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RELS 150-01, Introduction to the New Testament and Early Christianity. Spring 1999

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES 150
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT
AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY
SPRING, 1999

COURSE DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE AND METHOD

This course is designed primarily to fulfill the requirement of a second "Life" course in the first-year sequence. Its title, "Introduction to the New Testament," is descriptive of the content of the course, which is intended to be an exploration of three things: 1) the Greco-Roman pagan and Jewish backgrounds within which Christianity arose and with which it eventually struggled and broke; 2) the development of the distinct religion known as "Christianity" from its sectarian origins; and 3) the sacred literature, both canonical and extra-canonical, produced within this framework.

The method employed in presenting this course will be a combination of lecture and discussion. No deep acquaintance with the New Testament is assumed, although "Introduction to the Biblical Tradition" (Religious Studies 101), including the critical method of reading and interpreting biblical texts, is a requirement. The approach will be primarily historical and critical: that is, it will examine the plural contexts -- religious, historical, and cultural -- in which these sacred texts were developed. An important part of the course will be the examination of the conflicts, political and religious, experienced by the early Christians, and how these conflicts shaped the New Testament canon and the early Christian view of the world, including the development of Christian anti-Judaism within the New Testament itself.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Bart Ehrman (Ehrman), The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader (Oxford, 1998). (Appears as "Ehrman, Intro." on the syllabus) [**Please note:** Since this text contains the same version (New Revised Standard Version) of the New Testament canon as the NOAB or New Oxford Annotated Bible, I have indicated books that appear in the canonical New Testament by their titles. There ARE, however, several readings related to the New Testament and Early Christianity that are contained only in Ehrman. **Please use only the version required for the class.** Anything else results in confusion.]

_____, The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings (Oxford, 1997). (Appears as "Ehrman, Reader" on the syllabus)

Elaine Pagels, The Origin of Satan (Random House, 1996).

Please note: All readings are to be prepared for the class period *for which* they are assigned.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

First and second tests (in-class): 25% each. (Tests will consist of a combination of objective and essay materials.)

One final examination (Monday, May 3, 8:30-11:00): 30%

All tests and the final examination are indicated on the syllabus. **They must be taken when scheduled** unless there is an acceptable reason given. **Acceptable reasons do NOT include:** having to study for a test in another class on that day, not having had enough time to study for ANY reason, having to leave for break early, going to Mardi Gras, etc. **Acceptable reasons DO include:** documented **personal** illness; death of a **close** friend or family member; documented sports travel.

Attendance and *active* class participation: 20% (**Three absences are allowed; anything beyond that will result in a lowering of the grade.**)

OFFICE AND OFFICE HOURS FOR SPRING, 1999:

Clough 406 (phone: 843-3742; home phone 523-2481)

Office hours: MWF 10:30-11:30; TuTh 3:00-4:00

E-mail: gstreete@rhodes.edu

Website: www.streete.religion.rhodes.edu

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING BEFORE YOU PURCHASE BOOKS FOR THIS COURSE:

By enrolling in this course, Introduction to the New Testament, and by accepting a course outline, you have indicated that you understand the contents, method, and requirements particular to this course.

[If this course is not what you thought it was, or if you do not think you can fulfill the stated requirements, please drop the course now. If you continue in the course, you will be held responsible for fulfilling the requirements.]

Please retain this syllabus: it contains important information.

COURSE CALENDAR

JANUARY

	<p>Wed., Jan. 13: Introduction to the Course: The New Testament and Its World</p>	<p>Fri., Jan. 15: "What is the 'New Testament'?" Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 1, pp. 1-13; Ehrman, Reader, pp. 1-6.</p>
<p>Mon., Jan. 18: NO CLASS: MLK, JR. HOLIDAY</p>	<p>Wed., Jan. 20: The New Testament and Its World Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 2, pp. 16-39.</p>	<p>Fri., Jan. 22: NO CLASS; BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING Traditions about Jesus: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 3, pp. 40-49.</p>
<p>Mon., Jan. 25: Traditions about Jesus: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 4, pp. 51-54; Papyrus Egerton 2; the Unknown Gospel in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 133- 134.</p>	<p>Wed., Jan. 27: Jesus the Martyr: Read: "Introduction," Pagels, pp. xv-xxiii; "The Gospel of Mark and the Jewish War," Pagels, pp. 3-34; Mark, Chapters 1- 8</p>	<p>Fri., Jan. 29: Jesus the Martyr: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 5, pp. 56-71; Mark, Chapters 9-16</p>

