



## RELS 100: New Testament

Fall 2024

Prof. TK Wallace

### Instructor Information

Prof. TK Wallace

E-mail: [tommi.waters@wku.edu](mailto:tommi.waters@wku.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment (all times are in CST)

### Course Description

This course will introduce students to the academic study of the New Testament by looking at the history, context, and rhetoric of the New Testament as well as its current relevance to contemporary events and world relations. We will begin by exploring the historical situation of Christianity, including a brief overview of Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. We will then discuss the Gospels, the life of Jesus, and the early apostles before moving on to the letters of Paul and other apostles. We will learn about the tools of literary criticism and scholarly study of primary texts by asking questions such as: why did the author write this book? who was the audience? what events and religious and/or political movements were happening at the time? when was this book written? who wrote this book?

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

- 1. Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the Arts and Humanities.** This course will utilize the basic formal elements, techniques, concepts, and vocabulary of the discipline of New Testament Studies.
- 2. Distinguish between various kinds of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.** This course will distinguish the various ancient literary genres and subgenres that are found among the books of the New Testament and utilize diverse and appropriate strategies for reading these genres in their historical setting.
- 3. Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.** This course will demonstrate how the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the New Testament books have influenced these books.
- 4. Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.** This course will evaluate how the New Testament books have served as one important factor in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.
- 5. Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.** This course will evaluate how the New Testament books have contributed to the understanding of enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.

The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning](#) webpage.

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Weekly lecture videos created by the instructor
- Discussion board for students to ask content questions and receive faculty engagement and feedback
- Weekly announcements or e-mails from the instructor

### **Required Textbooks and Material**

- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*. 4th ed. ISBN: 978-0195289602
  - 4<sup>th</sup> edition is recommended for content and price, 5<sup>th</sup> edition is also acceptable
  - A PDF version of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition will be available for students on Blackboard
- Additional readings supplied by the instructor and/or posted to the Blackboard site

### **Grades**

Assessment	Percentage
Final Exam	50%
Quizzes	50%

### **Grading Scale\***

Final Grade	Letter Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

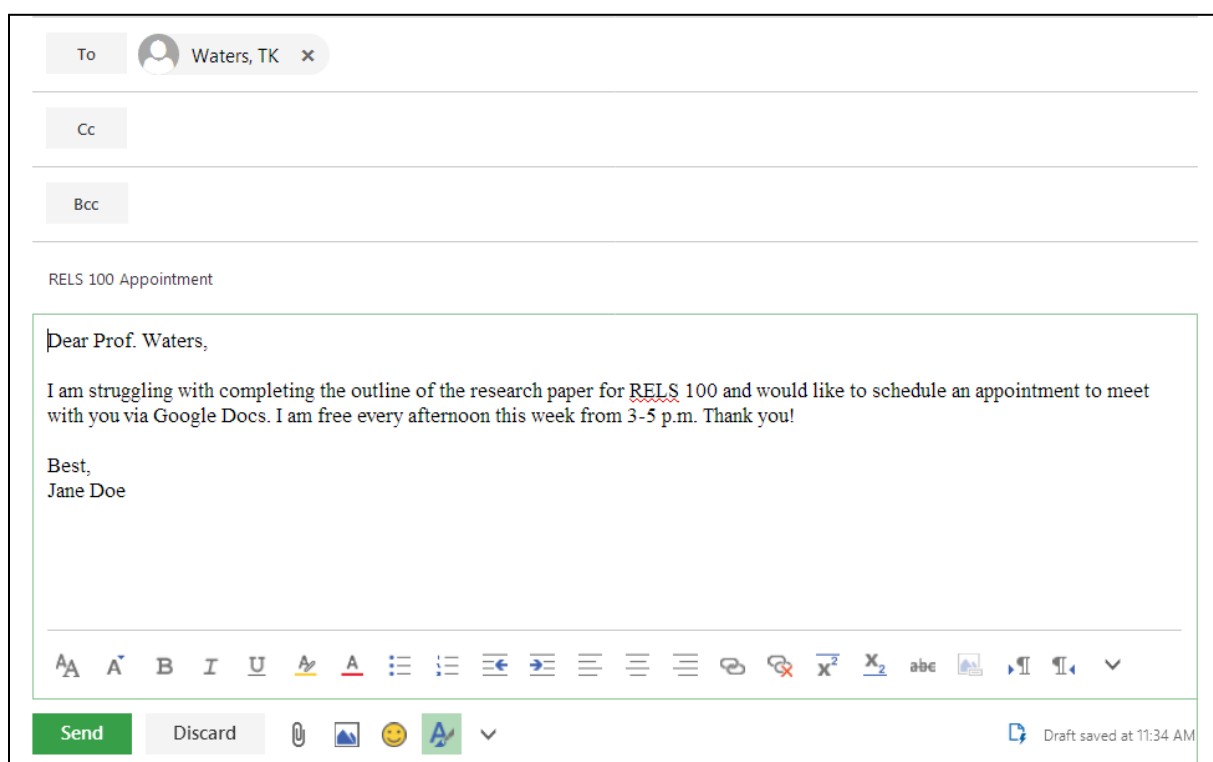
\*Final grades will not be rounded up automatically. At the instructor's discretion, a student may have their grade rounded up to the next letter grade (for example, an 89.1 to a 90) if they have demonstrated exceptional participation, work ethic, attendance and promptness, etc.

