



RELI 25 New Testament and Christian Origins, Fall 2015

About

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.

This course fulfills General Education requirement II-B. Click here for a description of the [formal learning objectives for the course](#).

Section 1 of this course meets T/Th 10:00-11:45 in WPC 219.

Section 2 of this course meets T/Th 3:00-4:45 in WPC 131.

Click here to download a printable pdf of the syllabus.

Objectives

After this course, you will have basic biblical literacy in the New Testament to understand many biblical references and themes in contemporary culture, politics, and the news.

Formally, this means that upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

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

Contact Your Prof

You can find me, Dr. S. (aka Prof. Caroline T. Schroeder, Ph.D.), at:

cschroeder [at] pacific.edu

www.carrieschroeder.com



209.946.3093

WPC 101

Office Hours: T 5-6 pm, Th 9-10 am, & by appointment

On [Twitter \(@ctschroeder\)](#)

On [Facebook](#)

On [Academia.edu](#)

Books and Media

The following required readings form the core of the course.

1. Bart Ehrman, [A Brief Introduction to the New Testament \(most recent edition\)](#). On sale at the bookstore. *Ehrman will also be on reserve at the Circulation Desk in the Library.*
2. The [Harper Collins Study Bible](#). On sale at the bookstore. *Students must use the NRSV or RSV translations of the New Testament for papers and assignments in the course.*
3. Additional required readings will be available on websites, in handouts, on the Pacific Course management system, etc.

Films and video clips on DVD and online will also be a required part of the course. See the links and information on the syllabus schedule for details.

Academic Integrity

My Statement on Academic Honesty and 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.**

Students are expected to understand and follow the University's Honor Code, available at <http://www.pacific.edu/About-Pacific/AdministrationOffices/Office-of-the-Provost/Shared-Governance/Standing-Committees/Academic-Affairs-Committee/Course-Syllabus-Requirements/Honor-CodeADA-Statement.html>.

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 assignment drafts are exempt.) We will discuss plagiarism and citations in class. I encourage any student with questions about academic integrity, plagiarism, or the Honor Code to ask me for clarifications.

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.

What the University of Pacific would like to say about Academic Honesty and Integrity:

The Honor Code at the University of the Pacific calls upon each student to exhibit a high degree of maturity, responsibility, and personal integrity. Students are expected to:

- act honestly in all matters
- actively encourage academic integrity



- discourage any form of cheating or dishonesty by others
- inform the instructor and appropriate university administrator if she or he has a reasonable and good faith belief and substantial evidence that a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy has occurred.

Violations will be referred to and investigated by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. If a student is found responsible, it will be documented as part of her or his permanent academic record. A student may receive a range of penalties, including failure of an assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University. The Academic Honesty Policy is located in Tiger Lore and online at

<http://www.pacific.edu/About-Pacific/AdministrationOffices/Office-of-the-Provost/Shared-Governance/Standing-Committees/Academic-Affairs-Committee/Course-Syllabus-Requirements/Honor-CodeADA-Statement.html>.

Assignments

This class will involve active participation from students and the professor both inside and outside of class. We will be learning together in a collaborative environment: reading, discussing, writing, researching, creating.

Copies of student work may be retained to assess how the learning objectives of the course are being met.

Explore the dropdown menu to learn more about particular assignments.

Preparing for Class

To succeed in the class, prepare for each day's session.

- Read the [assignments and/or view the videos](#) carefully and attentively
- Use the Study Guides listed on the [Course Schedule](#) for each day.
- Write your blog contribution.
- Take the quizzes and study the online flashcards on our Textbook's [companion website](#)

Course Blog

This course will have a private course blog primarily about course readings that will feed into our discussions in class. **We will typically discuss questions or issues arising from one or more of the posts in class each day, although not always all of them.** The class will be divided into four groups, A, B, C, D. Throughout the semester, these groups will rotate into four roles:

Tuesday Readers: Tuesday Readers post a critical response to the course readings that are due on Tuesday and post it as a blog post to the class blog by **9 pm Monday night**. The blog post:

