

Course Syllabus - DRAFT
KNB1501HS– Understanding the New Testament
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Winter 2018

Instructor Information

Instructor: Bradley McLean, PhD, Full Professor
Office Location: Knox College
Telephone: Office – (416) 978-2788
E-mail: bhm.mclean@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: KNB1501HS
Course Format: Online
Course Name: Understanding the New Testament

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the content of New Testament texts, with emphasis on understanding these texts in their original socio-historical and literary contexts.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

- Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. Sixth Edition. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Course Website(s)

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access Blackboard, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask portal.help@utoronto.ca for further help. It is recommended that you enter the Blackboard port using Mozilla *Firefox* as web browser (especially if you are having difficulty using *Internet Explorer*).

Course Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

OUTCOMES IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

1. Describe the historical time periods in which Christian texts developed;
2. Discuss the various theologies reflected in individual texts of early Christian writings;
3. Describe various research and interpretive methods used in biblical studies to interpret NT texts;
4. Discuss interactions between the historical contexts and the literature and diverse theology of early Christian writings;
5. Describe the ancient cultural contexts in which early Christian texts emerged and the interactions between the ancient cultural contexts and the literature and theology of individual texts.

COMPETENCIES IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

1. Demonstrate the ability to read, gather and select information from the assigned readings appropriate to task;
2. Demonstrate the ability and willingness to learn and understand one's culture, and culture of people different from oneself.
3. Demonstrate ethical behaviour by taking responsibility for the expectations of the course and being willing to participate in class discussions.
4. Demonstrate the willingness to assess one's own learning.

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas.

(1) Weekly quizzes (11 quizzes) (35%)

- Each week (excepting week 1) you will write an online quiz (15 minute) *at the beginning of class*. The quizzes are collectively worth 30% of your final mark.
- The quiz will test your knowledge of the *basic facts and ideas* explained in the *assigned readings* for that week.
- Students who miss a quiz be given a grade of *zero (0)*, unless *prior* arrangements have been made with the instructor.
- Failed quizzes *cannot* be written a second time.

(2) Online participation (35%)

The weekly online activities will provide an opportunity for you to share with others your ideas about your weekly learning. Our weekly discussions will be posted on the Discussion Board where they can be read by your fellow students. Each week of the course has the same rhythm.

By Monday evening

- Read the assigned readings in Ehrman
- Review the questions for online discussion

By Tuesday evening

- complete the online quiz for the week
- review the posted Powerpoint presentation(s)

By Wednesday evening

- Make your first online posting on this week's questions for discussion

By Friday evening

- Respond in a substantive way to at least three postings of your fellow students.

You should read the assigned material carefully before participating online. Be ready to explain your ideas, and listen and respond to the ideas of others. Active participation requires that each student be ready to articulate and support his or her own ideas and to respectfully engage the ideas of others.

Please take care to enter your messages under the heading for the appropriate week! Otherwise, your message will not be read.

Your participation grade will be based on your weekly 'postings' (typically, your main contribution to the discussion and your responses to other students). Your grade for your online participation will reflect the extent to which you make relevant, informed, thoughtful and clear contributions to the discussions. Your participation will be graded according to the following criteria, as appropriate:

- familiarity with unit content and readings
- appropriate use of relevant terminology
- clarity and reasonableness of contributions (i.e., your statements are supported by appropriate textual references, and explicit reasoning and not merely asserted)

Criteria also include your ability to:

- explain or elaborate on factual information
- provide illustrations and examples when making a point
- demonstrate understanding of key themes and principles
- compare and contrast concepts
- relate new knowledge to previously known ideas and concepts and to organize information
- integrate newly acquired knowledge within a broader and deeper perspective
- apply new concepts and principles to relevant issues

(3) Final Exam (30%)

- The exam will cover material in chapters 1-30 of the textbook.

