
Matthew J. Pereira, Ph.D.

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Days and Time: M, W, F 10:30 – 11:15 pm
Location: Conoco-Phillips Alumni Center 113-114
Office Hours: T 2:00 – 3:30 pm | TH 10:00 – 11:30 am, or by appointment on Zoom: ID: 869 050 2942
https://zoom.us/j/8690502942
TA’s Email: devin.a.medrano@okstate.edu

Course Description: This course introduces students to the writings of the New Testament along with the various methods, approaches and issues that emerge within the academic study of these 27 distinct writings. We will begin the course with an introduction to the nature, origin and the development of the New Testament, then thereafter, we will move to a discussion of the varied approaches to framing, reading and interpreting this collection of writings. Thereafter, the writings of the New Testament will be located and evaluated from within the political, social, religious and political contexts in which they emerged. Following an overview of the historical background of the New Testament writings, we will focus on summarizing, framing and interpreting the New Testament writings as follows: synoptic gospels (Gospel according to Matthew; Gospel according to Mark; Gospel according to Luke); account of early missionary activities (The Acts of the Apostles); Johannine literature (Gospel according to John, 1, 2 & 3 John); Paul’s Epistles (1 Thessalonians; Galatians; Philippians; Philemon; 1 & 2 Corinthians; Romans); Deutero-Pauline Epistles (2 Thessalonians; Colossians; Ephesians); pastoral letters (Titus; 1 & 2 Timothy); general letters (Hebrews, 1 & 2 Peter, James, Jude); and apocalyptic literature (The Book of Revelation). Select New Testament writings will be summarized in quicker fashion whereas other New Testament writings will be given more focus and in-depth study. Lastly, with regards to our approach and frameworks, our intention is to recognize that our starting points and questions shape the way one interprets text, so we will practice employing various disciplines with their adjoining methods and aims, including studies in the following disciplines: historical; theological; linguistics; gender; race; socio-economics, post-colonial studies and the reception of the NT in the Christian traditions.


Access to Bible translations online: You may use the following website to access translations: https://www.biblegateway.com/ Most translations of the New Testament (written in Koine Greek) are acceptable for this course, with the following being the most commonly used: NASB, NIV, NRSV, KJV, ESV, however, if you have questions regarding your translation of the New Testament, please do let me know.
Additional Readings: For all other readings and assignments outside of the course textbook, please see the Files Folder in Canvas Homepage.

Learning Objectives: Upon successfully completing this course, the following objectives will have been met:

1. Students will gain an understanding of methods and issues in the studying of the New Testament.
2. Students will acquire a comprehensive understanding of the structures, genres, authorship, and historical context of the books of the Bible.
3. Students will identify, compare and contrast the differences and similarities across the books of the Bible.
4. Students will practice their analytical reading of the historical texts of the New Testament canon.
5. Students will employ a range of interpretive frameworks to evaluate the books of the Bible.

Course Structure: This is a lecture intensive course with space for participation at given points in the sessions.

Attendance and Discussion Questions (50 points each; 100 points): Attendance and Discussion Questions (to be posted on Canvas) will be both weighed equally (50 points each) when considering this part of the evaluation and overall grade. Generally, OSU would like to encourage students to attend class in person, it surely is a better educational experience, however, I will make an attempt made to record lectures for those students who miss class.

You will be asked to locate our class on I-clicker and mark yourself as present at the start of each class once we begin our time together. https://www.iclicker.com/ If you have not signed up, follow the instructions to do so, and then search for our course: New Testament and Its Study, and/or search for my last name: Pereira. Make certain to enroll for the correct class number and time as well: REL 2023.22404. Note: if you have issues marking yourself present, please let me or Devin A. Medrano know within 48 hours of the class where the issue occurred, and we will rectify the issue. After 48 hours from the given class, the one point will be considered lost.

Grade Breakdown for Attendance will be as follows: each unexcused absence (generally excused absences are provided for university related events) will lead to a 1 point reduction from the 50 possible points available, so if a student missed 3 classes, the student would be rewarded 47 points for attendance.

Discussion Questions will focus on the five major world religions covered in the course, e.g., Hindu traditions, Buddhist traditions, etc.. Each response should address the question(s) provided. Each response should be 1–3 paragraphs long. Each discussion question will be evaluated from 1 – 10 points. Discussion responses that show a solid engagement the provided prompt(s) will receive 9 – 10 points, then those responses that could have used more care will be marked down accordingly.

6 Quizzes (50 points each; 300 points total): There will be six quizzes throughout this semester. There will be one quiz for each of the units covered throughout this semester except for the final section on the New Religious Movements. Quizzes may be in the form of multiple choice questions; true of false; and/or essay and reflections. The quizzes will focus on the identifications and the primary source readings for each of the units. The quizzes will be provided on Canvas.
2 Exegetical Essays (200 points each; 400 points total): To encourage the practice of biblical interpretation in dialogue with New Testament scholarship, students will be required to write two 4-5 page exegetical (see Calendar below). Exegetical essays should be placed in dialogue with one or more secondary sources (will be located in the “Secondary Sources” folder). Each essay should follow these basic guidelines: length 4-5 pages, typed in Times New Roman, double-spaced, one inch margins on all sides and stapled on upper left hand corner. Failure to follow these basic guidelines could lead to a five point deduction prior to an evaluation of the following expectations: (1) **Analysis** should be demonstrated through a coherent response to the prompts in the Guided Reading with a balanced and informed interpretation of the biblical passage in dialogue with one or more of the secondary source(s) to be discussed in class time; (2) **Structure** should be clearly demonstrated with a succinct introductory paragraph, well-defined paragraphs, smooth transitions and a clear conclusion; (3) **Writing** will be evaluated by assessing spelling, punctuation, grammar, word precision, style and content. All written work, whether submitted on time or up to a week after the original due date, must be submitted as a hard copy.

