INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT
REL 103

Course Objectives
By the end of this course you should be able to:

• Demonstrate biblical literacy.
  o This entails being able to identify the various genres of the New Testament canon. We will not be reading and studying each of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament. Instead, we will study selected texts from each genre. This course will provide you the tools and know-how to study the texts that we do not explicitly address in the class.

• Articulate what influenced the writing and reception of selected New Testament texts.
  o This entails answering basic questions regarding the date, authorship, location, purpose, and historical context of selected texts.

• Appreciate how the New Testament affects the modern world.
  o The Bible generally, and the New Testament in particular, has been monumentally influential in world history. It is read as the foundation of religious belief and practice by millions and continues to exert cultural influence as a literary document.

Per learning objectives #3 and #6 from the Pioneer Core Program, this course will require you to and develop your ability to:

• Understand and analyze multiple philosophical, ethical, and religious positions held by persons within your own and other cultures.

• Develop and defend a position that demonstrates logical reasoning both orally and in writing.

Assessment
Grades will be determined by the following:

• Classroom Citizenship: 50% (50 points): Assessed by the attendance and preparation policies. See below for more information.

• Midterm Examination: 15% (15 points): Based on readings from the New Testament, from the secondary literature, class lectures, and discussions.

• Final Examination: 20% (20 points): Based on readings from the New Testament, from the secondary literature, class lectures, and discussions.

• Term Paper on a New Testament Text: 15% (15 points): A 5–7 page paper on a New Testament text of the student’s choice that was not read for class. See below for more information.

Materials


Important Dates

• Wednesday, October 25th (6PM): Mid-Term Examination

• Monday, December 18th (6PM): Final Examination

• Between Monday, December 4th and Sunday, December 10th: Term Paper Due
## Course Outline

