

RELI 25: New Testament and Christian Origins

Prof. Schroeder ("Dr. S")

Spring 2009
M/W/F 9:30-10:50 am
Knowles 210

<http://www.carrieschroeder.com/NT2009>

You can find Dr. S at...

cschroeder@pacific.edu

Office hours TBA (Check Blackboard) or email to schedule an appointment

151A WPC Annex ("Humanities Hub")

946-3093

Facebook

About the Course

This course offers a socio-historical and literary introduction to the writings of the earliest Christians. The course will emphasize the importance of the historical context of these writings and will investigate the ways these texts fit into ancient Mediterranean cultures. Topics include but are not limited to: the person and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth; early Jewish and Christian relations; the structure and rituals of early Christian communities; the roles of women and slaves in the earliest churches; the spread of Christianity throughout the Empire; the historical significance of the apostle Paul for the development of Christian beliefs. We will also explore the concepts of apocalypticism, the resurrection, and the Christian canon as they are configured in earliest Christian literature. Throughout, the Christian canon will be read alongside the writings of pagans and Jews of the same time period as well as extra-canonical early Christian literature. Although we will study the theological concerns of first and second century Christians, this course will not address contemporary issues of theology and Christian faith.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain the significance of people and events important to the development of the New Testament and Christian origins
 2. Identify and explain major themes of each New Testament text and significant, contemporaneous extra-canonical texts
 3. Identify and explain issues of authorship, reading communities, and social-historical context for each New Testament text
 4. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical, religious, and social context of Christian origins in the early Roman Empire
 5. Demonstrate an understanding of early Christian communities' relationships with Jews, pagans, and other Christians
 6. Apply critical reading skills to primary sources from antiquity and secondary sources about antiquity
 7. Apply methods of scholarly biblical interpretation to New Testament texts and evaluate these methods critically
 8. Write critical-analytical essays based on close-readings of early Christian sources.
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Textbooks

1. Bart Ehrman, *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (1st ed. ok but page and chapter numbers may differ)
 2. A NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) Bible containing the Christian Old Testament and New Testament. (The HarperCollins Study Bible is available at the bookstore; the Oxford Study Bible is also acceptable.) **Students must use NRSV or RSV translations for papers and assignments in the course.**
 3. Required readings or videos on websites, in handouts, on Blackboard, and on iTunesU.
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Assignments

Attendance and Participation

Since we will all be members of a learning community this semester, enthusiastic class participation is essential. We will discuss what makes a positive learning environment for you during the first week of class.

The Attendance and Participation Grade will include:

- Occasional in-class presentations, graded activities, or providing discussion questions for class
- Regular participation in class, which means:
 - ⇒ Informed, thoughtful, and respectful engagement in discussions, activities, and in-class writing assignments on a regular basis
 - ⇒ *Listening* to the professor and the other students on a daily basis (including taking notes)
 - ⇒ Bringing class readings and/or notes to class to enable discussion
 - ⇒ Respectful behavior in class. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior (including arriving late and leaving early) will lower Participation and Attendance grades.
- Daily attendance. Every absence beyond three absences may lower the participation grade by one letter level (A to B, B to C, etc.).

Students with extended illnesses, required sports games/meets, or other emergency situations have the opportunity to make up their absences by providing a written response to questions or themes on the Study Guide for the missed day. The response will be at least one page long and will be submitted via email within 24 hours of the student's return to class.

The Absence Policy fine print:

- ⇒ At the beginning of the semester, athletes/debaters/etc. should provide me with the dates of class to be missed due to official university activities.
- ⇒ Students who are too ill to come to class should go to health services and provide documentation with their make up.
- ⇒ Students with other emergencies should email me as soon as possible.
- ⇒ The make-up policy outlined above is designed for students who have unavoidable commitments or emergencies, which will lead to more than three absences. Students with multiple unexcused absences at the beginning of the semester should not expect accommodation late in the semester. There are three freebies: use them wisely.
- ⇒ It is the professor's discretion as to which absences can or should be made up.
- ⇒ Lying to avoid a penalty is a violation of the honor code.
- ⇒ Absent students should get notes and assignments from other students.