### **Communication and E-mail Etiquette**

Since this is an online course, communication should be frequent between students and the instructor. There are a few ways this will take place in this course. The most reliable way to contact me is through e-mail, which I will check and respond to frequently.

E-mails to the instructor should be properly written. Please use correct grammar and spelling. When addressing the e-mail, please write “Dear Prof. Wallace” or “Prof. Wallace,” not “Hey, Prof. Wallace” or “Yo dawg,” etc. The subject line of the e-mail must include the course number (RELS 100) and the topic of your inquiry, concern, comment, etc. E-mails are automatically sorted by subject line into a folder for the course, so only e-mails within that folder will be answered—be sure to use the course number to ensure your e-mail is sorted into the folder for the course. E-mails that request information already explained in the syllabus may not be answered. E-mails will be responded to within 48 hours during the week. Any e-mails sent over the weekend will be responded to as soon as possible on the following Monday. Do not assume the instructor will receive an e-mail before a class, test, or meeting if these guidelines are not followed and 48 hours is not given.

### EXAMPLE E-MAIL:



The screenshot shows an email draft in a web interface. The 'To' field contains 'Waters, TK' with a profile icon and a close button. The 'Cc' and 'Bcc' fields are empty. The subject line is 'RELS 100 Appointment'. The email body contains the following text: 'Dear Prof. Waters,' followed by a paragraph 'I am struggling with completing the outline of the research paper for RELS 100 and would like to schedule an appointment to meet with you via Google Docs. I am free every afternoon this week from 3-5 p.m. Thank you!', and a closing 'Best, Jane Doe'. Below the text is a rich text editor toolbar with various icons for text formatting (bold, italic, underline, color, background color), list creation, indentation, link, unlink, insert, and other functions. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Send' (green), 'Discard' (grey), and icons for attachments, images, emojis, and a dropdown menu. A status bar at the bottom right indicates 'Draft saved at 11:34 AM'.

To Waters, TK x

Cc

Bcc

RELS 100 Appointment

Dear Prof. Waters,

I am struggling with completing the outline of the research paper for RELS 100 and would like to schedule an appointment to meet with you via Google Docs. I am free every afternoon this week from 3-5 p.m. Thank you!

Best,  
Jane Doe

Send Discard Draft saved at 11:34 AM

Students should check their university e-mail frequently, as this is the primary way the instructor will communicate with the class and individual students. Students are encouraged to check their e-mail at the beginning of each week, as announcements will typically be added on Monday mornings, and every 24 hours throughout the week. Students are responsible for any changes made to the class schedule, homework assignments, etc. that are explained in e-mails from the instructor. Note that students *must* have access to their university e-mail. Please contact WKU’s IT Department (<https://www.wku.edu/its/>) if you are unable to access your TopperMail and/or Blackboard

## Requirements

### Technology

Since this is an online course, students must have reliable access to a computer and internet. This course will take place through Blackboard, and final assignments must be submitted in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format, NOT .pages, a Google Doc share, or in the body of the submission text. Blackboard can be accessed through WKU at <http://wku.blackboard.com>. If you do not have Microsoft Word, it is available through WKU's IT department website.

In the event of technology issues that preclude you from submitting an assignment on time, please notify the instructor immediately, including your original submission (if the issue is with a paper, essay, etc.) in your e-mail. You may also contact the [WKU IT department](http://www.wku.edu/it/helpdesk/) to resolve the issue (<https://www.wku.edu/it/helpdesk/>). It is recommended that you type your essays in a Word document to copy/paste to the Blackboard submission text to avoid Blackboard losing your work due to internet errors.