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<tr>
<th>CLASS #</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<td><strong>Introductions</strong></td>
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| 1       | Monday 9.11.2017 | **Topic:** “Introduction to the course and the New Testament”  
Readings for Today:  
- No reading  
Objective: Articulate what it means to read the New Testament at the literary, ideological, and communal levels. |
Readings for Today:  
- Choose one of the following  
  - *Dei Verbum* (Canvas)  
  - “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” (Canvas)  
  - “Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture,” Section IV: “Guidelines Concerning How the Text is Rightly Used” (pp. 9–16) (Canvas)  
  - “Belgic Confession,” Articles 1–7 (Canvas)  
Objective: Articulate two reasons one might read the New Testament and explain the three levels of interpretation we will be operating with in this course. |
|         |            | **Unit 1: The Gospels and Jesus** |
Readings for Today:  
Objective: Distinguish the various religious, philosophical, cultural, and political phenomena that influenced the world in which the New Testament was written. |
| 4       | Wednesday 9.20.2017 | **Topic:** “Jesus”  
Readings for Today:  
- Mark Allan Powell, “Jesus” (http://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/main-articles/jesus)  
Objective: Identify the constituent aspects of high and low Christology and determine which framework selected texts about Jesus work from. |
| 5       | Monday 9.25.2017 | **Topic:** “Introducing the Gospels and the Gospel of Mark”  
Readings for Today:  
Objective: Define what a gospel is, identify what kind of materials are contained within the canonical gospels, and articulate basic information (date, setting, authors) about the composition of Mark. |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings for Today</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.27.2017</td>
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<td>- And then read the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1–6) in one sitting.</td>
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<td>Objective: Explain the differences between experiencing Mark in one sitting versus experiencing it piecemeal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.2.2017</td>
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<td>- (The link is to sixteen videos in a playlist. The number of each video corresponds with the chapters of Mark.)</td>
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<td>Objective: Explain the differences between reading Mark in one sitting and watching Mark in one sitting.</td>
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<td>10.4.2017</td>
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<td>- Selection from “Lives” (Canvas)</td>
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<td>Objective: Articulate how reading Mark alongside roughly contemporaneous texts affects the interpretation of specific passages.</td>
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<td>- Mark 1:1–1:15</td>
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<td>- Matthew 3:1–4:11</td>
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<td>Objective: Note two differences between each of the three sets of texts and assess how each solution to the Synoptic Problem would account for them.</td>
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<td>- Matthew 1–2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Luke 1–2</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Objective</td>
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Mark 15:22–16:8  
Matthew 27:33–28:20  
|      |            |                                                                                                     | Objective: Articulate how the Synoptic Gospels differ from one another with respect to their endings and assess the affect each ending has on its readers. |                                                                                     |
| 12   | 10.23.2017 |                                                                                                     | Mid-term Review Day                                                  | “The Class thus far” (Canvas)                                                        | Objective: Brainstorm ten terms or ideas that you think might be important to know for the mid-term exam. |
| 13   | 10.25.2017 |                                                                                                     | Mid-term Examination                                                 | No new reading.                                                                      | Objective: Complete the mid-term exam.                                                    |
Galatians                                                                 | Objective: Articulate three basic tenants of Paul's theology and explain how these relate to Jesus and the gospels. |
Philippians                                                                 | Objective: Identify the constituent parts of an ancient letter as they exist in Paul's letter to the Philippians. |
| 16   | 11.6.2017  |                                                                                                     | “Paul, Prison, and Slavery”                                          | Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (Canvas)  
Philemon                                                                       |                                                                                     |
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>“Paul and Women in the Early Church”</td>
<td>Bart D. Ehrman, “From Paul’s Female Colleagues to the Pastor’s Intimidated Women: The Oppression of Women in Early Christianity” (Canvas) &lt;br&gt; Nijay K. Gupta, “Women Leaders in the Philippian Church” (Canvas) &lt;br&gt; Selection from Karen Jo Torjesen, When Women were Priests (Canvas)</td>
<td>Articulate what you understand Paul’s view of slavery to be and how it has affected the modern world.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Writing and Research Assistance Day</td>
<td>No new reading.</td>
<td>Determine a term paper topic and acquire three resources for research.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Writing and Research Day</td>
<td>No new reading.</td>
<td>Write two pages of your final paper.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>“James, a Letter?”</td>
<td>Powell, 445–61</td>
<td>Provide three reasons you why you believe James is or is not a letter.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>12.4.2017</td>
<td>“James, pt. 3”</td>
<td>Elsa Tamez, Selection from <em>The Scandalous Message of James</em> (Canvas)</td>
<td>Articulate how the theology and worldview of James might affect the modern world.</td>
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Justin Jeffcoat Schedtler and Kelly J. Murphy, “Introduction” to *Apocalypses in Context: Apocalyptic Currents Through History* (Canvas). | Articulate the three most important things to know when reading apocalyptic literature. |
Powell, 519–37 | In a sentence, articulate the central message of Revelation. |
| 12.13.2017 | Final Review Day          | No new reading.                                                                  | Brainstorm ten terms or ideas that you think might be important to know for the final exam. |
| 12.18.2017 | Final Exam                | No new reading.                                                                  | Take the final exam. |

**Objective:** Note three similarities and differences between the theology and worldview of James and Paul.
Grading

Your letter grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- 93+ = A
- 88–92 = A/B
- 82–87 = B
- 77–81 = B/C
- 70–77 = C
- 60–69 = D
- 59 or below = F

Classroom Citizenship consists of 50% (50 points) of your grade and includes adequately preparing for class and participating in classroom discussions. Classroom citizenship is weighted heaviest because I believe that coming to class prepared and having engaged the assigned content is the most important part of this course. I do not care whether or not you “get the right answer” on the first go; I care that you have read and thought about the material and that you bring your thoughts to class. See the classroom citizenship section below for more information on how classroom citizenship points are earner.

The midterm and final Exams consist of 15% (15 points) and 20% (20 points) of your final grade, respectively. Exams are divided into multiple choice, short answer, and essay sections. The final exam is cumulative, but more material from the second half of the semester will appear than from the first.

The Term Paper on a New Testament text is worth 15% (15 points) of your final grade. The assignment is assessed on the clarity of presentation, strength of argument, use and engagement with secondary sources, and overall rhetorical effect. You have a one-week window to turn your paper in (12.4.2017–12.10.2017). For this reason, no late papers will be accepted. Any papers turned in at least one week before the deadline will be assessed and returned with feedback. If you choose, you may rewrite your paper incorporating this feedback and it will be re-graded. You will not receive a lower grade than the original, but if you successfully incorporate the feedback your grade will be positively affected. More detailed instructions for the paper will be handed out before the mid-terms, along with a rubric explaining how it is graded.

