Course Catalog Description

Course Synopsis
What is the New Testament? What do we know about these ancient texts? Where did they come from? What have they meant to different people at different times? How can we study them, and how have people studied them? These questions have occupied many people throughout history. This class will introduce students to the twenty-seven ancient books that are bundled together as “the New Testament” (along with a few extra), and to different approaches to these texts and debates about how to understand them. Our understanding of “the study” of the New Testament will focus on the past 200 years, with occasional references to earlier times. We seek an improved understanding of the New Testament’s role in debates today, as well as some ways in which the New Testament is more complex than debates within our society.

Meetings
TTh, 2-3:15pm
Location: North Classroom Building 102

Teaching Assistant
Mr. Garrett Looney
glooney@okstate.edu

Instructor Office Hours
Time: TTh 12:10-1:40pm, or by appointment
Location: 158 South Murray Hall

Learning Goals
• Identify major persons and events in the New Testament and in the study of it
• Question modern assumptions and assertions about the New Testament and its study
• Understand conflicting positions in the scholarly study of the New Testament
• Analyze primary sources very carefully and interpret them in light of their context
• Construct an argument for taking a certain position where the experts disagree

Required Textbooks
A copy of the New Testament (see handout for acceptable translations)

Additional readings will be made available on D2L.

Course Schedule
<p>| Tues. Jan. 15 | Introduction |
| Thurs. Jan 17 | Mark 1-16 |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>Tues. Jan. 22</td>
<td>INT 18-32, 44-57</td>
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| Thurs. Jan. 24 | Matthew 1-14

**Syllabus Quiz due on D2L**

| Tues. Jan. 29 | Matthew 15-28; INT 58-74                        |

**Library Treasure Hunt due**

| Tues. Feb. 5  | Luke 12-24; INT 1-6, 33-43                     |
| Thurs. Feb. 7 | INT 75-97; “Gospel of Thomas Excerpts” on D2L |
| Tues. Feb. 12 | John 1-12; INT 116-124

**Map Quiz 1**

| Thurs. Feb. 14 | John 13-21; INT 125-132, 7-14                |
| Tues. Feb. 19  | Midterm Review, bring questions               |
| Thurs. Feb. 21 | *In-class Midterm Exam* (bring bluebook!)    |
| Tues. Feb. 26  | Acts 1-28                                      |
| Thurs. Feb. 28 | INT 98-115                                     |
| Tues. Mar. 5  | “Two Scholarly Articles” on D2L               |
| Thurs. Mar. 7 | 1 Thessalonians 1-5; INT 144-167              |
| Tues. Mar. 12 | Galatians 1-6; Philippians 1-4; Philemon; INT 168-184 |
| Thurs. Mar. 14 | 1 Corinthians 1-6; 2 Corinthians 1-13; INT 185-200 |

**Paper, part 1, due**

<table>
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<th>Spring Break – No class March 19 or 21</th>
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<td>Tues. Mar. 26</td>
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<td>Thurs. Mar. 28</td>
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<td>Tues. Apr. 2</td>
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<td>Thurs. Apr. 4</td>
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**Paper, part 2, due**

| Tues. Apr. 9 | Hebrews 1-13; INT 251-259                  |
| Thurs. Apr. 11 | James 1-5; 1 John 1-5; 2 John; 3 John; INT 133-143; 267-273 |
| Tues. Apr. 16 | 1 Peter 1-5; 2 Peter 1-3; Jude; INT 260-266, 274-283 |
| Thurs. Apr. 18 | Revelation 1-21; INT 284-298               |
| Tues. Apr. 23 | “Apocalyptic Excerpts” on D2L              |
| Thurs. Apr. 25 | INT 299-304; “Non-Canonical Gospels Excerpts” on D2L |

**Paper, part 3, due**

| Tues. May 2  | Conclusion: “The New Testament Today” on D2L |
| Thurs. May 9 | Final Review, bring questions                |
|              | Final Exam, 2-3:50am (bring bluebook!)       |

**Grading breakdown**

- Syllabus Quiz (5%)
- Library Treasure Hunt (5%)
- Participation (10%)
- Map Quizzes (10%)
- Midterm Exam (15%)

- Paper, part 1 (5%)
- Paper, part 2 (10%)
- Paper, part 3 (15%)
- Final Exam (25%)
Assignments
All double-spaced, 1-1.25” side margins, 1” top and bottom margins, Times New Roman font

Syllabus Quiz (due 1/24 on D2L): This quiz tests how well you have understood the syllabus. You may retake it before the deadline to improve your score.

