

(WCH) REL-226

**The New Testament**

Spring 2015

Instructor, Richard Newton

v. 1/22/15

Class Meetings: Thompson Gymnasium 105, T/R, 9:30am to 10:45am

Office Hours: M, 3-5pm; W, 10am-12pm; F, 1-3pm; By Appointment   
 http://sowingtheseed.youcanbook.me

Course Website: https://etown.instructure.com/courses/149

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**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the literature known as the New Testament. It treats these texts as first-century Mediterranean artifacts, interpreting them in an attempt to understand the history, politics, anthropology, and expressions that typified the early Jesus movement. We will explore some of the methodologies used in biblical scholarship. And we will consider the New Testament’s place in the West’s cultural heritage.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By successfully completing the requirements of this course, you will be able to do the following:

1. *Describe the basic content of the New Testament.*
2. *Describe the historical context out of which the New Testament emerged.*
3. *Give an example of the way that a New Testament text can be subject to a variety of interpretations and methodologies.*
4. *Write cogently—holding forth about a single thesis while blending assertions, evidence, and commentary to persuade a reader.*

And by successfully completing the requirements of the course, you will be able to demonstrate your ability to meet the following student learning outcomes, which are outcomes for the Western Cultural Heritage Core:

1. *Explain the importance of the New Testament as a significant aspect of Western cultural heritage.*
2. *Illustrate the scriptural afterlives of a first-century text, charting its reception in historical and contemporary moments.*
3. *Give an example of the way that a New Testament text can be subject to a variety of interpretations.*
4. *Analyze primary and secondary sources in the field of biblical studies.*

**Required Course Materials**

Bibliography

The following resources are required purchases. Please bring Reed and the Bible with you everyday. You should bring Porter for apropos class meetings.

*The HarperCollins Study Bible: NRSV, Fully Revised and Updated*, ed. Harold W.

Attridge (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006).

\*This scholarly study Bible will act as our course standard. You are responsible for reading not only the main text, but also the critical commentary at the bottom of the pages.

Jonathan L. Reed, *The HarperCollins Visual Guide to the New Testament: What*

*Archaeology Reveals about the First Christians* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2007).

Adam L. Porter, *Introducing the Bible: An Active Learning Approach* (Upper Saddle

River, NJ: Pearson, 2004).

\*Porter will act as your socratic guide for reading the New Testament. When he asks you to answer a question or to read something, you are to do so diligently.

Canvas

This learning management software will house all of our written and submitted assignments. Through it, I will also share an array of e-resources to enrich your understanding of the New Testament. See this site as a digital representation of our classroom community. You can conveniently access it by selecting our course title under the “Teaching” menu at sowingtheseed.org.

Poll Everywhere

In order to facilitate efficient exchanges and evaluations in each session, we will use *Poll Everywhere*. Poll Everywhere is an audience response system with which you will be able to answer questions using SMS text messages, Twitter, web-enabled devices, or most smart phones.

We will discuss using Poll Everywhere in our second class session. You are responsible for registering yourself: <http://www.polleverywhere.com/register?p=1tufz-6psc>. This will cost you $14. You will also need to have a compatible device (i.e. web-enabled laptop/PDA, mobile phone with SMS text messaging, etc.) with you at every class. Students are responsible for knowing how to use the program on their device **by the end of the second week of class.** *If you are unable to acquire a compatible device, let me know as soon as possible. I may have a few spare devices for loan.*

**Reference Materials:** Before going to Wikipedia!

*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freeman (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

\*This is one of the standard scholarly encyclopedias used in biblical studies. It contains short scholarly entries on key terms in the Bible and biblical studies. You may find it in the reference section of the High Library.

*The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002).

\*This is an easy-to-read compendium of scholarly interpretations of the Bible. Each book of the Bible receives an introductory essay and verse-by-verse breakdown by a biblical scholar. There are also some great essays on reception history and themes in biblical studies. You may find it in the reference section of the High Library

*Bible Odyssey: People, Places, and Passages*—http://www.bibleodyssey.org

\*This is a public information website curated by the Society of Biblical Literature. It’s a most accessible resource for biblical studies.