Classroom Citizenship

Classroom citizenship will be assessed by your attendance of, preparation for, and participation in class. You have the opportunity to earn up to 2.5 classroom citizenship points (2.5% of your final grade) per class.

You will receive .5 of a classroom citizenship point for every class you attend, even if you have done zero preparation for it.

You have the opportunity to earn 1 classroom citizenship point for either the reading-response assignment or the discussion-question assignment required for that class. One or the other of these will be assigned for every class and must submitted through Canvas three hours before class begins, namely 3PM.

Reading response assignments will consist of three questions posted on Canvas about the basic content of the assigned reading. Each question should be answered in approximately two sentences. Discussion-question assignments require you to formulate two of your own questions about the assigned reading and your preliminary answers to these questions. Avoid creating questions that require a simple yes/no or one-word answer. Rather, your question may be about something you found troubling in the text, about how the text might influence life, or about how the text relates to previous course content. You should attempt to formulate a question that you think would be interesting for the class to discuss.

Both the reading-response and discussion-question assignments are graded on a 0, .5, 1 basis. You will receive a 1 if your responses sufficiently demonstrate you have read and engaged the assigned content. You will receive a .5 if you complete the assignment but do not adequately demonstrate that you have read the assigned content. And you will receive a zero if you do not complete the assignment.

Finally, every class you have the opportunity to earn 1 classroom citizenship point for short writing assignments and other activities that will occur at the beginning of every class. These will be completed on a piece of paper and handed in at the end of class. This paper is also confirmation of your attendance. Like the reading-response and discussion-question assignments, these are graded on a 0, .5, 1 basis. You will receive a 1 if your response sufficiently demonstrates that you have
read and engaged the assigned content. You will receive a .5 if you complete the assignment but do not adequately demonstrate that you have read the assigned content. And you will receive a zero if you do not complete the assignment.

In short, every class up to 2.5 classroom citizenship points can be earned by: (1) attending class, (2) completing the reading-response assignment or discussion-question assignment prior to class, (3) completing the in-class writing assignment.

In addition to earning classroom citizenship points by the means outlined above, you can receive .5 of a classroom citizenship point every time you visit me at my office hours. When you do so, please bring a piece of paper with your name on it that contains two questions you wish to discuss related to the course.

Absences

Since we have 25 meetings (excluding the midterm and final) and you can earn 2.5 classroom citizenship points per meeting, you have the opportunity to earn 62.5 classroom citizenship points by attending and adequately completing the required assignments for each class. As classroom citizenship is 50% (50 points) of your final grade, this leaves room for a few absences from class for any reason. That said, excessive absences will adversely affect your overall grade. After four absences, each absence may lower your final grade by 4% (4 points). These will be subtracted from whatever classroom citizenship points you earned for the course.

Late Work and Special Accommodations

No late assignments will be accepted. It is imperative that all assigned readings and assignments be completed before class begins so that we can make the most of our time together in the classroom. Because there is a week window in which to turn in the written assignment for this course, no late papers will be accepted.

Missed exams cannot be made up except in the case of a personal emergency.

Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, or any student considering obtaining documentation should make an appointment with Ms. Martha Bledsoe, Director of Services for Students with Disabilities, no later than the first week of class. She can be reached by calling 262-524-7335 or contacting her via e-mail at mbledsoe@carrollu.edu.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

According to Carroll University’s Student Handbook, the following are instances of academic dishonesty: using someone else’s words, ideas, or research without citation (i.e. plagiarism), using unauthorized materials during an exam, and copying another student’s work.

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense. I expect we will not have to address any issues of academic dishonesty, but if the occasion arises, all instances of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy. The Carroll University Academic Integrity Policy is located in your student handbook (https://my.carrollu.edu/ICS/Departments/Student_Affairs). I encourage you to familiarize with it. If a student violates this policy in any way, I reserve the right to impose a sanction of failure on the assignment/assessment or failure in the course. If you have questions about appropriate citations, please ask.

