

REL 2240 Introduction to the New Testament, Summer 2016

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday: 1:00-4:30

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Murphy, bmurphy@fsu.edu, 317-0367 ext. 230

Web-site: <http://myweb.fsu.edu/bmurphy/>

Office Hours: Mon –Thurs, 2:30-4:30pm

Prerequisites: None. Although the course is intended for students in their 2nd year, it presupposes no prior study of Christianity or any other religion, and should not be too difficult for freshers.

Course Description: An introduction to the writings of the New Testament in the context of the development of early Christianity.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, students should be able to explain how it is possible to arrive at a better understanding of the New Testament, by paying attention to the broad context, and the theological agenda of particular writers. They should be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of historical methodology.

Evaluation: Regular quizzes will determine that you are acquiring a good knowledge of the ‘broad context’ – that is, awareness of the contents of the most important New Testament documents, and of the historical context in which it was written. You will have ten quizzes in class, but may drop the lowest two grades. No extra quizzes! By writing longer papers, you will demonstrate a working knowledge of historical methodology, applying such methods to selected texts. Papers must be written in a scholarly manner, as set out in my notes ‘Writing Papers for REL 2240’. I will choose the best two out of a possible four papers. Each paper should be at least 2000 words long – you receive a W for this class, and you have to earn it!

Set Texts: *The Oxford Annotated Bible*,
Bart D. Ehrman: *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament* (3rd edition)

You will be permitted to have a copy of *The Oxford Annotated Bible* with you in the final examination. I suggest you buy a copy at the start of the semester, and bring it to class every day. No other book will be permitted in the final, and you really don’t want to spend time trying to photocopy the whole Bible.

Grading:

Papers:	60%
Quizzes:	20 %
Final Examination:	20%

94+ A
90+ A-
86+ B+
82+ B
78+ B-
74+ C+
70+ C
66+ C-
64+ D+
60+ D
56+ D-

In order to fulfill FSU's Writing Requirement ("W" Designation) credit, the student must earn a "C-" or better in the course, and in order to receive a "C-" or better in the course, the student must earn at least a "C-" on the required writing assignments for the course. If the student does not earn a "C-" or better on the required writing assignments for the course, the student will not earn an overall grade of "C-" or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

Schedule: For a more detailed schedule, including readings, check the web-site. Each quiz will be based on readings listed on the web-site, and topics discussed in class.

17th May: Quiz 1

24th May: Quiz 2

26th May Paper 1 Due: **How does Mark use his skill as a storyteller to present Jesus as a Savior?**

2nd June: Quiz 3

9th June: Quiz 4

14th June: Quiz 5

16th June Paper 2 Due: **What did Paul mean by 'faith'?**

23rd June: Quiz 6

24th June: *Last day to drop without special permission*

30th June: Quiz 7

5th July: Quiz 8

7th July Paper 3 Due: **What did Jesus mean by 'the Kingdom of God'?**

12th July: Quiz 9

19th July: Quiz 10

28th July, Paper 4 Due: **Were any of the first Christians feminists?**

Final Examinations are 1st – 5th August. Exact date of final to be announced.

Policies:

So, you want to receive an F? Just ignore the following rules.

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

I allow 4 excused absences. I assume that all absences are excused – I will not ask to see any documentation: if you miss a class or arrive late, I assume it is for a good reason and ask for no explanation. If you miss 5-7 classes, for whatever reason, you will lose 5% of your grade. If you have compelling reasons for missing more than one third of the course, then you should drop the class: if you miss 10 or more classes, you will automatically fail.

At the start of the class, I will close the door and then call roll. If you arrive when the door is closed, please wait patiently and quietly. Do not disturb the class. After 30 minutes, I will open the door, giving a chance for latecomers to enter and early-leavers to depart – in each case, receiving a half-credit for attendance.

Clocks on this campus are unreliable: I set my watch by the computer in my office – this is the same time as is displayed on computers in classrooms and in the library. (Administrative computers, e.g. in the Student Affairs Office are on a different server, although the time-difference is only a few seconds.)

