

REL 2120: Introduction to the New Testament  
Humanities Department  
Office: xxx; ext.xxx  
3 credits  
Hours: M 1:00-3:00 pm / MWF 11:30-12:20 / W F 9:30-10:30 am  
e-mail: xxx

**I. Course Description:** Presents for study selections from the New Testament in light of their historical and cultural settings in an attempt to relate early Christian concepts to human experience in both the ancient and the modern worlds. Class sessions are devoted primarily to discussion of the New Testament. **PREREQUISITE:** Sophomore standing or one course in religion or philosophy or permission of instructor.

**II. Required Texts**

1. The HarperCollins Study Bible.
2. R. Pregeant, Encounter with the New Testament: An Interdisciplinary Approach (ENT)

**III. Course Requirements and Student Evaluation**

1. Two unit tests (essay)
  - a. Higher grade.....25% of final grade
  - b. Lower grade.....10% of final grade
2. Final examination (essay, including a take-home component).....25% of final grade
3. Three 2-page reaction-papers.....10% each, total 30% of final grade
4. Participation .....10% of final grade

The participation grade is determined relative to a student's other work. Normally, students will receive participation grades equal to the average of their tests and papers; but these grades may be **decreased** by poor attendance (**see IV below**) or **increased** by the following forms of participation: meaningful contributions to classroom discussions and small-group exercises; communications with the professor through written notes, e-mail messages, telephone conversations/voice mail messages, or office consultations.

**IV. Policies**

1. **Grammar and spelling**, as well as content, will be considered in determining grades for papers written outside class. However, students who receive help on their papers from instructors at the Essential Skills Center or P.A.L., and obtain their signatures, will receive special consideration in this regard.
2. **Late papers** will automatically receive a grade reduction.
3. **No make-up tests will be given.** Students who miss tests for any reason will be required to do take-home work to the instructor's satisfaction. This work, however, will NOT be figured into the final grade; the missing credit will be made up by increasing the percentages of the other test scores.

## V. GUIDELINES FOR REACTION-PAPERS

1. The instructor will hand out a preference sheet containing the topics and dates for the reaction-papers. Students should fill these out, giving their **first 6 choices**, and return them at the next session. (If you list fewer than 6, the instructor will feel free to fill in the missing choices for you!)
2. The papers should be the equivalent of two pages typewritten (500 words); handwritten papers must be legible. All papers must have a one-inch margin on both the right and left sides as well as at the top and bottom.

### COURSE SCHEDULE AND STUDY GUIDE

**Fri., Jan. 21** Introductory Session.

**Mon., Jan. 24** **Reading Assignment:** ENT, Introduction and Ch. 1. **Study Guide:** Answer all questions at end of both Introduction and Ch. 1.

### UNIT I: BEFORE THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Wed., Jan. 26** **Reading Assignment:** ENT, Prologue to Part I; Ch. 2, pp. 45-66. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1-5 at end of Ch. 2.

**Fri., Jan. 28** **Reading Assignment:** ENT, Ch. 2, pp. 66-94. **Study Guide:** answer questions 7-19 at end of Ch. 2.

**Mon., Jan. 31** **Reading Assignment:** (a.) ENT, Ch. 3, pp. 98-104; (b.) Matthew 13:44-45; (c.) ENT, Ch. 3, pp. 104-108. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1-4 at end of Ch. 3.

**Wed., Feb. 2** **Reading Assignment:** (a.) Luke 15:11-32; Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 14:16-24; (b.) ENT, Ch. 3, pp. 108-114. **Study Guide:** answer questions 5-6 and the end of Ch. 3. **NOTE: REACTION-PAPER PREFERENCE LIST DUE NEXT SESSION.**

**Fri., Feb. 4** **Reading Assignment:** Matthew 22:1-14; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16: 1-9; Luke 10:29-37; Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21; (b.) ENT, Ch. 3, pp. 114-117. **Study Guide:** answer question 7 at end of Ch. 3. **REACTION-PAPER PREFERENCE LIST DUE.**

**Mon., Feb. 7** **Reading Assignment:** (a.) Mark 12:28-34; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Luke 11:2-4; (b.) ENT, Ch. 3, pp. 118-121; (c.) Mark 8:1-10; Mark 1:9-11; Mark 11:15-19; Mark 11:1-10; Mark 14:12-21; (4.) ENT, Ch. 3, pp. 121-134. **Study Guide:** answer questions 8-12 at end of Ch. 3.