Course Description

The description of this course from Carroll University’s course catalog reads as follows:

- An introduction to the history, literature, and interpretation of the New Testament. The course includes the study of the Jewish and Greco-Roman historical backgrounds of Jesus and the earliest church and the use of historical, sociological, and literary methods to examine the New Testament writings.
Disclaimer
The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as the curriculum and/or program require(s).

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are you, Mr. Professor?

I’m glad you asked. My name is Nick Elder. I’m a doctoral candidate studying Judaism and Christianity in antiquity at Marquette University. I’m currently writing a dissertation about the different ways that Jews and Christians wrote and read narratives in the ancient world. I originally hail from Kansas City, and then I lived in Denver for some time before moving to Milwaukee to attend Marquette. I have a BA from Colorado Christian University and an MA from the Iliff School of Theology. I’m married to my more attractive counterpart, Beth, and we have two children, Brooks and Kit James. I enjoy the finer things in life: family, friends, BBQ (Kansas-City style), hiking, camping, quality coffee, music, following Kansas State University athletics, being a pop-culture contrarian, and biking. On summer nights, I can be found operating a pedal-cab on the streets of Milwaukee, sitting around a bonfire on my patio with friends and family, or holed up somewhere reading an obscure book about ancient Judaism or Christianity.

This class is at night, specifically around dinner time. What if I am hungry?

Feel free to eat and drink in class, so long as you are not distracting others with potent-smelling fare.

Why does this class matter?

This class matters because the New Testament has been monumentally influential in world history, the development of culture, and because it continues to be read by millions as a religious text that informs their lives and religious practices. If you read the New Testament as a religious text yourself, then knowing more about it will influence your own religious and spiritual practices.

I am not religious; will this affect my grade in this class?

Absolutely not. This class does not presume any kind of faith commitment and does not require you to believe anything about the Bible generally or the New Testament in particular to succeed in it. We will primarily be studying the documents in the New Testament as literature and attempting to situate these texts in their own historical and literary contexts.

How is my grade calculated?

50% comes from classroom citizenship, 35% of it comes from two exams, and 15% comes from a 5–7 page written assignment.

How can I contact you if I have a question about this class?

The best way to reach me is by my Carroll e-mail (nelder@carrollu.edu). I will generally get back to you within one workday. But I can make no promises about being able to respond to last-minute questions about exams, assignments, or readings. So plan your preparation accordingly.

Do you take attendance?

Attendance is taken by the daily in-class writing assignment that you complete at the beginning of class. If for some reason you forget to turn this in, please let me know via e-mail ASAP.
Does this course have extra credit?

Not explicitly. There will be no “bonus work” that you can do to bump up your grade. But as mentioned in the policies above you can earn up to 62.5 points for classroom citizenship and the grading scale only includes 50 classroom citizenship points. If you receive more than 50 classroom citizenship points, these will be counted as “extra” points towards your final grade. In addition, you will receive .5 of a classroom citizenship point for every occasion that you visit me during office hours and bring two questions for discussion.

Are the exams difficult?

Only if you have not attended or adequately prepared for class. There will be no surprises on the exams. Everything on them will be something you have seen in previous course content. The objectives for each class will also give you an idea about what is most important for each meeting and what is likely to show up on an exam.

Is the paper graded harshly?

I will give your paper a very close read. I expect you to do the same before you turn it in. Half of writing is revising. Read your paper out loud and edit it multiple times before you turn it in. I expect you to work hard on the paper and in return I will work hard on providing you helpful feedback. As stated in the policies above, if you turn in your paper at least a week before the deadline, I will assess it and provide feedback so that you can revise the paper and turn it again.

Can I use technology, such as my computer or phone, during class?

I respectfully ask that you only use computers, phones, or tablets when they are relevant to classroom activities. I recognize that many of our readings are posted and accessible via Canvas and that it might be beneficial to access these via an electronic medium during class. That’s fine, but please do not use your devices to access non-course material during class. I will work hard to make class sufficiently interesting and worthwhile so long as you make the effort to avoid the temptation of accessing social media and other non-course material during our time together.