Daily Reading Responses

For every day on which there is a reading or film assignment, students will post to the Blackboard site under Assignments a reading response for the day. These responses help me understand how well you are comprehending the material. They also help ensure a productive class discussion by encouraging students to complete the readings.

The responses:

- Are due by 8:30 am the day of class. Late responses will not count.
- Will contain at least five complete sentences about the readings for the day
- Should demonstrate that the student has read and reflected upon the material for the day. (Please be specific, so that I know you have done the reading, and please demonstrate that you have read beyond the beginning of the assignment.)
- Need not be a unified paragraph; a student may address different topics in one post
- Can comment on aspects of the assignment that are most compelling and exciting to you (and say why)
- Can raise questions or points that were confusing or require clarification for you
- Can ask questions and raise issues you would like to discuss further in class
- Will usually be open to the students' interests. Students may choose to respond to questions on study guides (but do not have to), and occasionally the professor will assign a specific assignment/ question for the Reading Response
- Are not due on the day of an exam, paper, or other major assignment in this course

Students who miss more than six reading responses will receive a D or F for the semester on this assignment. (Note: merely completing the minimum number of responses will not *guarantee* a C; the responses must be of sufficient quality, as well.)

Students who are absent from class are encouraged to submit a Reading Response for that day.

Responses will be evaluated with points on a zero to 3 point scale. 4's will be given on rare occasions for outstanding, insightful work. Receiving mostly threes and fours will result in an A for this semester's cumulative assignment grade. Mostly 3s with 2s will result in a B. Mostly 2s will result in a C. Mostly 1s will result in a D. 1s and 0s will result in an F.

Papers

Two papers (no more than 1200-1500 words long, each) will be assigned, based on the readings for the class. All papers are due as hard copies in class and electronically on Blackboard.

Exams

There will be three exams as scheduled on the Course Schedule below. They will include maps, identifications of terms and names, short answer questions, and essays.

Grading and Evaluation

All papers and exams must be submitted anonymously. Put only your Pacific ID number on your paper or exam.

- A Reserved for excellence. The assignment, paper, exam, class participation, etc., demonstrates all the qualities of a B and demonstrates originality or complexity in thinking.
- B Assignments, exams, and papers fulfill all the requirements of the assignment and demonstrate strong competency in the course material. Essay exams and papers also demonstrate critical, analytical thinking about the material in the course, and provide a clear argument and thesis (where required) with documentation. (Essays and papers are neither simple summaries of the readings/ films/etc. nor personal reflection ungrounded in the course material.)

Typed assignments are well proof-read, with clear prose and accurate grammar.

Participation and Reading Responses demonstrate preparation and critical thinking about the material. For class participation, students provide quality questions and comments AND listen and respond where appropriate to the professor and fellow students.

- C Assignments, exams, papers, participation, and Blackboard reading responses demonstrate preparation and competency in the course material but are deficient in one of the key elements of B quality assignments, etc.
- D Shows little competency in the subject or is missing more than one key element of B quality assignments, etc.
- F Demonstrates little to no competency in the subject matter and/or is missing several elements of B quality assignments, etc.

See specific course assignments for more information on the evaluation of each assignment.

Policy on Make-ups, Extensions, and Late Assignments

Papers other assignments submitted late will be penalized one letter grade per 24-hour period late. (E.g., an "A" quality paper that was due Wednesday in class but was submitted on Thursday at 9 am will receive an B; if submitted at 5 pm Thursday, it will receive a C.)

Students who miss an in-class exam or other graded in-class assignment will receive a zero.

Extensions on assignments and rescheduling in-class presentations/discussion facilitations will be provided only in emergencies (e.g., death in the immediate family, severe illness, etc.) or unavoidable conflicts with another required university commitment (such as an athletic competition) with advance notice. Students with an emergency should contact the professor to make alternative arrangements as soon as possible.

