
The New Testament
RELS 100
Spring 2022
Online



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Course Description: An introduction to the historical, literary, and cultural approaches to the New Testament with a view toward understanding and interpretation.

Office Hours: I am available every weekday via phone and teleconference; just email me and let me know.

Communication: The best way to reach me is via email. I make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours. Students are responsible for checking their WKU email account once daily in case there are announcements pertaining to class.

Academic Integrity: Regarding *cheating*, WKU states, “No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination . . .” In this course, specific examples of unauthorized assistance include giving or receiving quiz or exam questions from another student—including students in previous and subsequent sections of this course. Students must take quizzes and exams by themselves. The assigned ancient texts and class lectures are all you need to complete the exams, but if you look at any other source, be sure to cite it. In other words, do your best to avoid *plagiarism*, which the University defines as “any use of another writer’s words, concepts, or sequence of ideas without acknowledging that writer properly.” *Violations almost always result in either a zero on the assignment or an automatic F in the course.*

Accommodations: In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from SARC.

Required Text:

Amy-Jill Levine and Mark Zvi Brettler, editors. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 2nd ed., New Revised Standard Version. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. FREE via the library:
https://saalck-wku.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01SAA_WESTKY/1ot7kmv/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9780190461874

Recommended Text:

Patrick Gray, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to the New Testament*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. FREE via the library:
https://saalck-wku.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01SAA_WESTKY/1ghlf28/alma9912812446302637

Learning Outcomes:

(1) Use the basic formal elements, techniques, concepts, and vocabulary of the discipline of New Testament (NT) Studies. (2) Distinguish the various ancient literary genres and subgenres that are found among the books of the NT, and utilize diverse and appropriate strategies for reading these genres in their historical setting. (3) Demonstrate how the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the NT books have influenced these books. (4) Evaluate how the NT books have served as one important factor in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts. (5) Evaluate how the NT books have contributed to the understanding of enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.

Assessment:

Three Quizzes	25%	by February 11, March 25, and April 22
Essay Exam 1	25%	by Friday, February 25
Essay Exam 2	25%	by Friday, April 1
Essay Exam 3	25%	by Thursday, May 5

Quizzes are mostly true/false and multiple choice questions covering basic facts from assigned readings and lectures. Quizzes will be posted on Blackboard, and students will have one week to complete them.

Exams will be essay questions covering a broad topic from each unit of the course. Exams will be posted on Blackboard, and students will have approximately one week to complete them.

Due Dates: Given the pandemic, I have tried to make due dates flexible, so there is a one-week window to complete quizzes and exams. I hope that everyone will be able to keep up. Having said that, if you feel overwhelmed, become sick, or find yourself responsible for caring for someone who is sick, please know that I will do my best to accommodate your needs. Just get in touch with me and be honest, and I'm confident we can work something out.

Academic Study of Religion: According to the University Catalog, "The mission of the religious studies program is to promote the academic study of religion at WKU and in the Commonwealth of Kentucky." Accordingly, this course uncovers, as established by critical scholarship, the human history behind texts that Christians have deemed sacred. In these endeavors, the course does not presume any religious affiliation on the part of the students. Neither does the course intend to privilege any one set of religious (or non-religious) beliefs over any other.

Schedule: This is an asynchronous course, yet to provide structure for students, the schedule is set up like a MWF course. I recommend completing each day's assigned reading before watching the lectures. Readings that are *not* found in the canonical New Testament (for example, the Diatessaron on Friday, Feb. 11) will be posted on Blackboard.

Books of the Bible divide into chapters, and chapters divide into verses; for example, Matthew 2:3 refers to the book of Matthew, chapter two, verse three, which reads: "When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him."

The topics and assigned readings are listed below. There is an **accompanying video lecture** for almost every day of class, so be sure to click each date on Blackboard, and that will take you to the lectures.

PART 1: JESUS AND THE GOSPELS

Wednesday, Jan. 19	A Brief History of Ancient Israel <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , 3–24: Helen Bond, "Social and Political Milieu"
Friday, Jan. 21	Mark 1:1–8:26 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , 95–114: Michael Bird, "Gospel of Mark"

- Monday, Jan. 24 Mark 8:27–16:20
Jewish Annotated, 680–82: Gideon Bohak, “Jewish Miracle Workers ...”
- Wednesday, Jan. 26 Matthew 1:1–14:36
Cambridge Companion, 115–33: Paul Foster, “Gospel of Matthew”
- Friday, Jan. 28 Matthew 15:1–28:20
Jewish Annotated, 619–22: Lawrence Schiffman, “Pharisees”
Joshua Garroway, “[Pharisees](#),” *Bible Odyssey*
- Monday, Jan. 31 Luke 1:1–10:42
Cambridge Companion, 134–54: M. Parsons, “The Third Gospel ...”
- Wednesday, Feb. 2 Luke 11:1–24:53
Use <http://bible.oremus.org/> to search for “son of God,” “sons of God,” and “children of God.” What does ‘son of God’ mean? How does Luke’s use of the term compare with Old Testament parallels?
- Friday, Feb. 4 re-read Matthew 9:1–8//Mark 2:1–12//Luke 5:17–26 (see Blackboard)
Jewish Annotated, 1–8: Levine and Brettler, “Gospels and Acts”
- Monday, Feb. 7 John 1:1–11:57
Cambridge Companion, 155–75: George Parsenios, “Gospel of John”
- Wednesday, Feb. 9 John 12:1–21:25
Jewish Annotated, 596–99: Joshua Garroway, “*Ioudaios*”
Adele Reinhartz, “[Ioudaios](#),” *Bible Odyssey*
- Friday, Feb. 11 Tatian’s *Diatessaron*: one Gospel “out of the four” (see Blackboard)
Barker on the Dura Europos Parchment (see Blackboard)
QUIZ 1 will be due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.
- Monday, Feb. 14 The Quest of the Historical Jesus (PowerPoint on Blackboard)
Cambridge Companion, 50–72: Sarah Rollens and Anthony Le Donne, “The Historical Jesus”