Library Treasure Hunt (due 1/31): I will give you a list of tasks to perform and questions to answer using various services at OSU’s Edmon Low Library. You must perform these tasks independently of your classmates. You can ask for help from the professor, the TA, or from library staff (although you must not allow library staff to answer the questions for you!).

Participation: Research shows that people learn better when they wrestle with a topic, ask questions, challenge assertions, rephrase statements in their own words, and make their own arguments about why something is the way it is. Participation is a necessary part of learning. There are many ways to do this: raising your hand in class, emailing the professor or the TA, and coming to office hours are only a few possibilities.

Paper (various due-dates): Expressing oneself in clear, concise, and relevant writing is required in many professional environments. But writing a college paper requires more than one sitting, so this assignment has several steps which you will work on over the course of the semester. An explanation of the grading of each step will be given before each due-date. Feel free to ask me for help finding materials or for advice at any stage!

- Part 1: Reading a text (1-2 pages, due Mar. 14). Pick a New Testament passage which you would like to explore more deeply. A list of sample passages will be provided, but you may also pick a topic not on that list, provided it is at least ten verses. In 1-2 pages, you will answer a series of questions (to be handed out) about your passage and summarize what it says in your own words.
- Step 2: Engaging opposing views (2-3 pages, due Apr. 4). The New Testament has been thoroughly studied, and scholars often contradict each other. Find at least two scholarly articles which address your passage, and find a place where they disagree about what your passage means. Write up the disagreement that you found between the two scholars, as well as what arguments they make and evidence they cite, in 2-3 pages.
- Step 3: Making an argument (3-5 pages, due Apr. 25). Now that you have found a disagreement, you need to figure out what you believe and why. You might decide that both scholars are wrong! Find at least a third article which sheds light on the disagreement you found, and make arguments based on evidence in the text, other primary sources, or logical considerations to persuade a reader that you are correct, rather than the scholar(s) with whom you disagree.

Draft Paper policy
Writing your work in drafts is a good way to improve it and focus on particular skills to develop. We are happy to see drafts of papers, but in order for us to read them and return them to you with feedback, we must receive the draft at least one week before the assignment deadline. We do not “assign grades” to drafts, but will give you suggestions regarding where and how you can strengthen the paper. Even paper drafts which would receive an ‘A’ as-is will receive suggestions, because all academic writing can be improved even more.
Email policy

We welcome email from students. However, email is a fundamentally delayed communication, since you need to wait for the recipient to get online before a response is possible. You should factor in a delay for an email response from us, although we will attempt to write back within 24 hours (48 over a weekend) unless we notify you to the contrary. Please remember that email is also professional communication, so use formal writing (“Dear Prof. X,” rather than “Hey-”), and please identify which class you are writing about.

Wikipedia policy

Wikipedia is a useful tool in its proper place, but it can be dangerous if misused. It is good for a brief (if not always reliable or balanced) statement of the facts, and the Wikipedia policy on citations is helpful for finding source materials. However, the sources used are not always reliable, nor are they always interpreted correctly.

- For example, a Wikipedia article could state that the apostle Paul wrote the book of Hebrews, citing a modern magazine article. This would not be a reliable source for this information.
- For a different example, a Wikipedia article could state that the apostle Paul wrote the book of Hebrews and cite Raymond Brown’s *Introduction to the New Testament*. This would be an incorrect use of this source since the source does not say that the apostle Paul wrote the book of Hebrews.