Exegetical Essay One is due **February 21st** | Exegetical Essay Two is due **April 5th**

**Final Exam (200 points):** The final exam will be administered at our assigned time during Finals Exam week. The exam will consist of essays, multiple choice and identifications. A study guide will be provided several weeks before the date of the Final Exam.

**Extra Credit (Public Lectures in Religious Studies):** There will be opportunities for extra credit announced throughout the semester in relation to attending and writing reflections on a series of public lectures (on Zoom) hosted by the Religious Studies program at OSU. These extra credit opportunities will be worth up to twenty points depending on the level of engagement with the lecture(s). More details to come in the weeks ahead.

**Late Work Policy:** Late work will be accepted up to one week after the original due date. Late work could be penalized up to 20% prior to evaluating the work. After one week, the grade of zero (0) will be submitted for any missing work. If you have any issues or concerns regarding assignments, please do let me know.

**Electronic Devices:** Please place all of your electronic devices, including laptops, cell phones, away and out of sight once the class has started. If you need to make a phone call or send a text, please feel free to step out of class and return when ready to be present. Points could be deducted from the attendance grade if a student is disruptive or distracting due to the use of electronics in class (but I do not anticipate any issues). Thank you in advance.

**COVID-19 Rules and Guidelines:** the following list of guidelines, which have been established by OSU (with a couple extra notes provided by myself), will be followed throughout this course:

**Mandatory Mask Wearing in Classroom:** Students are expected to wear masks at all times while in the classroom. Likewise, the instructor is expected to wear a mask or face shields or both in classrooms, labs and studio spaces. Please do not attend class if you are unable or unwilling to wear a mask at all times. I greatly appreciate your cooperation.
Social Distance Meetings between Students and Instructor: Rather than meeting in person, please reach out to me via zoom, email, facetime, or another medium, during office hours, or by appointment.

Recording Lectures and Course Materials Online: As long as the technology is working correctly, an effort will be made to record the lectures via zoom. All the course materials (outside of the textbook) will be provided on Canvas.

Distribution of the Graded Points (Comprehensive Evaluation):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Discussions</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exegetical Essay One</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exegetical Essay Two</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
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Academic Integrity: 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, 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. To appeal any charge: 101 Whitehurst Phone (405) 744-5627 | http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu

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 | (405) 744–7116 | Website: https://sds.okstate.edu/.


- The Nature of the New Testament
- The Writing of the New Testament
- Hermeneutics (Methods of Interpretation)
- Issues Concerning Views on Revelation & Inspiration
- The Four Fold Sense of the Scriptures
- The Text (Manuscript Evidence)
Weeks 3–4 | The Historical Background of the New Testament Writings (February 1st – February 12th)

The Political World

The Social World

Jewish Religious World

Greco-Roman Philosophies

Philo and Gnosticism

Quiz One: Nature, Origin and Hermeneutics of NT

Weeks 5–6 | The Synoptic Gospels and their Study (Biblical Criticism) (February 15th – February 26th)

Gospel according to Mark

Markan Priority

Gospel according to Matthew

Gospel according to Luke

Synoptic Problem

Redaction Criticism

Textual Criticism

Quiz 2: The Historical Background of the New Testament

Weeks 7–8 | The Acts of the Apostles and the Johannine Literature (March 1st – March 12th)

The Acts of the Apostles

The Gospel according to John

Christology and the Doctrine of the Trinity

1 John

2 John

3 John

Quiz 3: Synoptic Gospels & Biblical Criticism
Weeks 9–10 | The New Testament Epistles and the Apostle Paul
(March 15th – March 26th)

Classifying: New Testament Epistles
The Life of the Apostle Paul
The Theology of the Apostle Paul
Images of Paul
Paul’s Motivation
Paul and the Jewish Tradition
Paul’s Living Heritage

Quiz 4: Acts of the Apostles & John

Week 11–12 | The Epistles (Letters) of the Apostle Paul
(March 29th – April 2nd)

First Thessalonians
Letter to the Galatians
Letter to the Philippians
Letter to Titus
Second Corinthians
Letter to the Romans

Quiz 5: NT Letters & Apostle Paul

Weeks 12–13 | Pseudonymity and the Deutero-Pauline Writings
(April 5th – April 16th)

Psuedonymous Composition
The Letter of Colossians
Epistle (Letter) to the Ephesians
Pastoral Letter: To Titus
Pastoral Letter: The First to Timothy
Pastoral Letter: The Second to Timothy

Quiz 6: The Pauline Epistles
Letter (Epistle) to Hebrews
First Letter to Peter
Epistle (Letter) to James
Letter (Epistle) of Jude
Second Letter (Epistle) Peter
The Book of Revelation (The Apocalypse)

**Final Exam:** To be announced. Will be administered on assigned time during Finals Exam Week.

**Final Grades Due:** May 14th

**Tentative Nature of Syllabus:** The syllabus is subject to revision. Students will be held responsible for modifications distributed in class, and/or communicated by an email correspondence, and/or provided on Canvas.

**Note:** February 3rd is a designated Wellness Day, which means there will be no class or assignments on that day (or the day before and the day after as well).