

# REL105 The Bible: The New Testament

## Instructor:

Shawn Reeves

B.A. English (with History minor), University of Illinois

M.A. Theology, Franciscan University of Steubenville

Published Works:

*Worry: A Journey in Exodus* (Alba House, 2005)

*Embracing the Mystery of the Holy Spirit: The Son, the Spirit, and the Sacred* (Alba House, 2007)

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Office Hours: 9am-10am Wed. (in library)

This course will serve as an introduction to the origin, development, historical influence, and interpretation of the New Testament. We will look at the texts of the New Testament as assertions of the beliefs of the authors and study how the claims of these texts relate to one another and how the authors understood them to relate to the assertions of the Old Testament. Throughout the semester we will investigate the New Testament through the following questions: What is the author asserting in these texts? What terms/images does the author use and why? To whom is the author communicating and for what end and purpose? Finally, this course will explore how the content of the texts of the New Testament impacted the Christian community throughout time and motivated their doctrines and social actions.

## Requirements

Course requirements will consist of:

1. Attendance and participation
2. Reading from assigned texts
3. Successful completion of four take-home assignments and two examinations

## Texts

Stephen L. Harris, *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction, 5<sup>th</sup> edition* (New York: MacGraw Hill, 2006)

*The Harper Collins Study Bible* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2006)

## Grading

Grading is done on the following scale:

|        |     |
|--------|-----|
| 90-100 | = A |
| 80-89  | = B |
| 70-79  | = C |
| 60-69  | = D |
| 0-59   | = F |

Final Grade Breakdown:

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Take-Home Assignments | 40% |
| (10% each)            |     |
| Midterm Exam          | 30% |
| Final Exam            | 30% |

## Attendance Policy

For every two unexcused absences, your final grade will be reduced one percent. Examples: grade of 91% with four absences = final grade of 89%; grade of 91% with eight absences = final grade of 87%. Legitimate absences due to illness or family crises will be excused with note from physician, clergy, or equivalent.

## Take Home Assignments

These assignments are essentially open book quizzes. All texts and notes *are* permissible to be used to complete these assignments. The purpose of these exercises is to allow the students to become more familiar with the details and important points of the material covered in class and to award added formal preparation for the exams. Students will have about two weeks to complete each Take-Home Assignment from the time it is passed out in class. Students are encouraged to note closely in the syllabus when these assignments will be handed out and due. Any take-home assignments turned in past the due date will be reduced one full letter grade.

## Schedule:

### I. Section One: Basic Principles

- Aug. 18: New Testament as Expression of Belief  
Aug. 20: Apostolic Preaching and Development of a New Testament  
Aug. 22: Relationship with the Old Testament (Part I)  
Aug. 25: Relationship with the Old Testament (Part II)  
**Take-Home Assignment #1 Handed Out**  
Aug. 27: Establishment of a New Testament Canon (Part I)  
*Reading: Harris, p.4-46, 81-98, 250-264*  
Aug. 29: Establishment of a New Testament Canon (Part II)  
Sep. 1: **Labor Day - No Class**  
Sep. 3: Gospel as Biblical Genre  
*Reading: Harris, p.320-349 and 387-432*  
Sep. 5: Structure of the New Testament: Comparison of Synoptic Gospel Accounts  
Sep. 8: Structure of the New Testament: Comparison of Synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel

### II. Section Two: Assertions of the Gospels Concerning Jesus

- Sep. 10: Gospel Images and Titles of the Person of Jesus: Lord, Messiah, Savior, King of Jews  
**Take-Home Assignment #1 Due**  
**Take-Home Assignment #2 Handed Out**  
Sep. 12: Gospel Images and Titles of the Person of Jesus: Word of God, Son of God, Son of Man  
Sep. 15: The Discourse of Jesus about Himself (Part I)  
*Reading: John's Gospel, Ch. 10 and 15; Matthew's Gospel Ch.10-12 and 25*  
Sep. 17: The Discourse of Jesus about Himself (Part II)  
Sep. 19: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Miraculous Healings (Part I)  
*Reading: Harris, p.155-249*  
*Matthew's Gospel, Ch.8; Mark's Gospel, Ch. 1-2 and 7-8*  
Sep. 22: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Miraculous Healings (Part II)  
Sep. 24: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Miraculous Healings (Part III)  
Sep. 26: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Miraculous Lake Accounts  
*Reading: Matthew's Gospel Ch. 9 and 14; Luke's Gospel Ch. 7-8*  
Sep. 29: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Raising of Dead and Exorcisms (Part I)  
**Take-Home Assignment #2 Due**  
Oct. 1: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Raising of Dead and Exorcisms (Part II)  
Oct. 3: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Jesus and the Spirit of God  
*Reading: John's Gospel Ch. 4, 7, 14, and 16*  
Oct. 6: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Resurrection and Ascension (Part I)  
Oct. 8: Assertions of the Supernatural in the Person of Jesus: Resurrection and Ascension (Part II)  
and Midterm Exam Review  
Oct. 10: **Midterm**

### III: Section Three: Images of Jesus in the New Testament Letters

- Oct. 13: Paul's Vision of a Divine Jesus  
*Reading: Harris, p.126-154*  
*Ephesians Ch.1 and 4; Philippians Ch. 2; Colossians Ch.1;*  
*Romans Ch.5; 1 Corinthians Ch.15*  
Oct. 15: Jesus as the New Adam in Paul's Letters (Part I)  
**Take-Home Assignment #3 Handed Out**  
Oct. 17: Jesus as the New Adam in Paul's Letters (Part II)  
*Reading: Harris, p.357-381*  
Oct. 20: Jesus as the Eternal High Priest in the Letter to the Hebrews  
*Reading: Harris, p.395-401*  
*Hebrews Ch.4-9*

- Oct. 22: Centrality of the Crucifixion Event in the New Testament  
 Oct. 24: John's Presentation of Jesus in His Letters and Revelation  
*Reading: Revelation of John, Ch. 1, 5, and 19*

**IV: Section Four: New Testament Assertions Concerning the Christian Community**

- Oct. 27: Activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Community (Part I)  
 Oct. 29: Activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Community (Part II)  
*Reading: Harris, p.293-316*  
 Oct. 31: Ministry of the Apostles and their Coworkers: the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles (Part I)  
 Nov. 3: Ministry of the Apostles and their Coworkers: the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles (Part II)  
**Take-Home Assignment #3 Due**  
**Take-Home Assignment #4 Handed Out**  
 Nov. 5: Ministry of the Apostles and their Coworkers: New Testament Letters  
 Nov. 7: The Concept of Baptism in the New Testament (Part I)  
*Reading: John's Gospel, Ch.3; Romans Ch.6; 1 Peter Ch.3*  
 Nov. 10: The Concept of Baptism in the New Testament (Part II)  
 Nov. 12: The Christian Community in Paul's Letters (Part I)  
 Nov. 14: The Christian Community in Paul's Letters (Part II)  
*Reading: Harris, p.381-387*  
 Nov. 17: The Christian Community in the Letters of Peter and the Letter of Jude (Part I)  
*Reading: 1 Peter, Ch.1-3; 2 Peter, Ch.1 and 3*  
 Nov. 19: The Christian Community in the Letters of Peter and the Letter of Jude (Part II)  
 Nov. 21: The Christian Community in John's Letters and Revelation (Part I)  
*Reading: First Letter of John, Ch.3-5; Revelation of John, Ch. 4, 7-8, and 20-21*  
 Nov. 24: The Christian Community in John's Letters and Revelation (Part II)

**V: Section Five: Application of the New Testament to the Christian Religious Experience**

- Nov. 26: The New Testament and Early Christian Writings: First and Second Century Apologists  
 Nov. 28: **Thanksgiving Break - No Class**  
 Dec. 1: The New Testament and Early Christian Writings: Creeds and Writings of 4<sup>th</sup> Century Leaders  
*Reading: Creed Handout*  
*Harris, p.440-448*  
 Dec. 3: Influence of New Testament on Christian Response to Social Needs (Part I)  
**Take-Home Assignment #4 Due**  
 Dec. 5: Influence of New Testament on Christian Response to Social Needs (Part II)  
 and Final Exam Review  
 Dec 11: **Final Exam 8-10am**