Oklahoma State University

REL 2023.70691 The New Testament and Its Study
MWF 12:30 pm - 1:20 pm
Agricultural Hall 108
Aug 16, 2021 - Dec 03, 2021

[Left] P90, Gospel of John (18:36-19:7), 2nd century CE.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
What is the New Testament? While most of us might know that it is the holy book of Christianity, not many of us had many chances to ask questions like: When and how it was made into the form we have now? Who wrote it in what contexts? Why do we see some conflicting images about Jesus, Paul, and early churches in the NT? How can we interpret some of its difficult passages? To answer these questions, this course introduces students to the historical-critical study of the New Testament in its ancient cultural, political, and social context. We will approach the NT with a scholarly lens, reading it as a collection of 27 texts that we can critically (not cynically) analyze and think with.

COURSE OUTLINE
1) We begin by considering the distinctive ways in which biblical scholars read and interpret the NT writings, how the NT canon was made, and the historical contexts of the birth of Christianity. 2) We then turn to the letters of Paul, which tell us a lot about the earliest Jesus communities and issues they had to deal with. We will briefly look into Deutero-Pauline letters that continued Paul’s legacy. 3) Then we proceed to the gospels and see how they present Jesus’ ministry and its significance for believers living 40-70 years after his death, in the changed social and political context after the First Jewish War (66-70 CE). We will consider Acts of the Apostles here as well. 4) Then we go on to understand the fascinating but seemingly mysterious text, the Revelation of John, in consideration of the ancient literary genre called apocalyptic literature and its historical context. 5) We end the course with a brief discussion on the remaining texts of the NT and the development of Christianity from the second century and on.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand different perspectives in reading the NT and reflect upon their own views.
2. Know the historical-critical method in approaching the NT and practice analyzing selected NT passages on their own.
3. Able to read each of the NT writings as a distinctive, individual text produced in different historical and communal contexts with different agendas and thoughts.
4. Critically think about the larger political and social implications that a particular biblical interpretation imports in human history.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK, DEVICES (MUST-HAVE), AND COURSE MATERIALS

You need to have an access to these items:
1. I-Clicker: needed for attendance, in-class participation, and pop quizzes. You will need I-clicker Engagement (approx. $16).
2. For those who want to take the Final Exam via online proctoring system in Canvas, the proctoring software Examity fee might be charged to your Bursar account (expect $4~17).
3. The Holy Bible (preferred translations: NRSV, NASB, ESV; not preferred: NIV, KJV): If you do not have the Bible and want to purchase one, I recommend one of these:
   C. Accessing online at [https://www.biblegateway.com](https://www.biblegateway.com) (Make sure to choose the preferred translations of NRSV, NASB, or ESV)
5. Additional Readings: For all other readings and assignments outside of the course textbook, please see the Files Folder in Canvas course page.

* You can check out all assignments, exams, lecture slides, additional readings, and other documents under Canvas > Modules

EVALUATION

Grades will be based on the quality and completion of tasks:
1. Attendance (20%)
2. Weekly Quizzes (20%)
3. Essay on Pauline letters (15%)
4. Essay on Gospel (15%)
5. Midterm Exam (15%): Multiple-choice questions. Covers the materials from the beginning of the course to Paul. **Oct 8 (Friday) In-class**
6. Final Exam (15%): Multiple-choice questions. Not cumulative.
7. Bonus Assignments: There will be plenty of bonus assignments that you can use to make up any points you lost. These are random and points will be determined based on the class’ average. Includes watching documentary films, attending guest lectures, submitting additional writing assignments. **Dec 8 (Wed) In-class OR Canvas Examity**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

101 Whitehurst/405-744-5627/http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu
OSU is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. 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 altering academic records) will result in an official academic sanction. 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, and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge.

STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL OR LEARNING DISABILITIES
If you need special accommodations the University will try to make appropriate arrangements. These arrangements will need to be made ahead of time through the Student Disability Services Office, 315 Student Union (Phone: 405-744-7116; Website: https://sds.okstate.edu/).