- Will contain approximately 250 words.
- Should demonstrate that the student has read/viewed and reflected upon the material for the day. (Please be specific; posts that can bring together more than one reading—e.g., Bible reading + textbook—are often the strongest).
- 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.
- May choose to respond to questions on study guides or your own questions and concerns. (If you need ideas, see the study guides for prompts.)
- To receive full credit, each post must include an image or media clip that illustrates—rather than trivializes—its point. Furthermore, the source of the image must be clearly given.
- Put the date of the reading/relevant class discussion in the post title (e.g., “Jesus’s Demons (T Sept 8)” would be a good title.
- Please do not quote at length from course materials, especially the New Testament or ancient sources. Instead link to online versions, such as [Mark 1:1](#) at [bible.oremus.org](#). (Bible passages should be the New Revised Standard Version. [Watch this video on how to create links in WordPress blog posts](#) if you don’t know how.)
- Post should set Tuesday Reader as its Category.

Thursday Readers: Thursday Readers post a critical response to the course readings that are due on Thursday and post it as a blog post to the class blog by **9 pm Wednesday night**. Criteria are the same as Tuesday Readers. Post should set Thursday Reader as its Category.

Remixers: Students in this group will find and share at least one relevant online resource for class. Post by **noon Wednesday for discussion Thursday**.

- These resources might include news stories, journal articles, podcasts, archives, and so on. They may also include earlier posts from our own class blog.
- In addition to linking to the resource, the remixers must provide a short (no more than a paragraph) evaluation of the resource, highlighting what makes it worthwhile, unusual, or, if appropriate, problematic.
- Please do not quote at length from course materials, especially the New Testament or ancient sources. Instead link to online versions, such as [Mark 1:1](#) at [bible.oremus.org](#). (Bible passages should be the New Revised Standard Version. [Watch this video on how to create links in WordPress blog posts](#) if you don’t know how.)
- Post should set Remixing as its Category.

Responders: Students in this group will build upon, disagree with, or clarify either a reader post or something from class discussion. You may choose to respond to class discussions/blog posts from either Tuesday or Thursday: **post by Wednesday 9 pm for responses to Tuesday; post by Friday 9 pm for responses to Thursday**.

- To receive full credit, each post must include an image or media clip that illustrates—rather than trivializes—its point. Furthermore, the source of the image must be clearly given.
- The post title should contain the word “Responding” (e.g., “Responding: Who was John the Baptist?” would be a good title.)
- The post should reference the date and topic of class discussion.
- Please do not quote at length from course materials, especially the New Testament or ancient sources. Instead link to online versions, such as [Mark 1:1](#) at [bible.oremus.org](#). (Bible passages should be the New Revised Standard Version. [Watch this video on how to create links in WordPress blog posts](#) if you don’t know how.)
- Post should set Responding as its Category.

CREDIT: This assignment has been adapted (in some cases word for word) from [Dr. Mark Sample’s Blogging Guidelines](#) for his DIG 101 class. Many thanks to Mark for permission to reuse and remix his assignment.

[Image not found](#) The work above is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#). Please attribute Dr. Mark Sample as well as this site if you reuse.

Grading and evaluation

All of the blog posts will be evaluated on the following scale:



3: Exceptional. Fulfills all the requirements of the assignment and shows creativity, insight, or complexity.

2: Satisfactory. Fulfills the primary requirements of the assignment.

1: Unsatisfactory. Post has been made but does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

0: No post or late post.

Receiving mostly threes will result in an A for this semester's cumulative blogging assignment grade. 3s and 2s will result in a B. Mostly 2s will result in a C. Mostly 1s will result in a D. Baseline grades will be calculated based on blog posts earning 1-3 points, then the baseline grade will drop one letter for every zero. **You may skip one week with no penalty.**

Participation and Attendance in Class

We will all be members of a learning community this semester. Enthusiastic class participation is essential. All students are expected to participate in a thoughtful, well-prepared manner that is grounded in the course assignments. Daily assignments should be completed before class on the day on which they are listed on the syllabus. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assignments every day.

All members of the class are expected to reflect critically on the ways in which they can contribute to constructive rather than destructive class dynamics. I often call upon students and may not wait for students to volunteer themselves.

Participation involves:

- Bringing class readings and/or notes to class to enable discussion.
- Possible in-class presentations, graded activities, or providing discussion questions for class.
- Taking notes.
- Listening attentively to the professor and the other students.
- Daily attendance
- Informed, thoughtful, and respectful engagement in discussions, activities, and in-class writing assignments on a regular basis.
- Respectful behavior in class. (Disruptive or disrespectful behavior—including arriving late and leaving early—will lower grades.)

[Click here for the grading rubric, which includes class participation.](#)

Absence policy

The work we do in class is an essential part of your learning experience, and your contributions to class contribute to the learning of your peers. Absences mean a student is missing part of the learning experience and is not contributing to our community's learning. Absences therefore will lower a student's participation grade.

- Missing three class sessions will not affect a student's Participation grade. Every absence beyond three may lower the Participation grade by up to one letter level (A to B, B+ to C+, etc.).
- **There are no excused/unexcused absences. You have up to three. More than three reduces your Participation grade.**
- Students university commitments (sports team, forensics, etc.) that will lead to more than three absences need to give a schedule to the professor at the beginning of the semester and will receive instructions about how to make up work missed. Any work not made up counts as an absence.



- Students with serious personal emergencies (e.g., death of child or parent) or severe, extended illness that could lead to more than three absences should contact the professor immediately. (Note this is for serious, severe emergencies only—not for students who chose to miss class three times earlier in the semester and then come down with a cold at the end of term.)
- Lying to avoid a penalty is a violation of the Honor Code
- Make friends: Students who miss class should check the website, read their email messages, and get notes from a peer before coming to talk to the professor about missed material.

Quizzes

Research into teaching and learning demonstrates that frequent low-stakes assessments contribute to greater student learning than one or two high stakes big exams.

At the beginning of **TUESDAY** class sessions, we will have short quizzes. (12 total, so some Tuesdays there are is no quiz.) Most of the questions will pertain to the readings/assignments, lectures, discussion from the previous Tuesday through to the day of the quiz. A few questions from prior quizzes may be recycled into later quizzes. We will use clickers to take the quizzes. (I will provide the clickers.)

Questions from the quizzes will address material from class and readings.

Many of the questions will be identical to or similar to questions on the Textbook's Companion Website (unless the course materials for the quiz period are on different things than the Textbook + New Testament, in which case I will create new questions, typically on things on your study guides.)

Students who use the online Reading Guides to prepare for class daily should be prepared for the quizzes.

Quizzes cannot be made up. An absence=0. Quizzes will be worth 20 points and graded as follows:

- 10 points for taking the quiz
- .5 points for each correct answer

Overall quiz grade for the course will be calculated by dropping the lowest scoring quiz and taking the remaining points as a percentage of the total possible. (So, total points out of 220=percentage grade)

Bummed about so many quizzes? Your consolation is that there are no exams. That's right, no exams, not even a Final Exam.

Writing and Creating

In addition to the course blog, each student will create an online portfolio of scholarship this semester that will involve:

- learning to use and creating a site on an online platform such as Omeka or WordPress
- creating and writing at least two items/assignments on the site (ranging from 750 to 1500 words each, plus media)
- creating and writing a bio and introduction for yourself and your site

The final drafts of these items will be published on a *public web platform*. We will discuss the technology in class.

These Writing & Creating items will be evaluated based on the grading guidelines on the syllabus. The syllabus schedule lists



three deadlines for most items:

- **Deadline A:** item submitted will receive a grade and comments, which will be returned to you by the Deadline B date. Students may revise and repost by Deadline C for grade replacement.
- **Deadline B:** item submitted will receive a grade and comments, but cannot be revised for this cycle. Comments will probably be useful for your next item, though.
- **Deadline C:** item submitted will receive *only* a grade.