- Two weeks before the final exam, an exam preparation sheet will be made available to all students.
- Students who live within 200 kilometers from Knox College are required to write the exam at Knox College. The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, April 11, from 19:00 to 21:00 (Eastern Standard Time) at Knox College.
- Those living further away are permitted to write the exam in their own area, proctored by someone appointed by Knox College. Please remember to bring photo identification to the exam.

Grading System

A+ (90-100)
 A (85-89)
 A- (80-84)
 B+ (77-79)
 B (73-76)
 B- (70-72)
 Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within

quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses.

Course Schedule

Week 1

8-12 January *Context of the New Testament*
Ehrman, chaps. 1-2
Powerpoint: "1. Canon and Pseudonymity"
Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA

Week 2

15-19 January *Greco-Roman World and the Jewish world of Jesus*
Ehrman, chaps. 3-4
Powerpoint: "2. Judaism in the Time of Jesus"
Powerpoint: "2. Patronage and Benefaction"
Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA

Week 3

22-26 January

Oral Traditions, Christian Gospels, Gospel of Mark

Ehrman, chaps. 5-7

Powerpoint: "3. Gospel of Mark"

Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA**Week 4**

29 Jan.- 2 Feb.

Source Problem, Gospel of Matthew

Ehrman, chaps. 8-9

Powerpoint: "4. Synoptic Problem"

Powerpoint: "4. Gospel of Matthew"

Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA**Week 5**

5-9 February

Gospel of Luke and Gospel of John

Ehrman, chaps. 10-11

Powerpoint: "5. Gospel of Luke"

Powerpoint: "5. Gospel of John"

Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA**Week 6**

6-16 February

Johannine epistles, Historical Jesus

Ehrman, chaps. 12-15

Powerpoint: "6. The Quests for the History Jesus"

Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA

READING WEEK (Feb. 19-23)

Week 7

26 Feb. – 2 March

The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith

Ehrman, chaps. 16-18

(No powerpoint)

Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA**Week 8**

5-9 March

Acts of the Apostles, Paul and his mission

Ehrman, chaps. 19-20

Powerpoint: "8. Constructing a Life of Paul"

Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA**Week 9**

12-16 March

Paul's letters

Ehrman, chaps. 21-23

Powerpoint: "9. Ancient Letters: Corinthian Correspondence"

Powerpoint: "9. 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, Romans"

Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA

Week 10

19-23 March

Acts of Paul and Thekla, Deutero-Pauline letters, women in the early church
Ehrman, chaps. 24-26
Powerpoint: "10. Ministry of Women in Early Christianity"
Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA

Week 11

26-30 March

Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of Barnabas, 1 Peter
Ehrman, chaps. 27-28
Powerpoint: "11. Anti-Jewish Literature"
Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA

Week 12

2-6 April

James, Didache, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Rev., 2 Peter, Hermas, Apoc. of Peter
Ehrman, chaps. 29-30
Powerpoint: "12. Conflicts among Early Christians"
Questions for discussion: Ehrman, TBA

Final Exam

April 11 (2 hours)

3. EXPECTATIONS

1. Read all assigned readings and complete all tests and assignments by the assigned dates.
2. Log into the course site *at least* three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday):
 1. log on once, at the beginning of the week, to engage the course content and acquaint yourself with the week's activities.
 2. log on again by Wednesday, to make your main contribution to the weekly discussion (which will usually be based on focus questions posted under 'Questions for Online Discussion').
 3. log on again by Friday, to reply in a *substantive* way to your classmates' postings on the Discussion Board.

Note: it is expected that all students will interact with other students in a respectful manner.

4. Please be aware that *this course is not self-paced*. It is imperative that you *keep up* with the assigned course work and do not fall behind. This is of particular importance in the case of the Discussion Board, which is organized on a week by week basis. Do fall behind and make comments in the previous week's Discussion Board. *Late postings will not be counted towards your participation mark.*

5. If you are unable to participate fully in a given week, you must receive the permission of the instructor. If you do not receive permission to miss a week, you will be counted as 'absent' from the course. Interaction between students is a fundamental component of the learning process of this course.