

# INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Fall 2009

RS315N (44545) & CC304C (32630)

Welch 3.502; TTh 2:00-3:30

## Goals of the Course

I hope this course will help you begin (or carry further) a lifelong interaction with the texts in the New Testament. They are among the fundamental religious texts of the world, and they are especially important in a western cultural context. There is no prerequisite for this course. By the end of the semester, the conscientious student will have read most of the New Testament as well as some other early Christian texts that were not included in the New Testament. We will survey the texts, the history of their production, the methods employed by scholars in understanding them, and conclusions that have been reached. In the process, I trust that you will also have a chance to reflect on the general nature of human religiosity.

## Requirements

**1. Class attendance and participation** is essential for you to gain the most from this course. Absences will hurt your grade.

**2. Reading.** During the semester you will have the opportunity to read quite a few early church texts, including most of those in the New Testament. The modern readings about the ancient texts have been chosen to help you understand the ancient texts better. Knowledge of both ancient and modern texts will be assumed in the exams.

**3. Paper.** There will be a few short writing assignments during classes. Outside of class, each student will write an analysis of a gospel text after going through the Daily Intelligencer. The purpose of the writing is for you to develop your critical thinking, and to engage in the process of interpretation. This is not a full research paper, but you will be expected to be familiar with issues discussed in class and in your reading.

**4. Exams.** There will be two exams during the semester plus a final exam.

## Required Texts

*HarperCollins Study Bible*, Including Apocryphal Deuterocanonical Books (Student Edition) NRSV. HarperCollins. ISBN 978-0-06-0786630.

Bart Ehrman, *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0195369342.

iClicker (a classroom response device, not a book). ISBN 9780716779391.

## Optional Texts

Carol Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, eds., *Women's Bible Commentary*. Expanded edition; Westminster John Knox, 1998. ISBN 9780664257811.

James L. May, ed., *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*. Revised edition; HarperCollins, 2000. ISBN 978-0060655488.

## Grading

**1. Letter grades** indicate the following evaluations.

A: exceptional work, great!

B: solid work, well done.

C: some problems, needs more accuracy or greater depth.

D: serious problems, but effort made.

F: unacceptable university work.

**2. Plus/minus grading.** I use it. It is possible to earn a maximum total of 490 points in the course. See below for details on where points come from.

**3. Attendance and Participation.** Students will need an iClicker (available at the bookstore). We will use this in every class to record responses to questions and attendance. You earn 1 pt for each session you attend, and during each session there will be an average of about 3 pts. for participation.

**4. All work must be completed** by the time of the final exam. No incompletes will be given except in extreme circumstances (e.g., serious illness, death in the family). No additional extra credit assignments will be given at the end of the semester.

**5. Honesty** is a great virtue. I report all cases of academic dishonesty to the dean of students office. Academic dishonesty on any graded assignment will result in no points for that assignment, and perhaps a failing grade for the whole class. Dishonesty includes any kind of cheating; if you are unsure about the exact definition you should consult the General Information Catalogue (scroll way down to 11-802).

### Where do points come from?

Students can earn a total of approximately 490 points in this course. The exact amount possible will depend on how many participation activities there are, and on how often attendance is taken. The point amounts for the other assignments are stable.

Students who collect 90% or higher of the points possible will earn an A+/A/A- in the course (approx. 441 points or higher). Students who collect 80-90% will earn a B+/B/B- in the course. 70-80% = C range. And so on...

Here are the assignments in the class and their point values.

<b>Points</b>	<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Percent of grade</b>
10	Syllabus quiz	2%
20	Map assignments (2 @ 10 pts)	4%
80	Exam 1	16%
80	Exam 2	16%
100	Exam final	21%
15	DI internship assignment	3%
15	DI staff writer assignment	3%
70	DI gospel paper (= 650-750 word paper)	14%
100	Attendance & participation (approximate)	21%
<b>490</b>	<b>Total possible</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Disability Services

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259. Please let the professor know about any arrangements that will assist you in your learning.

### Contact info for Teaching Team

*Prof. Steve Friesen:* Burdine 418, Friesen@mail.utexas.edu. Wednesdays, 10-12, 2-3.

*Mr. Stephen Dove:* Burdine 416, Dove@mail.utexas.edu. Tuesdays 3:30-5:30.

*Ms. Shari Silzell:* Burdine TBA, Silzell@att.net. Mondays, 12-2.