For these reasons, you are welcome to consult Wikipedia to find the sources which it cites, but you are not allowed to cite, quote, or paraphrase Wikipedia in any written work. In particular, you are not allowed to quote or paraphrase Wikipedia on exams. You should read for yourself the sources which Wikipedia cites before you place too much confidence in what Wikipedia says. You may find that you disagree with Wikipedia, which is entirely permissible if it is the result of reflection and reasoning. These same considerations apply to almost every other website which is not simply a reproduction of a primary source document.

Late work

The assignment deadlines are designed to balance the needs of the students in the different classes taught by this instructor and with the instructor’s other professional duties. This balance is sabotaged by students submitting work late, which also is unfair to those students who would have liked more time to work on an assignment but turned it in on time. On the other hand, I understand from personal experience that life can sometimes be unexpectedly difficult. Therefore late work will receive a 5% (1/2 letter grade) grading penalty per day it is late unless one of the following two situations applies:

(a) prior arrangements have been made before the original deadline, due to a difficult situation that was anticipated, or

(b) unforeseeable and extreme (usually life-threatening) events made completing the work on time impossible.

Arrangements will be made ahead of deadlines in all reasonable cases. Notice that an assignment will not receive a passing grade if it is turned in more than a week late. Under no circumstances will work be accepted for credit after the last day of class, with the exception of the final exam. *It is better to turn in a work unfinished and get partial credit than turn it in too late and get no credit.*
Disability accommodations

To receive disability accommodations, students must register with the Student Disability Services office in 315 Student Union (http://sds.okstate.edu/ contains contact information). If you wish to receive accommodations, please contact SDS as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential for learning; without it, nothing can be known with confidence. The following is a statement on academic integrity, and what happens when it breaks down, from the Academic Integrity Coordinator:

Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will result in your being sanctioned. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript (F!), and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627, academicintegrity.okstate.edu.

Please realize that turning in the same paper to multiple classes is “multiple submissions” and is a violation of academic integrity!

Disruptive behavior policies

By your presence in a classroom you are participating in and helping to create an intellectual environment in which you and your classmates are able to learn and engage ideas and discussion. For this reason, it is common etiquette to conduct oneself in a professional manner so as not to distract others, prevent people from hearing things, or otherwise disrupt the learning environment. Cell phones are inherently disruptive, whether they ring or buzz or you send or receive text messages on them. Therefore cell phones may not be used during class time in any capacity. Campus police recommend turning cell phones to vibrate during class period so that emergency notifications can reach us all, but if receiving text messages is too distracting, you may turn cell phones to silent or off at the beginning of class. If you have a personal emergency situation in which you need to be able to receive a phone call, you must notify the instructor before class begins, and sit next to the door so that you can excuse yourself when you receive the call.

Eating food is also distracting both to the eater and others in the room by its smell, its sound, and its debris, so food may not be eaten in class. If you have a medical condition which requires eating food at regular intervals, your food must be neither smelly nor loud, and must not make a mess.

The question whether laptops are more helpful or disruptive to the learning environment is the subject of intense debate among instructors. Advocates of laptop use in the classroom point to the greater ease of taking notes, the ability to access online resources, and the responsibility of the students as adults to make their own decisions. Critics of laptop use, on the other hand, point to several studies which show that most students using laptops earn lower grades. They attribute this fact to the difficulty people have in resisting the temptation to check their email, update social media, read the news, or play games, and the resulting distraction this causes to other students who sit behind the student and see flashing colors. Laptops are
allowed in class, provided their use does not disrupt the classroom environment. If I notice that a laptop user is frequently disengaged, or other students are looking at the laptop screen over the user’s shoulder, I may ask that student to cease using the laptop for their own sake and for the sake of class discussion.

Other disruptive behaviors (such as frequent tardiness, preventing others from speaking, or insulting language) will be addressed as necessary with individuals or with the group as a whole. A warning from the instructor, if ignored, may precede a reduction in a student’s participation grade or other disciplinary measures as appropriate.

Let’s all make the class a learning environment, so that we may all benefit from it!