**Wed., Feb. 9** **Reading Assignment:** (a.) Mark 16:1-8; Matthew 27:62-28:20; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1-21:25; (b.) ENT, Ch. 4. **Study Guide:** answer all questions at the end of Ch. 4.

**Fri., Feb. 11** **Reading Assignment:** ENT, Epilogue to Part I. **Study Guide:** answer all study questions at end of the Epilogue to Part I. **REACTION-PAPERS 1-3:** (#1) How My View of Jesus the Historical Person Has Changed (through the reading/discussion in this course); (#2) The Social and

Political Implications of Jesus's Teachings for the Late Twentieth Century; (#3) A Comparison of Jesus' Teachings (as presented in ENT) To \_\_\_\_\_ (any one of the following: the teachings of another religious leader or of a religion other than Christianity; the views of a particular philosopher or the main ideas of a particular philosophy; a value-system embraced by a particular culture or sub-culture; the views of a popular figure in the recent history.

**Mon., Feb. 14 Review of Unit I**

**Wed., Feb. 16 TEST ON UNIT I**

## **UNIT II: THE GOSPELS AND ACTS**

**Fri., Feb. 18 Reading Assignment:** (a.) ENT, Prologue to Part II; (b.) Mark 1:1-5:43; (3.) ENT, Ch. 5, pp. 174-179. **Study Guide:** answer all study questions at the end of Prologue to Part II and questions 1-3 at the end of Ch. 5.

**Mon., Feb. 21 PRESIDENTS DAY—NO CLASSES**

**Wed., Feb. 23 Reading Assignment:** (a.) Mark 6:1-12:44; (b.) ENT, Ch. 5, pp. 179-184. **Study Guide:** answer questions 4-6 at the end of Ch. 5.

**Fri., Feb. 25 CONFERENCE ON RELATIONAL HERMENEUTICS, CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY, ORANGE, CALIFORNIA; THIS CLASS DOES NOT MEET.**

**Mon., Feb. 28 Reading Assignment:** (a.) Mark 13:1-16:8; (b.) ENT, Ch. 5, pp. 184-197. **Study Guide:** answer questions 7-13 at the end of Ch. 5. **REACTION-PAPERS 4-5:** (#4) Explain the divergent views of Mack and Myers discussed in ENT, Ch. 5, section 5; then evaluate these attempts to read Mark either as "anti-worldly and vindictive" or as a call to nonviolent social revolution; (#5) Explain how some "process" interpreters can claim that "one can read Mark as saying not that Jesus' death was predestined but that it became necessary under the circumstances of his rejection" (ENT, p. 196); then give your own evaluation of this claim.

**Wed., March 1 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Matthew 1:1-12:50; (2.) ENT, Ch. 6, pp. 200-209. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1-4 at the end of Ch. 6. **REACTION PAPER 6:** Give a broad characterization of the ethical perspective presented in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and give your assessment of the relevance of this perspective for the time and place in which you live.

**Fri., March 3 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Matthew 13:1-25:46; (2.) ENT, Ch. 6, pp. 209-219. **Study Guide:** answer questions 5-9 at the end of Ch. 6.

**SPRING BREAK: MARCH 4-12**

**Mon., March 13 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Matthew 26:1-28:20; (2.) ENT, Ch. 6, pp. 219-232. **Study Guide:** Answer questions 10-18 at the end of Ch. 6. **REACTION-PAPER 7:** Drawing on the discussion in ENT, pp. 230-232 and your own reading of Matthew, give your own reflections on the question, "Is the Gospel of Matthew Anti-Jewish?"

**Wed., March 15 Reading Assignment:** (1.) ENT, Ch. 7, p. 236; (2.) Luke 1:1-4:30; 6:17-49; 7:1-35; 10:1-42; 12:1-53; 13: 22-30; (3.) ENT, Ch. 7, pp. 236-247. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1-4 at the end of Ch. 6.