Students must complete all papers and exams to pass the course. A student taking the course pass/ no-credit must achieve at least the College-mandated grade of C- to pass the course.

Percentage to Letter Grade Conversion

100%	A+	77-79.9	C+
93-99.9	A	73-76.9	C
90-92.9	A-	70-72.9	C-
87-89.9	B+	67-69.9	D+
83-86.9	B	60-66.9	D
80-82.9	B-	0-59.9	F

Final Course Grades

Final course grades will be calculated as follows:

1. Quality class participation and attendance 12.5%
2. Daily reading responses on Blackboard 12.5%
3. Exam 1 (short) 10%
4. Exam 2 16.5%
5. Exam 3 18.5%
6. Paper 1 15%
7. Paper 2 15%

Academic Integrity

I take academic integrity very seriously. As your professor, I pledge to be honest with you, and I hope that you will do the same for me as well as your peers.

Cheating and the Honor Code

Students are expected to understand and follow the University's Honor Code, available at <http://web.pacific.edu/x5152.xml>. I encourage any student with questions about academic integrity, plagiarism, or the Honor Code to ask me for clarifications.

For this course, academic dishonesty includes any violations covered by the Honor Code (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and lying to receive a higher grade), as well as submitting one's own prior work for a new assignment—prior work from this course or another course, and prior work in whole or in part. (Specifically assigned revisions to paper drafts are exempt.) We will discuss plagiarism and citations in class.

Any alleged or suspected violations will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs. All students who violate the Honor Code will receive a minimum penalty of a zero for the assignment or exam; a serious violation will merit failure of the course.

Please visit <http://www.carrieschroeder.com/integrity.html> for tips on avoiding plagiarism and more information on my expectations for academic integrity.

Classroom Conduct

Some classroom conduct is rude and disrespectful to your fellow students, because it distracts everyone in the class from the learning process. Please turn off cellphones and other digital communications devices. Please make every attempt to arrive to class on time; late arrivals are disruptive. Students who read the newspaper, do the crossword puzzle, Facebook or surf the web, or engage in some other such activity during class time can expect a public request in class to cease the activity, a prohibition from the use of a laptop, and/or a lower Participation and Attendance grade in the course.

Resources

Academic Resources

The most important resources for the course are:

1. The Blackboard site, which will have announcements, assignments, and additional resources
2. The course website at <http://www.carrieschroeder.com/NT2009>
3. An online study-guide for our textbook at http://www.us.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195369342/student_resources/?view=usa
4. My office hours! (TBA on Blackboard and also by appointment) Please feel free to come by if you have questions or just want to talk about the class.

There are also...

- *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*: The go-to resource for all things biblical!!! Library Reference Section BS440 .A54 1992
- Throckmorton, *Gospel Parallels*: provides side-by-side text of the Gospels, so you can compare them; on Reserve for this course
- The homepage for the PBS special "From Jesus to Christ" <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/>
- Museum websites such as the British Museum, British Library, Metropolitan Museum, Getty Museum, etc.
- <http://bible.oremus.org> (a nice search engine for Bible passages; please use the NRSV translation for this course)

I strongly caution against using non-academic websites to find background information.

Disability Resources

Any student with a physical disability or with a learning disability needing accommodations should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, in Bannister Hall. The office will assist with any needed accommodations. Please see me at the beginning of the semester to discuss needs for this course. The OSSD website is: <http://web.pacific.edu/x10591.xml>.

Education Resource Center

Also in Bannister Hall. In particular, you can visit the Tutorial Center to sign up for a meeting with a writing tutor before a paper is due.

Course Schedule

- ★ *This schedule is subject to change at the Professor's discretion. It is the responsibility of each student to keep up with schedule changes, even if absent.*
- ★ *Assignments should be completed in time for class on the day on which they are listed on the syllabus.*
- ★ *Students should bring to class any texts assigned for the day or detailed notes.*

Visit <http://www.carrieschroeder.com/NT2009> for an online version of the syllabus with hot links to websites and an up-to-date schedule.

