
May 17:  **Final Exam** (100 points; 50 one-point multiple choice questions and one 50-point essay). Multiple-choice questions will be based on lectures since the midterm, all New Testament texts except the gospels, and Harris, chapters 13-20. The essay 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), which would require discussion of “gospel” (covered prior to the midterm) as a literary genre.

**TAKING THE ONLINE QUIZZES:**

It is very important to follow the instructions for the online quizzes. Before taking a quiz, be sure to click the “Instructions and Troubleshooting” button. It will take you a clear description of the quiz-taking procedure. **It is important to note that you must save your answers before the expiration of the 12-minute session and click the submit button before exiting the quiz. If you do not do so, SacCT will record your score as a zero.**

In fairness to the rest of the class, I cannot give second chances to students who do not follow the instructions.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that your internet connection is reliable. If your connection fails, I cannot give you a second chance to take a quiz. If you have any doubts about your connection it would be wise to take the quizzes at one of the computer labs on campus.**

**PRACTICE QUIZ:**

A no-credit practice quiz with questions unrelated to the course is available on our SacCT website. I strongly suggest that you take the practice quiz before taking the online quizzes.

**GRADES:**

Your course grade will be based on your scores on the midterm, final, and two online quizzes. The midterm and final exams are worth 100 points each and will consist of two parts: multiple-choice (50 points; 50 one-point questions) and essay (50 points). The online quizzes are worth 15 points (15 one-point questions) and are timed (12 minutes).

Grades will be based on the percentage you earn of the 230 points possible in the course:

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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. In what ways are they similar? How do they differ?
4. Sources for the "historical Jesus." What are they? What problems do they present to scholars who seek to reconstruct the life and teachings of the "historical Jesus"?
5. 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/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.