The New Testament Gateway—http://ntgateway.com

\*Dr. Mark Goodacre of Duke University maintains this directory of academic internet resources on the New Testament and Christian origins.

**Class Preparation**

Our course is divided into four sections with each one comprised into weekly units. Barring a few exceptions, you will prepare between 20-30 pages of reading for each class session. When reading Reed, I will provide you with a study guide to help you hone in on key concepts. Porter will act as your study guide for reading the biblical text. Completing the reading and study guides are essential for meeting the Student Learning Outcomes.

On days where you’ve prepared Reed, we will spend the first 10 minutes of class reviewing your study guides. You should bring forth question into the reading for small group and class discussion. From there we will launch into a hands-on activity to help us understand how biblical scholars approach the New Testament.

On days where you’ve prepared Porter and a particular biblical studies passage, our class will operate as a seminar. We will begin by recounting the passage and coming to a base understanding of the biblical text. I will then guide our discussion around issues raised by Porter and other biblical scholars. Additionally, a pre-assigned student will bring insights gleaned from content Porter’s “further reading” section.

From time to time, we will have pop-quizzes over information that we have discussed in class.

Fourth-Hour

In lieu of a fourth-hour in-class meeting, you will be responsible for reviewing timelines and maps that are pertinent to the study of the New Testament. You will receive these in class at various points in the semester. Materials from these handouts will be tested on quizzes and exams.

Additionally, we will spend the last weeks of the semester working on a digital humanities project that chronicles the reception history of a particular book in the New Testament.

**Assignments/Evaluations of Student Learning Outcomes**

*A. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes*

My assessment of student learning outcomes will derive from your performance on the following assignments:

-*Study Guide Completion and Class Participation*

Each class member is expected to participate in class activities and complete their study guides. I do not insist that a student master material on the first attempt, but I expect you to put forth a solid effort. That means contributing to our corporate review of the study guides with your questions and answers. **On days where you have prepared Reed, your study guides are due on Canvas by the beginning of class. On days where you are preparing Porter, bring your work to class to receive credit.**

-Quizzes

Quiz materials will cover basic information form the study guide or other handout. These measure basic knowledge over the week’s material. If you are consistently scoring below 75%, see me immediately so that we may amend any problems with your preparation practices. Most quizzes are multiple-choice or some other selection-based method.

-*Seminar Facilitator Paper*

Each student is assigned a class session where he or she will present a 3-4 page paper to inform our discussion of biblical studies and the New Testament reading of the day. In your introduction, your paper should summarize the insights gleaned from one essay in Porter’s “Further Reading” list (topic), ask how it relates to the passage of the day (research question), and name how the essay shapes your understanding of the passage (thesis statement). The remainder of your paper should defend and expound that thesis, with reference to the Bible passage, Porter, and your further reading (i.e. the ACE model). **Your paper is due on Canvas, that day by 8:00am.**

- *Exams*

Two of our units (Jesus & Christ) will be evaluated by way of in-class exams. They are not cumulative and will cover information from the study guides, in-class meetings, and select handouts. The format will include multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay. If you keep up with the study guides, actively participate during class sessions, study your handouts, and attend the review sessions, you should perform well.

*-Final Project*

For your final project, you will be using digital technology to chronicle a reception history of a select book of/passage in the Bible. You will receive class time to work on this, but you will also be required to work outside of class. Projects will include group and individual components, **including a presentation during the college’s exam week.** Details forthcoming.