Part I: What is a "socio-historical and literary study" of the NT anyway??

M Jan 12	Introduction: What is "religion"? What is this class?
W Jan 14	Why Study the New Testament? What is the Academic Study of the Bible? Survey on Blackboard – take the survey before 7 am January 14! Ehrman, Excursus to Chapter 1 ("The Historian and the Believer") In order to receive a passing grade for class participation, students must read this excursus and attend class Wednesday. Students who add the course after January 14 must provide a 1-2 pp. paper explaining the significance of this reading assignment in their own words and how Ehrman's points might affect their own personal experience of this course.
F Jan 16	Studying the New Testament Historically – Class meets online, not in our classroom today! "What Can We Really Know About Jesus" at http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/reallyknow.html "The Historian's Task" at http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/historians.html Assignment on Blackboard TBA
M Jan 19	MLK Day: No Class
W Jan 21	The Winners Write History: Texts, Scribes, and the Christian Canon Ehrman Chapter 1 (except Excursus) Watch Obama's Inauguration on January 20. Identify religious themes, language, references, etc., in the speech, and any New Testament references in the inaugural prayers.

Daily Reading Response Assignment begins today! Submit your Reading Response on Blackboard by 8 am.

Part II: The Greco-Roman and Jewish Context

- F Jan 23** **Civilization and Its Discontents: The Roman Empire**
Valerie Hope, "Social Pecking Order in the Roman World" at http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/social_structure_01.shtml
"Portraits of Greco-Roman Cities" at <http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/portraits.html>
- M Jan 26** **Pagans and Polytheism: Roman Religiosity**
Ehrman Chapter 2
"The Empire's Religions," <http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/empire.html>
Optional: Visit the Roman Religion Gallery at http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/roman_religion_gallery.shtml
- W Jan 28** **Diversities of Judaism in the Roman Empire**
Ehrman Chapter 3
2 Maccabees introduction and chapters 8-11, 15 (in Study Bible)
2 Samuel 7:1-17
Psalm 2
Daniel 7
Read selections from the Dead Sea Scrolls at <http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/scrollindex.html>
- F Jan 30** **Temple, Law, and Synagogue**
Blackboard: Reading assignment on Philo and early rabbis on Jewish Law
"Temple Culture," <http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/temple.html>
Josephus on the Sack of Jerusalem, <http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/josephussack.html>
- M Feb 2** **Literacy and Literature**
Ehrman Chapter 4
Bring questions for Exam to class.
- W Feb 4** **Exam 1**

Part III: Jesus and the Readers and Writers of the Gospels

- F Feb 6** **Mark: The Secret Messiah**
Ehrman Chapter 5
Mark

M Feb 9	The “Synoptic Problem” Review Ehrman Chapter 5 section “The Synoptic Problem” On Blackboard: Throckmorton, Gospel Parallels selections
W Feb 11	Jesus’ Birth and Baptism Mark, review chapter 1 Matthew 1-4 Luke 1-5:11 Ehrman, Chapter 6 section entitled “The Importance of Beginnings”; Chapter 7 section entitled “Luke’s Birth Narrative in Comparative Perspective”
F Feb 13	Jesus’ Life and Teachings in Matthew & Luke Matthew 5-25 Luke 5:12-chapter 21 Ehrman unread sections of Chapters 6 & 7
M Feb 16	Presidents’ Day: No Class
W Feb 18	Jesus’ Trial, Death, and Resurrection in Matthew and Luke Matthew 26-28 Luke 22-24
F Feb 20	John: Jesus as Divine Logos Ehrman Chapter 8 John
M Feb 23	Jesus’ Life and Teachings in the Gospel of Thomas and “Lost Gospels” Gospel of Thomas at http://pbs.gen.in/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/gthomas.html Blackboard: Other Gospels
W Feb 25	The Historical Figure of Jesus Ehrman Chapter 9 Blackboard: Fredriksen, “Did Jesus Oppose the Purity Laws?”
F Feb 27	From Jesus to the Gospels to Early Christianity Ehrman Chapter 10
M Mar 2	Review: Lecture from Questions For Reading Response, post questions and topics for review.
W Mar 4	Exam 2
F Mar 6	Assignment TBA