Remember, you should always aim to be the classroom before the lesson begins. By the time I call roll, you should be sat at your desk waiting.

Cell phones must be switched off in class. You will be penalized for breaking this rule. Food is prohibited, but you may quietly imbibe non-alcoholic drinks.

Late Work: Work must be handed in during class on the date given. If you know that you will be unable to make a class, you may arrange for a friend to deliver the work to me, but the responsibility is yours. I will only consider grading late work in exceptional cases (e.g. serious illness, with a doctor's note). If I consider it appropriate, I will penalize late work. Unless you have a very good reason for presenting the work late, it will receive an F.

Highlights/Lowlights: To help all students in the class produce better papers, I select the best and worst pieces of work that are submitted on the web-site along with my comments. These extracts will be presented anonymously. If you are willing to have extracts from your work used on the web-site, write a large letter 'Y' at the start of the first page. If unwilling, write a large 'N'. I operate on the rule that *qui tacet consentire* (silence indicates consent).

Students With Disabilities:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building,
Florida State University Tallahassee,
FL 32306-4167 (850) 644-9566 (voice) (850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

Sexual Harassment Policy:

It is the policy of the University that its employees and students neither commit nor condone sexual harassment in any form.

http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/info/university_notices.htm

Student eligibility for an incomplete grade:

Incomplete ("I") grades will not be assigned, except in the case of exceptional unforeseen circumstances that occur within the last three weeks of the semester and your work has otherwise been satisfactory (C average).

THERE IS A FATE WORSE THAN F!

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

If you deliberately violate the Academic Honor Code, you are trying to get more credit for your work than you deserve by deceiving your instructor. Furthermore, you are attempting to gain an unfair advantage over honest students. Taking steps to deal with plagiarism takes up a lot of my time, and slows down the whole process of grading. So, please read the following instructions and follow them carefully.

If you are using any words taken directly from any book, or web-site, or CD-ROM, they must be enclosed in inverted commas - "...", or else clearly indicated by an indented margin and change of format:

As with this piece of text, which clearly stands apart from the rest of this page. This is how a quotation from another source should appear in your paper when printed, unless it is just a "couple of words" that you want to mention.

You must state from which book they were taken, preferably including a page number. The reference must be given in the text, when the quotation is used, so that I can see when grading your paper exactly what is your work and what is taken from another source. Use either footnotes¹, or (parentheses). It is not sufficient to list sources at the end of the paper, although you should also do this. If you are using ideas or information taken from a book, a web-site, a lecture or a conversation with a friend, acknowledgement must be given in the text, at the point in which the idea or information is used.

Even if you are not quoting directly, there should still be a clear acknowledgement of your sources: this is known as paraphrasing – you explain someone else's ideas in your own words. By giving a citation, you give credit to the person whose information you are using. You also advertise to the professor that you have been reading about the subject.

If you have any doubts about meeting these requirements, contact me as soon as possible. Further notes are available on my web-site.

Papers must be written by you in English. If you write it in Spanish, you must translate it yourself: you are being graded, in part on your ability to communicate effectively in English. You are allowed to have help with "proof-reading" - i.e. you may ask someone to read what you have written in English and point out any mistakes. You must acknowledge your gratitude to your proof-reader at the start of the paper.

Plagiarism also includes the use of illicit material in closed book quizzes and final examinations. If I discover that you are guilty of plagiarism, you will receive an F for the piece of work in question, and it will be counted towards your final grade. As required by p.73 of the General Bulletin, I will inform the Vice-Rector in writing, and this will remain on your file. Repeated offences may result in your being expelled from the university. If I discover a second offence, you will receive an F for the entire course.

¹ This is a footnote. Your word-processor will automatically number your footnotes.

I have read and understood the syllabus for REL 2240, Summer 2016. If I fail to follow the instructions given here, particularly those which relate to violations of the Academic Honor Code, I accept responsibility.

Name (print):

Signed:

Date: