RELIGIOUS STUDIES 202
NEW TESTAMENT: HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
FALL 2012

Dr. John R. Huddleston
Glebe 4B, Room 203 (use sidewalk entrance)
Office hours: T 1:45 – 3:00, Th 1:45 – 4:30 (or by appointment)
Office phone: 953-4996 (w/ voice mail)
E-mail: Huddlestonj@cofc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course introduces the student to that group of documents known collectively in Christian tradition as the New Testament. In addition to generous readings from the biblical text, we will examine selected extra-biblical documents (Jewish and Greco-Roman) in order to situate the early Christian canonical writings in their pristine historical, religious, and social contexts. Particular attention will be devoted to: (1) the position of early Christianity as one among a number of Jewish sects in the diverse religious world of first-century Palestine, and that movement’s gradual emergence from this ancient Jewish matrix in forging its own identity in light of the life and teachings of Jesus and his earliest followers, and (2) the contentious debate over the requirements for Gentile (non-Jewish) entry into the fledgling Jewish-Christian community as reflected especially in the writings of Paul, the self-proclaimed apostle to the Gentiles.

In written exams and homework assignments, students will gain the ability to identify and analyze early Christian and other texts in their socio-historical and political contexts, to distinguish between a variety of literary genres and their relevance for interpretation, and to articulate the multiple ways a particular text is interpreted by different, and at times competing, religious communities.

REQUIRED TEXTS

2) A Bible. The preferred translation is the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) in the following study edition: The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Books. 3rd edition, ed. Michael Coogan et al. (Oxford University Press, 2001). A new 4th edition appeared in 2010, fully revised with new notes etc., although the translation is unchanged. Earlier editions of the NRSV are also acceptable, as are a few other reputable translations, on which I shall comment during the first meeting of class.

3) A collection of readings, available on OAKS (accessed via your MyCharleston account; open to students enrolled in the class).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Three examinations (25% each). These consist of fill-in-the-blank, passage identification (identify a passage and discuss its significance), and one essay. A study guide will be distributed prior to each exam. It is imperative that you notify me in advance if you are unable to attend class on the day of an exam. You should call me at my office (voice mail) or leave a message at the Department of Religious Studies (953-0895). Make-up exams may differ in coverage from those taken in class and will be given only to those who provide a valid excuse from the office of Undergraduate Studies for their absence.
Class participation and weekly quizzes/homework assignments (25%). It is expected that each student will come to class prepared (having done the readings and assignments) and ready to participate in class discussion. As part of your weekly work, I will give either an in-class quiz over the readings or a homework assignment. The quizzes (announced beforehand) are designed simply to motivate you to keep up with the readings. You will be allowed to miss two of these (please do not send your assignments via e-mail). Any number beyond this will count as a zero, regardless of why you missed class or did not turn in the assignment.

GRADING
Letter grades are determined in accordance with the following scale:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= 100-94 & C &= 75-73 \\
A- &= 93-90 & C- &= 72-70 \\
B+ &= 89-86 & D+ &= 69-66 \\
B &= 85-83 & D &= 65-62 \\
B- &= 82-80 & D- &= 61-59 \\
C+ &= 79-76 & F &= 58-
\end{align*}
\]

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS
(Please bring all relevant reading materials to class!)

A. Brief Survey of Israel's History from Abraham to Bar Kokhba
   Reading: Time lines in Oaks #1 and sources for Roman Period in Oaks #2

B. The Religious World of the Second Temple Period: Greco-Roman Religiosity and the Diversity of Jewish Sects
   Readings: Ehrman chaps. 3 and 4
   “Savior Gods in the Mediterranean World” (Oaks #3)
   “Miraculous Conceptions and Births in Mediterranean Antiquity” (Oaks #4)
   Cohen, “Judaism at the Time of Jesus” and Saldarini, “Pluralism of Practice and Belief in First Century Judaism” (Oaks #5)
   Murphy, “Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Sanhedrin” (Oaks #6)

C. The Religious World continued: The Qumran Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls
   Readings: Vermes, “The Community Rule”; “Commentary on Habakkuk”; and “Commentaries on Isaiah” (Oaks #7)
   Flint, “Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls” (Oaks #8)

D. Messiahs, Messianic Expectation, and Messianic Revolts
   Readings: Ehrman, pp. 260-266
   Nickelsburg and Stone, “The Agents of Divine Deliverance” (Oaks #9)
   Horsley and Hanson, “Royal Pretenders and Messianic Movements” (Oaks #10)

