

RE 201 (Fall 2002)  
Introduction to the New Testament



Michelangelo, Pieta

**I. TEACHING TEAM**

Instructor: Michel Desjardins  
Office: Woods 5-107  
Phone: 884-0710, ext. 3323 (office); 886-0386 (home)  
Email: mdesjard@wlu.ca

Teaching Assistant: Lisa Poultney  
Email: lpoultne@wlu.ca

**II. OFFICE HOURS**

Mondays and Wednesdays 4:30-6:00 pm, and by appointment

**III. CLASS TIMES AND LOCATION**

Mondays & Wednesdays 2:30-3:50 pm  
Woods 4-110 (+ extra Wednesday tutorial room S 101)

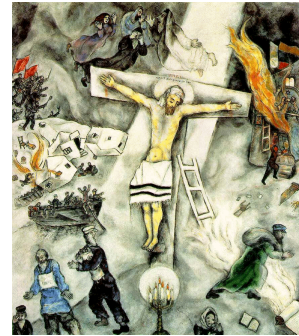
**IV. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND FORMAT**

This course is an introduction to the New Testament literature itself and to academic approaches to that literature. Classes will be a mix of lectures (Monday, part of Wednesday) and small-group tutorial discussions (Wednesday). The lectures will examine the NT documents within the historical context of the first two centuries, highlighting their distinctive literary and religious features. Tutorials will provide opportunities for close reading of selected passages and for developing interpretive skills. No previous familiarity with the NT or with scriptural interpretation is expected. I would hope that you come away from this course having read the entire NT, and with an appreciation for each work's defining characteristics. I would also hope that you come to recognize the distinctive voices that we all bring to interpreting what is arguably the most significant literary corpus in Canadian culture.

V. **READINGS** (available at the WLU Bookstore)

A Bible, preferably the New Revised Standard Version, but some other versions are also acceptable, such as the New Jerusalem Bible, the New American Bible and the New International Version. The WLU bookstore has at least two editions of the NRSV in stock, including the user-friendly *The NRSV Harper Collins Study Bible*.

Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. [The library will have the 1<sup>st</sup> ed on reserve.]



Chagall, The White Crucifixion

VI. **COURSE EXPECTATIONS, REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

- 1 Familiarity with the issues raised in the NT texts and with Ehrman's *The New Testament*. This course will be more meaningful to you if you make the time to read as much as you can from both of these sources. The Midterm and Final Examinations will expect that you've read the sections recommended each week on this course syllabus. Take the time before each session to prepare the "Readings" in the Course Outline below.
- 2 Tutorial attendance. Tutorials provide the opportunity for you to address, in a more intimate setting, problems and questions which arise in the readings and lectures. Most of all, they are a "practicum" where you learn to read the NT texts from academic perspectives. If you become comfortable with what happens in the tutorials, you can expect to do well in the course. We encourage you to prepare for the tutorials by reading the assigned NT passage before each session, preferably more than once, thinking about what the author is trying to say, and jotting down some of your ideas. Starting in Week 2, you will meet weekly in tutorial groups, during the final hour of the Wednesday class. One group will be facilitated by the instructor in the lecture room (Woods 4-110), the other by the Teaching Assistant, Lisa Poultney, in Science 101.
- 3 Journals (worth 30% of the final course grade). Starting in Week 3 and running through Week 11 (excluding Week 5, when tutorials will be replaced by a Midterm), we'll expect you to submit a written journal entry at the beginning of each tutorial session. Your tutorial leader will assess your journals based on the quality of your critical engagement with the ideas. There are no "right" and "wrong" answers; there *are* thoughtful and sloppy contributions.

We're asking for 6 submissions (typed, between 500 and 1000 words; keep a back-up copy on file), allowing you miss two weeks for health or other reasons, but we expect the others to be delivered on time, to the tutorial leader *at the beginning* of the tutorial session; no extensions will be allowed, so try not to get behind on these assignments. Each submission will worth 5% of the final grade.

What's expected? The form that these journal assignments take is up to you to decide (e.g.,

diary or essay form) and the conclusions that you reach will have no impact on the mark you receive. We expect you to: (a) focus on the New Testament passage under review for that week's tutorial session; (b) briefly (100-150 words) identify the passage's main theme or argument; (c) suggest how the passage fits into what you've been reading for class and hearing in class (100-150 words); then (d) offer a personal response.

- 4 Midterm (worth 30% of the final course grade). You will write the midterm Wednesday, October 9; there will be no regular lecture or tutorial that day. You will be given details about what to expect, including some of the questions, ahead of time. The instructor will assess the midterms.
- 5 Final examination (worth 40% of the final course grade). It will be scheduled during the university examination period (December 5-19). You can expect details well ahead of time. What might help to know now is that the questions will be general in nature. The best way to prepare is to participate actively in the tutorials on a weekly basis, and ensure that you understand the issues raised in the readings and lectures. The instructor will assess the final examinations.

# Remember: this is YOUR course, YOUR learning experience; try not to leave a session without having had your questions answered to your satisfaction. We are always pleased to address your questions and concerns in the office or over coffee.

