

**WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION
GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE**

Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	Contact Hours
PHI	225	INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT	1. <u>3</u> <i>Lecture/Demonstration</i> 2. <u> </u> <i>Lab/Studio</i> 3. <u>3</u> <i>Credit Hours</i>

Course Description

Offers an overview of the New Testament and selected Early Christian writings. Introduces students to various methods of critical study, analysis, interpretation and application of these writings. (IAI H5 901 pending)

Topical Outline

- I. Introduction and Overview
- II. What is the New Testament?
- III. Historical, Social and Religious Contexts
- IV. The Gospel According to Mark
- V. The Gospel According to Matthew
- VI. The Gospel According to Luke
- VII. The Gospel According to John
- VIII. The Historical Jesus
- IX. Acts of the Apostles
- X. Thessalonians and Corinthians
- XI. Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, Romans
- XII. Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles, Women
- XIII. Hebrews, Peter, James 2 Peter, Jude and Johannine Epistles
- XIV. The Book of Revelation

Method of Presentation

1. Lecture
2. Class Discussion
3. Other: Small group work Student presentations Student debates

Student Outcomes (The student should)

1. identify the Christian canonical writings as well as relevant Jewish writings.
2. identify and analyze problems of authorship with respect to the canonical writings.
3. analyze historical, social, political and religious contexts of the New Testament.
4. identify and evaluate different approaches to interpreting the New Testament.
5. demonstrate an ability to critically analyze passages of the New Testament.
6. identify and analyze different social, cultural and historical developments that are traceable to the New Testament.
7. relate ideas in the New Testament to ideas in Western philosophy.
8. develop a personal interpretation of the New Testament that is informed by the methodological approaches of the course.
9. write a total of at least 10 pages (of approximately 300 words each) of college-level writing in the service of the above outcomes.

Method of Evaluation

A. Typical classroom assessment techniques

- Projects
- Class participation
- Objective tests
- Studio/Lab performance
- Final exam
- Portfolios
- Essays/Term papers
- Oral examination
- Research report

B. Course content learning outcomes

- Quizzes
- Group participation
- Case study assignments
- Homework
- Midterm Exam
- Exams

C. Additional assessment information (optional).

Writing Assignments: Each of the following can be used as a 1500 word paper or a 300 word weekly assignment.

1. Either make the case that the New Testament can be understood from a historical perspective or only from the perspective of a Christian.
2. Analyze Jesus' relationship to the Jewish Tradition.
3. Give the best possible definition of religion and discuss how Christianity fits it and the ways it does not fit the definition.
4. Analyze early Christianity's relationship to contemporaneous religions.
5. Is ancient Judaism a single tradition or several distinct ones?
6. Evaluate the claim that the Gospels were written by eyewitnesses concerned with historical accuracy.
7. Make a case on whether Mark's Gospel portrays Jesus as God.
8. Analyze the Jewishness of Matthew's Gospel.
9. Compare and contrast the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke.
10. Analyze the claim that John's portrayal of Jesus is fundamentally different from the other Gospels.
11. Focusing on two or three vignettes in the Gospels, present a case on their historical accuracy.
12. Analyze the different depictions of Jesus' resurrection in each of the Gospels.
13. How much was the Book of Acts influenced by Luke?
14. Did Paul preach a different religion from Jesus?
15. Evaluate the claim that Paul did not author of some of the Epistles credited to him.

16. Analyze different statements on women or on slavery in the Pauline Epistles.
17. Show how the author and/or audience of one of the books of the New Testament was experiencing persecution or religious conflict.
18. Show how two authors of the New Testament disagree on an important point.
19. Explain the historical context of the Book of Revelation and its meaning.
20. Do the "I am" statements in the Gospel according to John express religious exclusivism?
21. Focusing on one or two passages, interpret some of the teachings or miracles of Jesus.

1. *Required*

- Bart D. Ehrman. A Brief Introduction to the New Testament. 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press, 2013 ISBN: 978019986230

□ *Supplementary materials*

None

□ *Software*

None

Prepared by: Colleen Burns
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