Mar 9-13	No classes: Spring Break
M Mar 16	Imagining Jesus' Birth and Childhood Blackboard: Infancy Gospel of Thomas & Protoevangelium of James
W Mar 18	Assignment TBA
F Mar 20	Submit thesis and outline to paper # 1 on BB by 8:30 am. Professor will review in class examples of potentially successful theses and unsuccessful theses in class (names removed, of course) (No Reading Response)
M Mar 23	Paper #1 Due in Class and on Blackboard

Part 4: Paul and the Pauline Communities

W Mar 25	Luke's Second Act(s) Ehrman Chapter 11 Acts
F Mar 27	Meet the Apostle: 1 Thessalonians Ehrman Chapters 12-13 1 Thessalonians
M Mar 30	Sex in the City: Paul's Letters to the Corinthians Ehrman Chapter 14, section on 1 Corinthians 1 Corinthians
W Apr 1	More Sex in the City Ehrman Chapter 14, section on 2 Corinthians 2 Corinthians
F Apr 3	Law & Order: Galatians Ehrman Chapter 15, section on Galatians Galatians
M Apr 6	Letters from an Asia Minor Jail (or Two) Ehrman Chapter 15, sections on Philippians and Philemon Philippians Philemon
W Apr 8	All Roads Lead to Rome Ehrman Chapter 16 Romans

F Apr 10 **The Pretenders, Part 1**
Ehrman Chapter 17 sections on Pseudonymity and the Deutero-Pauline Epistles
2 Thessalonians
Colossians
Ephesians

M Apr 13 **Travel Day – No Class**

W Apr 15 **The Pretenders, Part 2**
Ehrman Chapter 17, sections on the Pastoral Epistles to end of chapter
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus

F Apr 17 **The Pauline Tradition and Women**
Ehrman, Chapter 18
Reread “Household Codes” in Colossians and Ephesians
Blackboard: Acts of Paul and Thecla

M Apr 20 **Paper 2 due in class and on Blackboard**
In class: screening of part of The DaVinci Code

W Apr 22 **Debunking The DaVinci Code**
Review:

- Mt 26:6-13, Mk 14:3-9, Lk 7:36-50, Jn 12:1-8 (anointing)
- Mt 27:55-61, Lk 8:1-3 (list of women followers)
- Lk 10:38-42; Jn 11:1-3; 11:17-22, 11:32-33 (Mary / Martha)
- Mt 28:1-10, Mk 16:1-13, Lk 23:49-24:35, Jn 19:25, 20:1-18 (resurrection)

Read Gospel of Mary at
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/mary.html>
Read handout of selections of the Gospel of Philip

Part 5: Persecution, Identity Crises, and the End of the World

F Apr 24 **Christian and Jewish Self-Definition; Pagans and Persecution**
Ehrman Chapter 19
Hebrews
1 Peter

M Apr 27 **Christians and Christians**
Ehrman Chapter 20
James
Jude
2 Peter
1, 2, 3 John

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- W Apr 29** **Apocalypse Now**
Ehrman Chapter 21's section entitled "Apocalyptic World Views and Apocalypse Genre"
Daniel (in Study Bible)
1 Enoch selections at
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/primary/enoch.html>
Optional: Surf around more on the PBS site
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/>
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- F May 1** **The End of the World as We Know It**
Ehrman Chapter 21
Revelation
Blackboard: Apocalypse of Peter
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- M May 4** **Review**
For Reading Response, post questions and topics for review by noon Sunday
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- W May 13, 8-11 am: Exam 3 (covers material since Exam 2)**