Wednesday, Feb. 16 Messianic Pretenders according to Josephus
Jewish Annotated, 717–21: Jack Pastor, “Josephus”

Friday, Feb. 18 [Gospel of Thomas](#)

by Friday, Feb. 25 **SUBMIT EXAM 1 TO BLACKBOARD BY 11:59 P.M.**

PART 2: PAUL AND HIS OPPONENTS

Monday, Feb. 28 1 Thessalonians 1:1–5:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:1–3:18
Cambridge Companion, 176–87: Nijay Gupta, “1–2 Thessalonians”

Wednesday, March 2 Galatians 1:1–6:18; Genesis 17:1–27
Jewish Annotated, 633–45: Paula Fredriksen, “Paul and Judaism;”
Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, “Judaizers, Jewish Christians, and Others;”
Meir Ben Sahar, “Jewish Views of Gentiles.”

Friday, March 4 1 Corinthians 1:1–16:24; Acts 1:15–26
Cambridge Companion, 188–217: Alexandra Brown, “1–2 Corinthians”

Monday, March 7 Philippians 1:1–4:23
Cambridge Companion, 241–60: Jerry Sumney, “Prison Epistles”

Wednesday, March 9 Philemon 1–25; 1 Corinthians 7:1–40

Friday, March 11 Romans 1:1–16:27
Cambridge Companion, 218–40: Matthew Novenson, “Romans/Galatians”

Mon.–Fri., March 14–18 **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS**

Monday, March 21 Colossians 1:1–4:17; Ephesians 1:1–6:24
Jewish Annotated, 608–11: Michael Satlow, “Marriage and Divorce”

Wednesday, March 23 1 Timothy 1:1–6:21; *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (see Blackboard)
Cambridge Companion, 261–73: Ben White, “1–2 Timothy, Titus”

Friday, March 25 **QUIZ 2 will be due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.**

by Friday, April 1 **SUBMIT EXAM 2 TO BLACKBOARD BY 11:59 P.M.**

PART 3: DIVERSITY WITHIN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Monday, April 4 Acts 17:16–34 plus Greek & Roman philosophers on Blackboard
Cambridge Companion, 134–54: Mikeal Parsons, “Third Gospel and Acts”

Wednesday, April 6 Hebrews 1:1–13:25
Cambridge Companion, David Moffitt: “Hebrews”

Friday, April 8 James 1:1–5:20; Jude 1–25
Cambridge Companion, 290–97, 302–5: Patrick Hartin, “General Epistles”

Monday, April 11 1 Peter 1:1–5:7; 2 Peter 1:1–3:12
Cambridge Companion, 297–302, 305–8: Patrick Hartin, “General Epistles”

Wednesday, April 13 1 John 1:1–3 John 15
Cambridge Companion, 308–12: Patrick Hartin, “General Epistles”

Friday, April 15 Letters from Ignatius of Antioch (selections posted on Blackboard)
Candida Moss, “[Ignatius of Antioch](#),” *Bible Odyssey*

Monday, April 18 Revelation 1:1–22:21
Cambridge Companion, 313–30: Lesley Baynes, “Revelation”

Wednesday, April 20 [Apocryphon of John](#) (link here and on Blackboard)

Friday, April 22 *Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (links here and on Blackboard)
Jewish Annotated, 604–8: Ross Kraemer, “Jewish Family Life ...”

QUIZ 3 will be due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.

Monday, April 25 Canonization of the New Testament (handout on Blackboard)
Cambridge Companion, 333–47: Julia Snyder, “Canon of the NT”

Wednesday, April 27 *Jewish Annotated*, 759–63: A.-J. Levine, “Bearing False Witness;”
763–67: Ed Kessler, “New Testament and Jewish-Christian Relations”

by Thursday, May 5 **SUBMIT EXAM 3 TO BLACKBOARD BY 11:59 P.M.**

Library Resources Online:

Aharoni, Yohanan, et al. *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*. 3rd ed. London: Macmillan, 1993. (available online)
Berlin, Adele, editor. *Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

(articles are available via the Oxford Reference Premium Online database)

Cross, F. L., and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 3rd ed. Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1997. (articles are available via the Oxford Reference Premium Online
database)

Curtis, Adrian, and Herbert G. May. *Oxford Bible Atlas*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
BS 630.O96 (available online)

Hornblower, Simon, and Anthony Spawforth, editors. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd rev. ed. Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 2012. (articles are available via Oxford Reference Premium Online)

Other Online Resources:

Bible Odyssey (Society of Biblical Literature): <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/>

Early Christian writings (canonical and extracanonical): <http://earlychristianwritings.com/>

Early Jewish writings (canonical and extracanonical): <http://earlyjewishwritings.com/>

Mark Goodacre, *New Testament Gateway*: <http://www.ntgateway.com/>

Oremus Bible Browser (concordance): <http://bible.oremus.org/>

Bible Gateway (lots of translations): www.biblegateway.com

WKU is committed to supporting faculty, staff, and students by upholding the University’s
Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy and Discrimination and Harassment Policy:

<https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>

<https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/251.pdf>