FEBRUARY

Mon., Feb. 1: The Synoptic Problem: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 6, pp. 72-78; Pagels, "The Social History of Satan," pp. 35-62.	Wed., Feb. 3: Jesus the Messiah: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 7, pp. 79-95; Matthew, Chapters 1-13	Fri., Feb. 5: Jesus the Messiah: Read: Pagels, "Matthew's Campaign against the Pharisees," pp. 63-88; Matthew, Chapters 14-28
Mon., Feb. 8: Jesus the Savior: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 8, pp. 96-114; Luke, Chapters 1-10	Wed., Feb. 10: Jesus the Savior: Read: Luke, Chapters 11-24	Fri., Feb. 12: Jesus' Legacy: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 9, pp. 115-129; Acts 1-12
Mon., Feb. 15: Jesus' Legacy: Read: Acts 13-28	Wed., Feb. 17: Jesus' Legacy: Read: Pagels, "Luke and John Claim Israel's Legacy," pp. 89-111; Romans Chapters 9-11	Fri., Feb. 19: Jesus the Sign: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 10, pp. 133-153; John Chapters 1-9
Mon., Feb. 22: Jesus the Sign: Read: John 10-21	Wed., Feb. 24: Jesus the Sign: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 11, p. 154-170.	Fri., Feb. 26: FIRST TEST

MARCH

Mon., Mar. 1: A Different Jesus: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 12, pp. 171-184; Gospel of Thomas, Sayings 1-70 in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 116-121.	Wed., Mar. 3: (end 1st seven weeks of classes) A Different Jesus: Read: Gospel of Thomas, Sayings 71-114 in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 121-123; Infancy Gospel of Thomas in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 127- 130.	Fri., Mar. 5: The Jesus of History: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapters 13-14, pp. 185- 202.
Mon., Mar. 8: SPRING RECESS	Wed., Mar. 10: SPRING RECESS	Fri., Mar. 12: SPRING RECESS
Mon., Mar. 15: Jesus and Apocalyptic: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 15, pp. 203-232.	Wed., Mar. 17: Ash Wednesday Jesus and Apocalyptic: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 16, pp. 233-240; Pagels, "Satan's Earthly Kingdom," pp. 112-148.	Fri., Mar. 19: Paul the Apostle: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapters 17-18, pp. 241- 270; 1 Thessalonians
Mon., Mar. 22: Paul the Apostle: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 19, pp. 271-298.	Wed., Mar. 24: Paul the Apostle: Read: 1 & 2 Corinthians	Fri., Mar. 26: Paul the Apostle: Read: Galatians, Philippians, Philemon
Mon., Mar. 29: Paul the Apostle: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 20, pp. 299-310; Romans	Wed., Mar. 31: Paul's Legacy: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 21, pp. 311-319; Acts of Paul and Thecla in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 177- 182.	

APRIL

		Fri., April 2: Good Friday NO CLASS
Mon., Apr. 5: Paul's Legacy: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 22, pp. 320-340; Ephesians	Wed., Apr. 7: Paul's Legacy: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 23, pp. 341-350; 1 Timothy	Fri., Apr. 9: SECOND TEST
Mon., Apr. 12: Christians and Jews: Read: Ehrman, Chapter 24, pp. 351-365.	Wed., Apr. 14: Christians and Jews: Read: Hebrews	Fri., Apr. 16: Christians and Pagans: Read: Ehrman, Chapter 25, pp. 366-382.
Mon., Apr. 19: Christians and Pagans: Read: 1 Peter; Ignatius to the Smyrneans in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 334-336.	Wed., Apr. 21: Christians and Christians: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 26, pp. 383-397; James; Polycarp to the Philippians in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 340-343.	Fri., Apr. 23: Christians and Christians: Read: Pagels, "The Enemy Within," pp. 149-178; Jude, 2 Peter; <i>Didache</i> in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 313-317.
Mon., Apr. 26: Christians vs. the Cosmos: Read: Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 27, pp. 398-413; Revelation Chapters 1-11	Wed., Apr. 28: Christians vs. the Cosmos: Read: Revelation Chapters 12-22; Apocalypse of Peter in Ehrman, Reader, pp. 407- 412.	Fri., Apr. 30: Conclusions: Read: Pagels, "Conclusion," pp. 179-184; Ehrman, Intro., Chapter 28, pp. 414- 422.

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