   Reading: Ehrman, chaps. 1-2
      Reading: Ehrman, chaps. 5-8 and non-canonical gospels in Oaks #11
      Bible: Gospel of Mark (all)

   FILM: “From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians” -- Sept. 20

   B. The Gospel of John
      Reading: Ehrman, chap.12
      Bible: Gospel of John, chaps. 1-12, 18-20

   C. Comparing Selected Gospel Passages
      For this section, we will read closely the following passages (nos. 1-4 are in Oaks #12):
      1. genealogy in Matthew and Luke (read Matthew 1:1-17 and Lk 3:23-38)
      3. Jesus on marriage and divorce (Matt 19:1-12//Mk 10:1-12)
      5. Passion Narratives in comparative perspective (gospel texts in Oaks #14), plus read Patterson, “The Dark Side of Pilate” (Oaks #15) for historical context.

III. Jesus, the Law, and Jewish Polemic in the Gospels -- Oct. 2
   Reading: Oaks #16 (Sanders on Jesus and the law), #17 (two Jewish midrashim on the law), #18 (Saldarini in Matthew 23), and #19 (Fredriksen on Jesus and the purity laws)
   Bible: Mark 1:44
         Matt 5:17-48
         Matt 15:1-20//Mark 7:1-23
         Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Lk 13:10-17; 14:1-6
         Matthew, chap. 23 (for this chapter, see Saldarini, “Understanding Matthew’s Vitriol” and handout on Rabbinic views of hypocrisy)

IV. Jesus the (Apocalyptic?) Prophet, Son of Man, and Messiah -- Oct. 4-9
   Reading: Ehrman, chaps. 17 (pp. 267-272) and 18
   A. Jesus as a Prophet
      Matthew 17:9-13/Mk 9:9-13 (John the Baptist as Elijah figure)
      Matthew 16:14//Lk 9:19; Mark 6:14-16 (“one of the prophets”)
      Matthew 21:11, 46; Luke 24:19; Acts 3:22 (reference to Moses);
B. Jesus, the Son of Man
   Daniel 7 - “a son of man” in the Hebrew Bible
   Matthew 16:13; Mark 2:10
   Mark 13:24-27, 14:62; Matthew 26:64

C. Jesus as Messiah and Son of God
   Reading: Brown, “Jesus the Messiah” (Oaks #20 and handout)

V. The Quest for the Historical Jesus -- Oct. 11
   Reading: Ehrman, chaps. 15-16
   Sanders, “An Outline of Jesus’ Life” (Oaks #21)
   Miracle-workers of Jesus’ day (Oaks #22)

VI. The Early Church -- Oct. 16
   A. The Early Church
   Reading: Ehrman, chap. 11
   Bible: Book of Acts, chaps. 1-15
   Peper and DelCognito, “The Pliny and Trajan Correspondence” (Oaks #23)

***EXAM 2 - October 18 ***

VII. A Pharisee Among Us: Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles -- Oct. 23–Nov. 13
   A. Paul's Story and his Letters
   Reading: Ehrman, chaps. 20 and 24
   Murphy-O'Connor, “The Workplace and the Apostolate” (Oaks #24)

B. The Parousia, Communal Strife, and Resurrection: Correspondence with the
   Thessalonians and Corinthians
   Bible: 1 Thessalonians (all); 1 Corinthians 1, 7–12; 14:26-39, and chap.15
   Reading: Ehrman, chaps. 21 and 22 (up to p. 354)
   Murphy-O’Connor, “House Churches and the Eucharist” and “Temple Banquets and the
   Body” (Oaks #25)

C. Paul and the Law: The New Perspective and Beyond
   Bible: Galatians (all); Romans, chaps. 9-11
   Reading: Ehrman, pp. 354-362 and chap. 23
   Gager, “Paul’s Contradictions” (Oaks #26)

VIII. The Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John -- Nov. 15
   Bible: Revelation, chaps. 1-5, 13, 17-22
   Reading: Ehrman, chap. 30 and selections from two apocalyptic texts similar to
   Revelation: Second Baruch and Fourth Ezra (Oaks #27)

***November 20 - Film***

***November 22 - Happy Thanksgiving!***
IX. Some Deutero-Pauline and Other Letters -- Nov. 27-29

A. Second Thessalonians and the Pastoral Epistles
   Bible: 2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy and Titus
   Reading: Ehrman, chap. 25 (pp. 397-403, 410-418)

B. The Letters of James, Jude, and 2 Peter
   Bible: Epistles of James, Jude, and 2 Peter
   Reading: Ehrman, chap. 29 (pp. 474-477, 484-488) and pp. 391-392