

IST 2004: Introduction to the New Testament

Professor: Eric C. Smith (ecsmith@iliff.edu)

Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., room I-301

Office Hours: Thursdays 9-11 a.m. and by appointment, I-202A

This course introduces the literature of Christian origins. It begins with a look at the context out of which the New Testament emerged, and then turns to the earliest extant texts, including Paul's letters, the Gospels, Acts, and post-Pauline epistles. This course will survey most of the texts of the New Testament (and a few texts outside the New Testament) and will seek to place them in their specific historical and cultural contexts. Furthermore, this course aims to give students skills that will allow them to interpret these texts responsibly for a variety of contexts, with methodologies that have proved useful for contemporary audiences. *Introduction to the New Testament* fulfills the breadth requirement for Sacred Texts.

Course Goals:

- To recognize that multiple forms of Christianity emerge in and from the texts of the New Testament;
- To learn to carefully read and analyze ancient texts;
- To understand the texts of the New Testament in the context of other contemporaneous texts;
- To understand the larger debates that have preoccupied scholars, faith communities, and other readers of the New Testament.

Course Outcomes:

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Navigate confidently and competently through the world of early Christian writings
- Identify and engage the concepts that have emerged from the study of the New Testament.
- Identify where significant New Testament passages reside.
- Read and interpret the New Testament for a variety of contexts.

Course Requirements:

Epistle Exercise: Due in week 4, this exercise will consist of two 300-400 word letters and a few short (2-3 sentence) answers about the letters you wrote. (10%)

Short Presentation: Given in week 9, these presentations will serve to familiarize the class with one non-canonical writing from early Christianity. The presentations should last about 5 minutes, and should familiarize the class with the name of the text, its purported and actual (if known) author, its genre, its date, its canonical status (is it canonical for anyone, or has it ever been), its textual status (is it extant, fragmentary, whole, etc), and some interesting features of the text. Students may elect to work alone or in pairs. No written assignment needs to be turned in, and students may elect to use PowerPoint, Prezi, Keynote, or another electronic presentation tool if they like. The texts should be drawn from the list below. You may petition the instructor for permission to present on a text that is not listed. (10%)

The Gospel of Peter	Acts of Timothy
The Secret Gospel of Mark	Acts of Peter and Andrew
Papyrus Egerton 2 (The Unknown Gospel)	Acts of Peter and Paul
The Gospel of the Ebionites	Acts of the Martys
The Gospel of the Nazareans	1 Clement
The Gospel of Mani	The Didache
The Gospel of Basilides	The Didascalia Apostolorum
The Acts of Pilate/Gospel of Nicodemus	Ignatius' Letter to the Ephesians
The Gospel according to the Hebrews	Ignatius' Letter to the Magnesians
The Acts of Paul and Thecla	Ignatius' Letter to the Trallians
The Gospel of Bartholomew	Ignatius' Letter to the Romans
The Diatessaron	Ignatius' Letter to the Philadelphians
The Book of Thomas the Contender	Ignatius' Letter to Polycarp
Dialogue of the Savior	Ignatius' Letter to the Philippians
Gospel of Mary (Gospel of Mary Magdalene)	The Epistle of Barnabas
Gospel of Judas	3 Corinthians (The Third Epistle to the Corinthians)
Apocryphon of James	The Preaching of Peter
Apocryphon of John	The fragments of Papias
	The Shepherd of Hermas
	The Apocalypse of Peter

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will ask students to know and recognize key persons, concepts, texts, and dates from the first half of the class (generally, the epistles of Paul and the Jewish and Roman backgrounds of the New Testament). (30%)

Final Exam: The final exam will ask students to know and recognize key persons, concepts, texts, and dates from the second half of the class (generally, the gospels, Acts, Revelation, and some non-canonical materials), and to synthesize this material with material from the first half of the class in comprehensive essay questions. (40%)

Discussion and Participation: Students will be expected to participate in online and in-class discussions in a manner that demonstrates that they have completed the reading and that they are engaging (and not merely summarizing) the material at a level suitable for graduate studies. (10%)

Policies and Services:

Incompletes: Incompletes are offered only in exceptional circumstances. See the Masters Student Handbook on my.iliff.edu for specific policies and procedures.

Pass/Fail: Masters students wishing to take the class pass/fail should discuss this with the instructor by the *second class session*.

Academic Integrity and Community Covenant: All students are expected to abide by Iliff's statement on Academic Integrity, as published in the Masters Student Handbook. All participants in this class are expected to be familiar with Iliff's Community Covenant.

Accommodations: Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs. Students are encouraged to contact their assigned advisor to initiate the process of requesting accommodations. The advising center can be contacted at advising@iliff.edu or by phone at 303-765-1146.

Writing Lab: Grammar and organization are important for all written assignments. Additional help is available from the Iliff Writing Lab, which is available for students of any level who need help beginning an assignment, organizing thoughts, or reviewing a final draft.

Inclusive Language: It is expected that all course participants will use inclusive language in speaking and writing, and will use terms that do not create barriers to classroom community.

Books for the Course

Required

- Marc Brettler and Amy-Jill Levine (eds.), *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford, 2011). ISBN: 978-0195297706.
- A good NRSV study bible (Harper Collins, Oxford, NIB, etc). No other translation is acceptable, and the edition must be a study bible.
- Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (Fifth Edition; Oxford, 2012). ISBN: 978-0199757534.
- Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not A Christian* (HarperOne, 2010). ISBN: 978-0061349911.
- Krister Stendahl, *The Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Fortress, 1995). ISBN: 978-0800629229.
- L. Michael White, *Scripting Jesus: The Gospels in Rewrite* (HarperOne, 2010). ISBN: 0061228796.

Recommended

- Kurt Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Revised 1982; English only; American Bible Society, 2010). ISBN: 978-1585169429.

Course Schedule:

January 9: Jewish and Greco-Roman Backgrounds; Introducing Jesus

Readings: Ehrman pp. 1-81; Eisenbaum pp. 67-131; New Testament (entire) (recommended)

In Class: *From Jesus to Christ*, part 1 (time permitting)

January 16: Issues in the Interpretation of Paul; 1-2 Thessalonians; Philippians; Galatians

Readings: Ehrman pp. 306-338, 354-367; Eisenbaum chapters 2, 8, 9; 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians

January 23: Corinthian Correspondence; Philemon

Readings: Ehrman pp. 340-354, 367-370; Eisenbaum chapters 10, 11; 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philemon

Epistle Exercise handed out

January 30: Romans, Pseudo-Paul, Pauline thought

Readings: Ehrman pp. 372-384, 397-420; Stendahl, *Final Account* (entire); Romans; Colossians; Ephesians; 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus

Epistle Exercise due

February 6: Midterm Exam

February 13: Mark; Synoptic Problem

Readings: Ehrman pp. 82-113; White chapters 1, 5, 11, Appendix A, Appendix B; Gospel of Mark

February 20: Matthew, Luke

Readings: Ehrman pp. 114-153; White chapters 3, 12, 13, Appendix D, Appendix E, Gospel of Matthew; Gospel of Luke

Panel Discussion: Citations of scripture in the gospels

Selection of non-canonical texts for presentation on March 6th

February 27: John, Johannine Literature; Gospel of Thomas, Infancy Gospel of Thomas

Readings: Ehrman pp. 176-216; White chapters 2, 14; John; 1, 2, and 3 John; Gospel of Thomas; Infancy Gospel of Thomas

March 6: Acts, Revelation, Other Early Christian Writings

Readings: Ehrman pp. 154-175, 474-507; White chapter 15; Acts of the Apostles; Revelation of John

Short presentations on a non-canonical text (see list in the Course Requirements section above)

March 13: Final Exam