### Homework and Readings

Students are responsible for thoroughly watching and taking notes on assigned short lectures, videos, etc. that will be posted to the [RELS 100 YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2c3DRSvt5jaoYaMPtmo7Uw) (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2c3DRSvt5jaoYaMPtmo7Uw>). For some modules, students will watch a lecture video with background information about the module topic before reading the assigned texts. These lecture videos as well as other themed or topic videos (such as "The Synoptic Gospels" video) will be approximately 20 minutes long. Context videos will be much shorter at about 5-10 minutes long and are simply to provide a bit more detail to texts after students have read and engaged with them on their own.

Each week, students will be reading one or more primary texts from the New Testament or other Church writings. Students are responsible for reading the entire text assigned before watching the context video. Students are encouraged, but not required, to reread or skim the text again after watching the video as well.

### Final Exam

There will be a final exam in the course to be taken during finals week. This exam will be available to take on Blackboard and will be open-book and open-note. Since all Colonnade courses must have a written component that is uploaded at the end of the semester to ensure courses are meeting learning objectives and outcomes, the final exam will include a short essay in addition to the multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and other objective questions. The final exam will be open for one week for students to take the exam on Blackboard, but they must finish the exam in one sitting after they start it.

### Quizzes

Students will take quizzes through Blackboard most weeks. Quizzes are not intended to be stressful for students—they are meant to review important material, to aid the instructor in

ensuring students are understanding the material, to ensure students are keeping up with the readings and videos, and to prepare students for the final exam. Quizzes will typically be 5-10 questions long and composed of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, and multiple answer questions. There will be 11 quizzes throughout the semester and the lowest grade will be dropped.

The answers to quiz questions are immediately released after the quiz has been submitted. For this reason, students cannot retake quizzes. When taking a quiz, be sure to have reliable internet access and take the quiz on a computer (not a smartphone). Additionally, be careful not to refresh the page, close the page, etc.

### Discussion Boards

Discussion boards will not be required to earn grades in the course but will be available to facilitate student discussion and engagement. If you have questions, thoughts, concerns, etc. about the module for the week, post in the respective discussion board to start a conversation with your peers. The instructor will check the discussion boards on Mondays and Thursdays to respond to new student posts about content.

### **Late Work and Grading**

Grades will be updated weekly in the Blackboard grade center. All work will typically be graded within two weeks of the due date but may take up to two weeks. In the event that work cannot be graded within this time frame, the instructor will notify the students as soon as possible.

The syllabus schedule below is split up with each lesson intended to be completed in a week. It is *highly* recommended to keep up with the syllabus schedule to avoid having excessive work at the end of the semester as late work will not be accepted. However, there are two hard due dates by which point that work must be submitted:

- Quizzes 1-11: Monday, December 2 at 12 p.m./noon
- Final Exam: Thursday, December 5 at 12 p.m./noon

Assignments must be turned in by the time and date listed in the syllabus and on Blackboard. Late assignments will not be accepted. Once a zero is entered for a missing assignment, that grade is permanent.

### **Class Etiquette**

We are a learning community which means that in all communication with the class, we should always be respectful to the entire class: the instructor, classmates, and ourselves. Class discussion should be civilized and respectful to everyone and relevant to the topic we are discussing. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but should also treat the rest of the class fairly and respectfully with regard to race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Do not use hurtful language, slurs, etc., use

gender-inclusive language (i.e. "humankind" instead of "mankind"), and use whatever name and pronouns classmates request. There is a zero-tolerance policy for hate speech of any kind in this class.

### **Non-Confessional Approach to the Course**

Non-confessional study of religion is how we study religion in religion courses at secular universities. This does not mean that students have to get rid of their religious beliefs, change them, or have any certain beliefs; it also does not mean that outside of class time and classwork the students cannot study what they are reading or learning confessionally. The point is that in this course we must study religion by focusing on what the texts tell us about the history, culture, beliefs, and so on of this early Christian movement using the tools of academic study without imposing our own religious or personal beliefs—whatever they may be—on the material. In this course, students must use non-confessional language in all course assignments. Students will be issued a reminder the first time they do not use non-confessional language in an assignment, then will not be able to earn over half of the possible grade on subsequent assignments where they do not use non-confessional language.

### **Academic Integrity/Dishonesty/Plagiarism Policy**

Please refer to <http://www.wku.edu/judicialaffairs/process-for-academic-dishonesty.php> for WKU's full policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism. In short, no plagiarism or cheating will be permitted in this course and will result in a zero for the assignment and possibly a failing grade in the course. By remaining in the class, students certify that they understand what plagiarism is and will be held accountable for any plagiarism that may occur on their part, whether intentional or accidental.