*B. Grading of Student Performance*

12.5% - Study Guide Completion and Class Participation

12.5% - Quizzes

15% - Seminar Facilitator Paper

20%- Exam I

20% - Exam II

20% - Final Project

*C. Grading Scale*

59 > =F Unacceptable Performance

60-63 =D- Insufficient Performance

64-66 =D Needs Improvement

67-69 =D+ Adequate Performance

70-73 =C- Acceptable Performance

74-76 =C Satisfactory Performance

77-79 =C+ Promising Performance

80-83 =B- Good Performance

84-86 =B Great Performance

87-89 =B+ Commendable Performance

90-94 =A- Excellent Performance

95-100 =A Superior Performance

*D. Class Schedule*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit Focus** | **Tuesday** | **Thursday** |
| **The Bible as Text and Artifact** | | |
| **Week 1**  *What is the New Testament?* | **1/13**  #BlackLivesMatter  \*Please look over the syllabus and post any questions on the Course Syllabus FAQ.  -Update your Profile Page on Canvas>People | **1/15**  *In Situ*  -Syllabus  -Reed, 2-15  -Watch the Get to the Point Introduction Video |
| **Week 2**  *From whence does the New Testament come?* | **1/20**  *Sitz Em Leben*  -Reed, 16-34  -Porter, 199-202  -Watch the ACE Video | **1/22**  Hellenists, Romans, Jews  -Reed, 35-53 |
| **Jesus: The Man, The Myth, The Legend** | | |
| **Week 3**  *Gospels I* | **1/27**  Jesus of Galilee: A Son of Man, A Son of God  Reed, 54-77  -Porter, 203-204 | **1/29**  The Gospel of Mark  -Porter, 205-210 |
| **Week 4**  *Gospels II* | **2/3**  The Synoptic Gospels  -Reed, 78-99  -Porter, 211-214  \*We will work on Porter in class. | **2/5**  The Gospel of Matthew  -Porter, 215-220 |
| **Week 5**  *Gospels III* | **2/10**  The Gospel of Luke  -Porter, 221-226 | **2/12**  The Gospel of John  -Porter, 227-232 |
| **Week 6**  *Historicizing Jesus* | **2/17**  *The Son of Man* (dir. Mark Dornford-May, 2006)  -Porter, 233-236 | **2/19**  *The Son of Man* (cont’d)  \*Begin preparing for your midterm. |
| **Week 7**  *Exam Week* | **2/24**  Exam I Review | **2/26**  Exam I |
| *SPRING BREAK* | **3/3 (No Class)** | **3/5 (No Class)** |
| **Christ: His Followers, His Body, His Legionnaires** | | |
| **Week 8**  *The Pauline Mission* | **3/10**  Paul: The Evangelist  -Reed, 100-121 | **3/12**  Paul: The Epistolary  -Porter, 247-252 |
| **Week 9**  *Epistles I* | **3/17**  To the Collective in Thessalonica  -Porter, 253-258 | **3/19**  To the Collective in Galatia/To the Collective in Corinth  -Porter, 259-264 |
| **Week 10**  *Epistles II* | **3/24**  To the Collective in Rome  -Porter, 265-268 | **3/26**  Deutero-Pauline Literature  -Porter, 273-278, |
| **Week 11**  *The Word as Tradition* | **3/31** Acts  -Porter, 241-246 | **4/2 (No Class, Monday Schedule)** The Acts of Paul and Thekla  -Porter, 269-272, 298-303 Due Tuesday for Extra Credit |
| **Week 12**  *The End is the Beginning is the End of Christianity* | **4/7** The First Christians and the Jewish Wars  -Reed, 122-139 | **4/9** Revelation  -Porter, 279-286 |
| **Week 13**  *Exam Week* | **4/14**  Exam Review | **4/16**  Exam II |
| **The New Testament as Scripture** | | |
| **Week 14**  *The Future Way* | **4/21 (SCAD No Class)** | **4/23** The Christian World After the New Testament  -Reed, 140-155 |
| **Week 15**  *Project Work Week* | **4/28**  **Project Day** | **4/30**  **Project Day** |
| **Final (Project) Exam Tuesday, 5/5/15, 7:30-10:30AM** | | |

**Additional Policies, Resources and Information**

*A. Absences/Late Work*

This course is taught from the perspective that higher education is a professional endeavor. Just as there are ramifications for missing a job, there are ramifications for missing class.

