



RELS 214 / THEO 516

The New Testament

**Richard
Ascough**

Assistant
Professor of New
Testament

[Department of
Religious Studies](#)

[Queen's
Theological
College](#)

Theological Hall 229
Kingston, ON
Canada, K7L 3N6

(613) 533-6000
x78066

rsa@post.queensu.ca
[http://
post.queensu.ca/~rsa](http://post.queensu.ca/~rsa)

Winter 2002

Thursday
8:30-11:30 a.m.

Mackintosh-
Corry Hall D214
(note room
change; we are
not meeting in
Theological Hall
203)

Office Hours:
Tue 9:30-11:30
or by appt.

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Course Description

This course is designed to give an overview of the content and background of the twenty-seven documents that comprise the New Testament. Through these texts we will explore the historical development of early Christianity as it is expressed in the literature of the various faith communities.

The course aims to:

- familiarize the student with the content and context of the four gospels, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation, including information related to the production and subsequent transmission of these writings
- introduce the student to the role that different analytical methods or conscious "reading strategies" play in the interpretation of these texts
- familiarize the student with a number of exegetical tools which can be used in the study of biblical texts.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to change any aspect of the course at any point during the duration of the course.

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Textbooks

Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (2nd edition; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

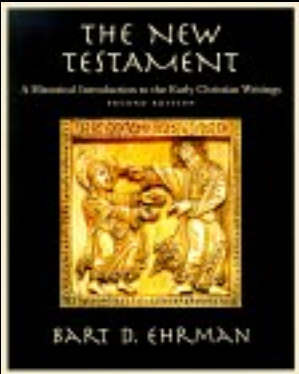
The New Testament. If you do not have a copy of the New Testament you might consider purchasing Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Almost any version of the New Testament will do, although the New Revised Standard Version or the Revised Standard Version are recommended for study purposes. Do not use the King James Version or the Living Bible (or any other paraphrase). See my guide to [English Versions of the Bible](#) for help in choosing a

translation. Various versions of the Bible are available online at [The Bible Gateway](#).

Recommended: John Riches, *The Bible: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Students will not be examined on this text, but it is an interesting supplement to the course for those who are interested in the formation of the canon and its effects throughout history.

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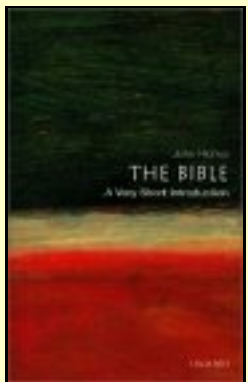
Outline and Readings



Ehrman 2000



Ehrman 1998



Riches 2000

Jan. 10 How We Got the New Testament & The World of the New Testament

- Ehrman 2000:1-15

Discussion Focus: What socio-historical factors are significant for understanding the world of the New Testament and the growth of early Christian groups?

Supplementary. Ehrman 2000:16-41.

Jan. 17 Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles

- 1 Thessalonians
- 1 Corinthians 1-4, 15-16
- Galatians 1-2
- Philippians 2
- Philemon
- Romans 5-8
- Ehrman 2000:260-331

Discussion Focus: Be prepared to outline historical information about Paul and the major points of his theology.

Supplementary: 1 Corinthians 5-14; 2 Corinthians; Romans 1-4, 9-16; Ascough 1998; Roetzel 1991; Soards 1987; Donfried 1991; Francis and Sampley 1984.

Jan. 24 Paul's First Interpreters

- 2 Thessalonians
- Ephesians
- Colossians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Ehrman 2000:332-74

Discussion Focus: Be prepared to discuss the view of church structure and leadership roles in the post-pauline epistles and compare and contrast this view with that found in the authentic

letters of Paul.

Supplementary: Schüssler Fiorenza 1983; MacDonald 1983.

Jan. 31 How We Read the New Testament

- John S. Kselman and Ronald D. Witherup, "Modern New Testament Criticism," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer, and R.E. Murphy, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 1130-45 (in Reference section of Stauffer Library)
- Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 3-40 (on Reserve at Stauffer Library)
- Ehrman 2000:442-50

Discussion Focus: Outline the major interpretive methods or "reading strategies" employed by scholars of the New Testament.

Supplementary: Schüssler Fiorenza 1983; Robbins 1996; Fee 1983

***** Short Essay Due *****

Feb. 7 From Oral Tradition to Written Word & Mark's Story of Jesus

- Mark 1-16
- Ehrman 2000:43-83

In-class exercise: Using the sheets handed out in class examine carefully Mark 1:1-11 and the parallels in Matthew 3:1-17 and Luke 3:1-22. Note the similarities and differences among the three accounts. Do you think there is a *literary* relationship among these three, that is, did one writer copy another? If so, who was the first writer?

Discussion Focus: Be prepared to discuss the oral transmission of the stories about Jesus and be able to discuss the rationale behind positing the "Sayings Source" (Q) and give some of its basic features.

Discussion Focus: Be prepared to outline the major structural and theological elements of Mark's gospel.

Supplementary: Stein 1987; Sanders and Davies 1989; Throckmorton 1992; Kingsbury 1983; Matera 1987; Robbins 1984.

Feb. 14 A.D. 66: *The Last Revolt* (video)

Discussion Focus: Identify the social and political factors leading up to the Jewish Revolt of 66 C.E. and discuss the consequences of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem for the Jews of the first century.