### **Students with Disabilities**

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](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

### **Free Services for Students**

WKU provides students with many free services to aid in their academic success. Helm and Cravens Libraries offer books for check-out with a WKU ID card and articles and journals that can be accessed online. In addition, WKU provides free tutoring for students in many classes and general study skills at The Learning Center (TLC). TLC is located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DSU-2141. TLC provides free tutoring services that empower students to achieve academic success. Trained peer tutors are available to review course content, answer questions, and demonstrate effective study strategies. TLC offers individual appointments and group sessions (PASS) for hundreds of undergraduate courses. For more information or to make an appointment, visit [www.wku.edu/tlc](http://www.wku.edu/tlc). Cherry

Hall houses The Writing Center on the first floor (CH 123) where students can get help with academic writing skills, and there is an additional location in the Helm Library Reference Room.

The WKU Center for Literacy is located in Gary A. Ransdell Hall 2066. At the Center for Literacy, students can receive assistance in developing strategies to help reading/studying to learn and writing for evidence and argument. The Center for Literacy offers both individual and small group sessions throughout the semester. More information about the WKU Center for Literacy can be found on the website: <http://www.wku.edu/literacycenter/>

WKU's Counseling Center offers free services for students and can be found in Potter Hall 409. The Counseling Center offers individual counseling, group counseling, and even has a therapy dog. They are there to talk to whether you are suffering from severe mental illness or distress or simply want to talk to someone because your semester is overwhelming.

### **Title IX Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <<https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at <[https://wku.edu/policies/hr\\_policies/2040\\_discrimination\\_harassment\\_policy.pdf](https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf)>.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, (270)745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, (270)745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, (270)745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at (270)745-3159.

### **Inclusion Statement**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to ensuring all members of our campus community have access to equitable and inclusive learning, working, and living environments. At the heart of our mission, we seek to provide holistic education and employment experiences that prepare students, faculty, and staff to become effective scholars, contributors, and leaders in our diverse and evolving communities. Consistent with our campus purpose statement and creed, this classroom will be a respectful space, welcoming all sexes, races, ages, national origins, ethnicities, gender identities/labels/expressions, intellectual and physical abilities, sexual orientations, faith/non-faith perspectives, income levels and socio-economic classes, political ideologies, educational backgrounds, primary languages, family statuses, military experiences, cognitive styles, and communication styles. If

at any time during this course you are excluded or feel a sense of alienation from the course content, please feel free to contact me privately without fear of reprisal.

## Land Acknowledgement Statement

The history of our community and land gives us the opportunity to recognize, respect, and appreciate our place within that history. Western Kentucky University (WKU) honors and acknowledges the Indigenous peoples' land on which this University was built. All land in the state of Kentucky was once Indigenous territory, which is why it is our duty to acknowledge that WKU exists on Native land. This particular region of Kentucky was home to both the Shawnee (Shawandasse Tula) and Cherokee East (ᏌᏍᏊᏚᏉᏯ Tsalaguwetiyi) tribes.

We also honor and acknowledge the former residents of Jonesville. According to the Jonesville History Project, “Jonesville was a predominantly African American community in Bowling Green, Kentucky, that was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the expansion of the WKU campus. This incident echoed a pattern across the country where the power of eminent domain was utilized to seize property from minority communities for large public works projects under the guise of urban revitalization.”

## FOR DUAL CREDIT STUDENTS

Your climb to greater heights as a Western Kentucky University Hilltopper starts in this course as a Dual Credit student. At WKU, our academic programs are designed to provide you with an education that is relevant to the world around you. During this course, you will engage in experiential learning and applied-research opportunities, all while working alongside an expert faculty member who is dedicated to helping you achieve your goals. We want you to continue to support you on your climb to the top after high school graduation, too, and encourage you to apply for admission to WKU during your senior year. If you have any questions about the full-time Hilltopper experience or the admissions process, please reach out to the Office of Admissions at 270-745-2551 or by email at [admission@wku.edu](mailto:admission@wku.edu).