Resources

The most important resources for the course (also available on the drop-down menu under Resources on the course site) are:

- The [Sakai](#) site, which will have announcements, assignments, and additional resources
- The course website at <http://nt15.carrieschroeder.net>
- An online study-guide for our textbook at http://www.us.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195369342/student_resources/?view=usa
- The University Writing Center (website at <http://pacificwritingcenter.weebly.com>)
- The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in the McCaffrey Center, Rm. 137. Phone: 209-946-3221. Email: ssd@pacific.edu. Online: www.pacific.edu/disabilities
- Me! In office hours
- Dropbox at www.dropbox.com. Save copies your blog post drafts, class notes, etc., here so you don't lose them if your computer crashes!!! Backup early, backup often, backup easily.

At the Library you will find...

- *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

Other supercool websites are...

- 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.

Writing Resources

Writing Center

The Writing Center at the University of the Pacific is a great resource for students **at any stage in the writing process**, from beginning to develop ideas to revising near-final drafts.

Visit the [Writing Center website](#) for the schedule of writing mentors this semester. When you go to the Writing Center to meet with a mentor, bring:

- the assignment your professor gave you



- your drafts and/or notes of the assignment
- any other course materials you think are relevant for the assignment

Purdue OWL

Another great writing resource is the [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](#) website. My favorite parts of the site are:

- [APA, MLA, and Chicago citation format guides](#)
- Resource on [developing concise writing](#) (and avoiding wordiness and repetition), including awesome exercises called [the "Paramedic Method"](#) to give your wording writing some first aid to make it more concise!
- Resource on [improving sentence clarity](#).

Disability Resources

If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations, please contact the Director of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) for information on how to obtain an Accommodations Request Letter. **To ensure timeliness of services, please obtain the accommodation letter(s) from the Office of SSD at the very beginning of the semester.** Depending on course and session, the wait time may be as long as 1-2 weeks or as short as 1-2 days. After I receive the accommodation letter, please schedule a meeting with me during office hours or some other mutually convenient time to arrange the accommodation(s).

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the McCaffrey Center, Rm. 137. Phone: 209-946-3221. Email: ssd@pacific.edu. Online: www.pacific.edu/disabilities

Pacific's 3-Step Accommodation Process:

1. Student meets with the SSD Director and provides documentation and completes registration forms.
2. Student requests accommodation(s) each semester by completing the Request for Accommodations Form.
3. Student arranges to meet with his/her professors to discuss the accommodation(s) and to sign the Accommodation Request Letter

Grading & Evaluation

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

Explore the drop-down menus for the grading rubric, late policies, and more information.

Rubric

NOTE: This rubric is Dr. S's base rubric for grading assignments. Some individual assignments use a modified rubric. Students should see each assignment for details.

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.
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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 <i>listen</i> and <i>respond where appropriate</i> to the professor and fellow students.
C	Assignments, exams, papers, participation, and 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.

Makeup & Late Policy

Major assignments (for this class, the [Writing & Creating](#) blog posts) submitted late will be penalized one letter grade per 24-hour period late. (E.g., an “A” quality paper that was due Wednesday at 12 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 quiz, 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 immediately.

Letter and % Grades

Dr. S’s Percentage to Letter Grade Conversion:

- 93-100 A
- 90-92.9 A-
- 87-89.9 B+
- 83-86.9 B



80-82.9 B-
77-79.9 C+
73-76.9 C
70-72.9 C-
67-69.9 D+
60-66.9 D
0-59.9 F

Final Course Grades

Final course grades will be calculated as follows. Please note that the assignments below may have sub-parts or stages that are graded individually. See the assignment prompts for more information.

Quality class participation and attendance 10%

Course blog: 20%

Quizzes: 20%

Writing & Creating #1 20%

Writing & Creating #2 20%

Overall Writing & Creating portfolio (including bio, intro, overall look) %5

Blog setup stages: 5%