**Fri., March 17 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Luke 13:31-17:10; 19:1-27; 20:45-21:9; 22:1-24:53; (2.) ENT, Ch. 6, pp. 247-256. **Study Guide:** answer questions 5-8 at the end of Ch. 6.

**Mon., March 20 Reading Assignment:** Acts 1:1-2:47; 6:1-12:25; 8:26-40; 15:1-35; 17:1-34; 21:15-26:32; 28:11-31; ENT, Ch. 6, pp. 256-281. **Study Guide:** answer questions 9-25 at the end of Ch. 6. **REACTION-PAPERS 8-9:** (#8) Discuss the perspective of Luke-Acts on the issue of poverty and riches, taking into account Ch. 7, section 6 but also drawing upon your own close reading of Luke and Acts; (#9) Discuss the views of Felder and Martin (Ch. 7, section 7) on the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, and give your own reflections on the importance of their observations for Christianity and society in our time.

**Wed., March 22 Reading Assignment:** (1.) John 1:1-12:50; (2.) ENT, Ch. 8, pp. 284-294; **Study Guide:** questions 1-7 at the end of Ch. 8.

**Fri., March 24 Reading Assignment:** (1.) John 13:1-21:23; (2.) ENT, Ch. 8, pp. 295-308; (3.) ENT, Epilogue to Part II. **Study Guide:** questions 8-18 at the end of Ch. 8. **REACTION-PAPERS 10-12:** (#10) Drawing upon ENT, Ch. 8, section 3, explain and evaluate Bultmann's contention that the Gospel of John contains an early form of existentialist interpretation; (#11) Drawing upon ENT, Ch. 8, section 4, explain Jung's understanding of the Christ-symbol and reflect on how his insights might or might not be helpful in interpreting the Gospel of John; (#12) Drawing upon ENT, Ch. 8, section 5, and your own close reading of the Gospel of John, assess the significance of this gospel as a resource for raising ecological consciousness.

**Mon., March 27 Review of Unit II.**

**Wed., March 29 TEST ON UNIT II**

**UNIT III: THE PAULINE LETTERS**

**Fri., March 31 Reading Assignment:** (1.) ENT, Prologue to Part III; (2.) Philemon (entire letter); ENT, Ch. 9, pp. 334-338; (3.) Philippians (entire letter); (4.) ENT, Ch. 9, pp. 344-348. **Study Guide:** questions 1-3, 6-9 at the end of Ch. 9.

**Mon., April 3 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Galatians (entire letter); (2.) ENT, Ch. 9, pp. 348-354. **Study Guide:** answer questions 10-16 at the end of Ch. 9.

**Wed., April 5 Reading Assignment:** (1.) 1 Corinthians 1:1-11:34; (2.) ENT, Ch. 10, pp. 356-362. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1-3 at the end of Ch. 10.

**Fri., April 7 Reading Assignment:** (1.) 1 Corinthians 12:1-16:24; (2.) ENT, Ch. 10, pp. 362-368; (3.) 2 Corinthians 1:1-6:13, 7:2-4; 11:1-12:10; (4.) ENT, Ch. 10, pp. 368-375. **Study Guide:** answer questions 4-16 at the end of Ch. 10.

**Mon., April 10 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Romans 1:1-8:39; ENT, Ch. 11, pp. 378-385. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1-7 at the end of Ch. 11.

**Wed., April 12 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Romans 9:1-16:27; (2.) ENT, Ch. 11, pp. 385-388. **Study Guide:** answer questions 8-10 at the end of Ch. 11.

**Fri., April 14 Reading Assignment:** **Reading Assignment:** ENT, Ch. 12. **Study Guide:** answer all questions at the end of Ch. 12. **REACTION-PAPERS 13-16:**

(#13) Drawing upon ENT, Ch. 12, section 5, pp. 402-403 and sub-sections a and d, discuss the considerations the contemporary churches ought to take into account in assessing the significance of the letters of Paul for dealing with the question of the ordination of women to the Christian ministry; then give your own reasoned opinion on the question; (#14) Drawing upon ENT, Ch. 12, section 5, pp. 402-403 and sub-sections b and d, discuss the considerations the contemporary churches ought to take into account in assessing the significance of the letters of Paul for dealing with the question of the acceptability of a homosexual lifestyle for Christians; then give your own reasoned opinion on the question. (#15) Drawing upon ENT, Ch. 5, section 3, explain how some interpreters use an existentialist approach to interpret the letters of Paul, and give your own reasoned opinion as to whether and in what sense this approach is a genuine help in making sense of Paul's understanding of the Christian faith; (#16) Drawing upon Ch. 5, section 4, explain Scroggs's Freudian interpretation of Paul and give your own reasoned opinion as to whether and in what sense this approach is a genuine help in making sense of Paul's understanding of the Christian faith.