Supplementary: Akenson 2000:14-54.

Feb. 28 Matthew's Interpretation of Jesus

- Matthew 1-28
- Ehrman 2000:84-102

Discussion Focus: Be able to outline the major structural and theological elements of Matthew's gospel.

Supplementary: Luz 1995; Senior 1996; Senior 1997.

***** Web Search Assignment Due *****

Mar. 7 Luke's View of Salvation History

- Luke-Acts
- Ehrman 2000:103-40

Discussion Focus: Be prepared to discuss how Luke and Acts present the story of Jesus and the growth of the early church and show how this story is linked to Luke's theological concerns.

Supplementary: Conzelmann 1961; Powell 1989; Powell 1991.

Mar. 14 The Johannine Community

- Gospel of John
- 1-3 John
- Ehrman 2000:141-70

Discussion Focus: Discuss the development and eventual split of the Johannine Christian community and the theologies that contributed to these factors.

Supplementary: Kysar 1993; Sloyan 1991; Brown 1979.

Mar. 21 The Quest for the Historical Jesus

- Ehrman 2000:194-207, 213-28, 252-59

Discussion Focus: Outline the major periods in the scholarly quest for the historical Jesus and the primary historical and theological issues at stake for each period.

Supplementary: Borg 1994; Ehrman 2000:208-12, 229-51; Funk and Hoover 1993; Funk and Hoover 1998; Witherington 1997;

Theissen 1987.

***** Redaction Criticism Assignment Due *****

Mar. 28 General Epistles and Revelation

- Hebrews 1-2, 11-12
- James 1-3
- 1 & 2 Peter
- Jude
- Revelation
- Ehrman 2000:375-437

Discussion Focus: Outline the major features of the ancient genre of "apocalyptic" and identify the social function that such literature served.

Supplementary: Balch 1981; Elliott 1981; Chester and Martin 1994; Prévost 1991; Talbert 1994.

Apr. 4 Beyond the New Testament

- *Gospel of Thomas* (in Miller 1992:301-22 or Ehrman 1998:116-23 or online at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/noncanon/gospels/gosthom.htm>)
- *Gospel of Mary* (in Miller 1992:357-66) or online at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/noncanon/gospels/gosmary.htm>)
- Ehrman 2000:170-78, 179-93

Discussion Focus: Discuss arguments for and against using the *Gospel of Thomas* as a source for understanding the words and deeds of the historical Jesus.

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Assignments

20% Short Essay. In a 3-4 page paper use the following texts to argue either that Paul's eschatology (view of the end of human history) is consistent or that Paul's eschatology develops over the course of his letter writing: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 51-58; Philippians 1:21-24. Conclude by using your analysis to argue for or against the inclusion or exclusion of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 among the authentic letters of Paul (that is, does it fit into his eschatological schema or not?). The objective of this assignment is to introduce you to the basics of detailed exploration of Paul's letters and Paul's theology. **Due January 31, 2002.**

15% Web Search Assignment. Using the skills learned in the library orientation use the World Wide Web to find online resources which discuss the historical Jesus. Compile a resource page which includes ten

(10) entries - seven (7) that you consider to be of good quality and three (3) that you consider to be of poor quality. For each resource list the URL (full web address), the date accessed, a 2-3 sentence description, the process by which you found it, and your evaluation of it including the evaluation criteria that you used in establishing whether or not it is a good resource. The objective of this exercise is to introduce you to the vast array of web resources available, the tools used to find these resources, and the criteria used for determining the relative worth of these resources. For more information on searching the web see [net.Tutor](http://gateway.lib.ohio-state.edu/tutor/) (<http://gateway.lib.ohio-state.edu/tutor/>; they also provide a [Tutorial](#) for evaluating web sites). **Due: February 28, 2002.**

25% Redaction Criticism Assignment. In an essay no longer than 5 pages (typewritten, double-spaced) provide a redaction critical analysis of Mark 16:1-8 and the parallels in Matthew and Luke, assuming the two-document hypothesis (using the sheets handed out in class). Be sure to point out similarities and differences among the accounts and suggest reasons why Matthew and Luke made the changes to Mark's account. In a final section, outline your view of the literary relationship of John's account (20:1-10) to that found in the synoptic gospels. The objective of this assignment is to provide students with the opportunity to have hands-on application of one of the key methods for studying the gospel texts. **Due March 21, 2002.**

40% Examination. An examination of all aspects of the course, including the textbook. This examination will take place during the examination period in **April**.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the stated day. Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of a one mark reduction per day late. Please observe all page length restrictions.

For an indication of how I grade written assignments see my [Evaluation Guide](http://post.queensu.ca/~rsa/evaltion.htm) (<http://post.queensu.ca/~rsa/evaltion.htm>)

Please do not hand in assignments enclosed in a covering of some sort (e.g., binder, plastic sleeve); just place a staple in the top left corner.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and can result in a grade of F and a notation in the student's record. All use of sources in any form, paper or electronic, must be acknowledged and documented in both written and oral presentations. This includes indirect use of another's ideas as well as direct quotation. Please be sure to read Queen's University's [Policy on Academic Dishonesty](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/acaddish.html) (<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/acaddish.html>).

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