# We encourage you to use gender-neutral language in your discourse (but will not insist that you do so). This means, e.g., saying and writing "humans" ("humanity," "humankind," "people," etc.) instead of "mankind." We will be pleased to provide you with guidelines should this practice be new to you.

# When quoting from, or alluding to, the Bible, integrate the references directly into your text (instead of using footnotes or endnotes), and abbreviate the titles when you place the reference within parentheses — e.g. "Paul, in Romans 9-11, struggles with the role of the Jews after the coming of Jesus"; "Paul sometimes struggles (most notably in Rom 9-11) with the role of the Jews after the coming of Jesus"; "John's Gospel opens with the famous phrase, 'In the beginning was the Word' (John 1:1)."

# Note the following abbreviations of biblical books (used without closing punctuation; not all actually have abbreviations), which are now common in North American scholarship: Matt, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Rom, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1 Thess, 2 Thess, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus, Phlm, Heb, Jas, 1 Pet, 2 Pet, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Rev. Also note that "2 Thessalonians" does not mean Chapter 2 in a letter called Thessalonians, but the entire letter itself (two letters have this name, so they are distinguished by numbers, based on length, i.e. 2 Thessalonians is shorter than 1 Thessalonians). And note the punctuation (colons, semi-colons and commas) when indicating chapter and verse from the Bible — e.g. Romans 9:1-4 (= Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 9, verses 1 to 4); Romans 9:1-4; 11:3-6, 9-12 (= chapter 9, verses 1 to 4, as well as chapter 11, verses 3 to 6 and [still chapter 11] verses 9 to 12).



Chi-Rho Symbol

## VII. CALENDAR DATES, SERVICES AND REGULATIONS

September 13: Final day to drop fall term courses with no late registration fee

September 20: Final day for late registration to add fall term courses; final day also to drop fall term courses at 10% tuition charge

November 4: Final day for withdrawing without failure from fall term courses

**The Writing Centre** provides access, free of charge, to individual writing instruction. To make an appointment, just drop by the office (Room 2C5-ABC), or contact the co-ordinator (Emmy Misser; 884-0710, ext. 3339; <emisser@wlu.ca>). For website information see <<http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwwc/>>.

**The Special Needs Office** provides information for, and assists students with, disabilities and special needs at Wilfrid Laurier University. Staff at the Office are committed to assure students equal access and support services for programs, facilities and services in the university community. These disabilities include, but are not limited to: sight, hearing, learning, chronic pain, head injuries, mobility, psychological/psychiatric. The Office is located in 1C11 on the bottom floor of the Arts building (884-0710, ext. 3086). If you have a disability or special need, do contact this office, and also review the Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.

**Plagiarism:** Check <<http://www.wlu.ca/writing/handouts/usesources.htm>>.

**Foot Patrol:** For a walk or ride home after class, call 886-FOOT. No walk is too short or too long for them.

## VIII. COURSE OUTLINE

1 **Sept. 9 & 11:** Introduction to the course, the New Testament and the world of the early Christians  
\* READING: Ehrman, Chapters 1-2

2 **Sept. 16 & 18:** Approaching Paul  
\* READING: 1 Thessalonians; Ehrman, Chapter 18  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:13 [= chap 1, verse 1 to chap 3, verse 3, of the document called "1 Thessalonians"]



3 **Sept. 23 & 25:** The Thessalonian correspondence  
\* READINGS: 2 Thessalonians [all of it]; Ehrman, Chapter 19  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:28

4 **Sept. 30 & Oct. 2:** The Corinthian correspondence  
\* READINGS: 1 Corinthians; Ehrman, Chapter 20  
Paul (fresco) \* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: 1 Corinthians

8-10

5 **Oct. 7 & 9:** Galatians and Romans

\* READINGS: Galatians; Ehrman, Chapter 21  
T MIDTERM written October 9

Class cancelled October 14 (Thanksgiving); make up December 2

- 6 **Oct. 16:** Approaching the Gospels  
\* READING: Ehrman, Chapters 3-4, 6  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: Mark 16:1-8; Matt 28:1-10; Luke 24:1-11 (handout)



- 7 **Oct. 21 & 23:** Mark  
\* READINGS: The Gospel of Mark; Ehrman, Chapter 5  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: Mark 5:21-43; Matt 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56 (handout)

- 8 **Oct. 28 & 30:** Matthew  
\* READINGS: The Gospel of Matthew; Ehrman, Chapter 7  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: Matt 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-23 (handout)  
Icon of St. Mark

- 9 **Nov. 4 & 6:** Luke  
\* READINGS: The Gospel of Luke; Ehrman, Chapter 8  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: Luke 24:13-53

- 10 **Nov. 11 & 13:** Acts  
\* READING: The Book of Acts; Ehrman, Chapter 9  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-21; 26:4-18 (handout)



Pete (bronze)

- 11 **Nov. 18 & 20:** John  
\* READINGS: The Gospel of John; Ehrman, Chapter 10  
\* TUTORIAL PREPARATION: John 20:1-18



- 12 **Nov. 25 & 27:** Jesus  
\* Nov. 25 guest lecturer: Lisa Poultney  
\* READINGS: Ehrman, Chapters 13-17

Fra Angelico, Magdalene

- 13 **Dec. 2:** Wrap-up