You may miss 2 (two) classes without penalty. These are to help you account for those times when life just happens (family emergencies, serious illness, etc.). Any absence thereafter *may* result in a seven-point deduction from your overall grade. This is to numerically reflect the change in expectations that you should adopt as a result of your absences.

You are still responsible for submitting assignments by their deadlines. Late work is only accepted in the most extreme circumstances—that is, matters of life and death, not pass or fail. I reserve the right to make any deductions. Be aware that I may conference with the Office of the Dean of Students and/or request pertinent documentation.

B. *Written Work & Documentation Standards*

All written work should follow the conventions outlined in Kate L. Turabian’s *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, eighth edition See http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\_citationguide.html for more information.

All submissions should be proofread for spelling, grammar, and organization (e.g. ACE and Get to the Point Introduction models). Please use footnotes for citations.

All manuscripts should be double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. Please write in 12pt, Times New Roman for all assignments (250 words ≅ page). The body paragraphs of papers should be color-coded according to the ACE model (Blue=Assertion, Red=Evidence, Green=Commentary).

I strongly encourage you to seek assistance from Learning Services. Their tutors can help you with writing and may serve as useful conversation partners. They are located in Baugh Student Center 226-239. Visit http://www.etown.edu/offices/learning/ for information on hours and services.

*C.* *Academic Integrity*

Elizabethtown College places a high priority on academic integrity. I do not tolerate plagiarism, the purchasing and submission of purchased assignments/term papers, the non-attribution of one’s sources, and the dishonest use of another’s words or work. For more details on protocols related to academic dishonesty, please see the following course catalog: <http://catalog.etown.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=243#Academic_Judicial_System>.

*D.* *Statement on Disability*

Elizabethtown College welcomes otherwise qualified students with disabilities to participate in all of its courses, programs, services, and activities. If you have a documented disability and would like to request accommodations in order to access course material, activities, or requirements, please contact the Director of Disability Services, Lynne Davies, by phone (361-1227) or e-mail [daviesl@etown.edu](mailto:daviesl@etown.edu)*.* If your documentation meets the college’s documentation guidelines, you will be given a letter from Disability Services for each of your professors. Students experiencing certain documented temporary conditions, such as post-concussive symptoms, may also qualify for temporary academic accommodations and adjustments. I encourage you, *as early as possible*, to meet with me to discuss the academic adjustments specified in your accommodations letter as they pertain to my class.

*E. Inclusive Language*

Our course discourse will employ inclusive language. Language can affect the politics and products of our thinking, so we will endeavor to think of “humankind” rather than “mankind,” “Before the Common Era (BCE)/Common Era (CE)” rather than “Before Christ (BC)/Anno Domini (AD);” and the proper names of deities, beings, and other entities rather than the generic pronoun “he.” This effort represents a small but pivotal first step in making our class a safe and open-minded space.

*F. Student Health Services*

One of the best ways you can prepare for the rigor of the class is by taking measures to stay healthy. In addition to proper nutrition and exercise, visiting Student Health Services and The WELL are great ways of making sure you’re doing all you can to take care of yourself. Even if you feel as if all is well with you, I encourage you to take advantage of both of these services. Preventative care is the best medicine. For more information, visit http://www.etown.edu/offices/health/.

*F. Campus Diversity Advocates*

The CDA provides education, advocacy, support and a safe space for persons desiring a more inclusive Elizabethtown College. These volunteers work to empower students of all walks of life (e.g. gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, age, ability, religion). For more information, visit http://www.etown.edu/offices/diversity/advocates.aspx.

*G. Course Discomfort*

Because our course deals with categories that envelop who we are as human beings, participants may feel that the material is encroaching on their personhood. In the past, students have approached me on matters of faith/non-faith, struggles with cultural context, and other issues. Please know that I am always here to listen and assist you during my office hours or by appointment. The university’s chaplain/religious life directors may also be of assistance. For more information about Rev. Tracy Wenger Sadd and Rev. Amy Shorner-Johnson, see http://www.etown.edu/offices/chaplain/staff.aspx.