### **Monday April 17: PATRIOTS DAY--NO CLASSES**

**Wed., April 19 Reading Assignment :** (1.) ENT, Ch. 13, p. 414; (2.) Colossians (entire letter); (3.) ENT, Ch. 13, pp. 418-421; (6.) Ephesians (entire letter); (6.) ENT, Ch. 13, pp. 422-430. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1, 3-5 at the end of Ch. 13.

**Fri, April 21 Reading Assignment :** (1.) ENT, Ch. 13, pp. 430-432; (2.) 2 Timothy 1:1-2:2; 2:22-3:9; 3:16-17; 4:3-22; (3.) ENT, Ch. 13, pp. 432-434; (4.) 1 Timothy 1:1-4:10; 5:17-6:2; (5.) ENT, Ch. 13, pp. 434-436; (6.) ENT, Ch. 13, pp. 436-437; (7) ENT, Epilogue to Part III. **Study Guide:** answer questions 6-10 at the end of Ch. 13 all questions at the end of the Epilogue to Part III. **REACTION-PAPERS 17-19:** (#17) Compare and contrast Paul as represented by the seven undisputed letters (ENT, Chs. 9-12) to "The Paul of legend" (Epilogue to Part III, Section 3); (#18) Compare and contrast Paul as represented by the seven undisputed letters (ENT, Chs. 9-12) to "The Gnostic Paul" (Epilogue to Part III,

Section 2); (#19) Compare and contrast Paul as represented by the seven undisputed letters (ENT, Chs. 9-12) to the author of the pastoral letters, who wrote in Paul's name (Chapter 13, Section 4).

#### **UNIT IV: THE GENERAL LETTERS AND REVELATION**

**Mon., April 24 Reading Assignment:** (1.) ENT, Prologue to Part IV; Ch. 15, pp. 472-477; (2.) James 1:1-2:26; 4:13-5:20; (3.) ENT, Ch. 16, pp. 493-497; (4.) 1 John (entire letter); (5) ENT, Ch. 16, pp. 498-503, 505-506, **Study Guide:** Answer questions 1-5 at the end of Ch. 15 and all questions at the end of Ch. 16. **REACTION-PAPER 20:** Evaluate the relevance of the Letter of James with respect to issues faced by U.S. society today.

**Wed., April 26 Reading Assignment:** (1.) ENT, Ch. 17, pp. 507-515; (2.) Revelation 1:1-9:21; (3.) ENT, Ch. 16, pp. 515-521. **Study Guide:** answer questions 1-5 at the end of Ch. 17.

**Fri., April 28 Reading Assignment:** (1.) Revelation 10:1-22:21; (2.) ENT, Ch. 17, pp. 521-537. **Study Guide:** answer questions 6-11 at the end of Ch. 17. **REACTION-PAPERS 21-23:** (#21) Drawing upon the discussion in ENT, Ch. 17, as well as your own close reading of Revelation, assess the view that this writing makes predictions that are being fulfilled in the late 20th century. (#22) Drawing upon the discussion in ENT, Ch. 17, sections 4 and 6, and your own close reading of Revelation, assess the positive and negative potentials of this writing from both and psychological perspectives. (#23) Drawing upon ENT, Ch. 17, section 5, explain and evaluate Ron Farmer's reading of Revelation from the perspective of a "process hermeneutic."

**Mon., May 1 Reading Assignment:** ENT, Epilogue. **Study Guide:** answer all questions at the end of Epilogue. **Review of Unit III and Unit IV and final discussion.**

**FINAL EXAMINATION: FRIDAY, MAY 5, 11:30 A.M.**