## Class Schedule

### UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS

- **Lesson 1: Introduction to the New Testament**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read syllabus
    - Watch “What Is the New Testament?” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 1 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 2: Introduction to the Gospels and the Gospel of Mark**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Watch “What Are the Gospels?” video
    - Read the Gospel of Mark
    - Watch “Gospel of Mark: Context” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 2 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 3: The Gospels of Matthew and Luke**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read the Gospel of Matthew
    - Read the Gospel of Luke
    - Watch “Gospel of Matthew: Context” video
    - Watch “Gospel of Luke: Context” video
    - Watch “The Synoptic Gospels” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 3 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 4: The Gospel of John and the Historical Jesus**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read the Gospel of John
    - Read Crossan, *Excavating Jesus* Introduction
    - Watch “Gospel of John: Context” video
    - Watch “Who Was Jesus?” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 4 (50 pts.)

### UNIT 2: THE APOSTLES AND PAULINE EPISTLES

- **Lesson 5: The Book of Acts and the Spread of Christianity**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read “Introduction to the Book of Acts” in *New Oxford Annotated Bible*
    - Read the Book of Acts
    - Watch “The Spread of Christianity” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 5 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 6: Introduction to the Pauline Letters and Romans**

- Readings and Videos
  - Watch “Who Was Paul?” video
  - Read the Letter to the Romans
  - Watch “Romans: Context” video
- **Lesson 7: Letters to the Corinthians**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read 1 Corinthians
    - Read 2 Corinthians
    - Watch “Letters to the Corinthians: Context”
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 6 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 8: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read Galatians
    - Read Ephesians
    - Read Philippians
    - Read Colossians
    - Watch “Pauline Letters, Pt. 1: Context” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 7 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 9: 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Philemon**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read 1 Thessalonians
    - Read 2 Thessalonians
    - Read Philemon
    - Watch “Pauline Letters, Pt. 2: Context” video
- **Lesson 10: Pastoral Epistles**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Watch “Hot Topics in the Pastoral Epistles” video
    - Read 1 Timothy
    - Read 2 Timothy
    - Read Titus
    - Watch “Pastoral Epistles: Context” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 8 (50 pts.)

### **UNIT 3: EPISTLARY, APOCALYPTIC, AND APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

- **Lesson 11: Sermons and General Letters of the New Testament, Pt. 1**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read Hebrews
    - Read James
    - Read Jude

- Watch “Hebrews: Context” video
  - Watch “General Letters, Pt. 1: Context” video
- Assessments and Activities
  - Complete Quiz 9 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 12: General Letters, Pt. 2: 1 & 2 Peter**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read 1 Peter
    - Read 2 Peter
    - Watch “General Letters, Pt. 2: Context” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 10 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 13: Johannine Letters, Revelation, and Apocalyptic Literature**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Read 1 John
    - Read 2 John
    - Read 3 John
    - Watch “Johannine Letters: Context” video
    - Watch “Jewish Apocalyptic Literature” video
    - Read the Book of Revelation
    - Watch “Book of Revelation: Context” video
  - Assessments and Activities
    - Complete Quiz 11 (50 pts.)
- **Lesson 14: New Testament Apocrypha**
  - Readings and Videos
    - Watch “Apocryphal Literature and the New Testament” video
    - Read Gospel of Thomas
    - Read Infancy Gospel of Thomas (New Testament Apocrypha PDF, pp. 281-283)
  - Assessments and Activities
    - **December 2: All Quizzes Due at 12 p.m./noon (500 pts.)**
- **Lesson 15: Finals Week**
  - Assessments and Activities
    - **December 5: Complete Final Exam by 12 p.m./noon (500 pts.)**

Disclaimer: changes to the schedule and syllabus may be made at the instructor’s discretion. Students will be notified of changes via a Blackboard announcement at least four days in advance. The date above the course schedule will be changed to reflect the last update and the updated syllabus will be posted on Blackboard with an announcement. All course material needed for a module/lesson will be posted to Blackboard by 11:59 a.m. on Monday the week before the module is due.

## Important Dates

Classes Begin

August 19

Last Day to Drop/Add

Fall Break

Thanksgiving Break

Final Examinations

Final Grades Due

August 26

October 7-8

November 27-29

December 2-5

Tuesday, December 10 (noon)

### Grade Keeper

Assessment	Possible Points	Student Points
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>500</b>	
<b>Quizzes*</b>	<b>500</b>	
Quiz #1	50	
Quiz #2	50	
Quiz #3	50	
Quiz #4	50	
Quiz #5	50	
Quiz #6	50	
Quiz #7	50	
Quiz #8	50	
Quiz #9	50	
Quiz #10	50	
Quiz #11	50	
Course Total:	1000	

\*Note that the lowest quiz grade will be dropped, which will make each quiz worth 40 points.