Huntingdon College  
W. James Samford, Jr. School of Business  
and Professional Studies

COURSE NUMBER: REL102  
COURSE NAME: Survey of New Testament Scriptures  
Fall 2015, Session I – Brewton  
Tuesday, 9/1, 8, 15, 22, 29 from 5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR’S NAME: Dr. Tommy Smith

CONTACT INFORMATION:  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: An overview of the biblical heritage found in the Christian Scriptures growing out of the Old Testament and intertestamental periods. Three basic types of literature: Gospels, Pauline letters, and post-Pauline works. Centers on the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, and the interpretation of him as the Christ by the early Christian community. Theological, philosophical and ethical concerns. Concepts such as discipleship, redemptive community, self-sacrificial love, evangelism, service and mission.

This course is an introduction to selected writings of the New Testament. Through these writings we will encounter the faith of the early followers of Jesus Christ and their perspective(s) on God’s involvement in history. We will explore the historical development of these writings, the people they reflect, and the continuing significance of these writings as scripture (i.e., spirituality, or the way these writings seek to put faith into practice, will be considered).

PREREQUISITE: None

TEXTS REQUIRED:  
*The New Interpreter’s Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon  
(see Huntingdon College booklist for current edition and ISBN)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:  
The student, upon completion of this course, should be able to,  
1) situate the New Testament in a basic historical and geographic framework,  
2) recognize basic theological themes as they appear in selected New Testament texts,  
3) carefully read and interpret brief sections of selected New Testament texts,
4) think critically about the New Testament and its various interpretations (by "critically" we do not intend that students will criticize the Bible or its contents, but that they will reflect carefully on what a text means and how they discern that meaning), and
5) communicate clearly, verbally and in writing, a text’s main points and arguments.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA:

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Explanation of Assignments:

**Midterm Exam (35%)**
A midterm will be given and will cover the content of your assigned readings, both biblical and secondary. Students who keep up with their readings for the course should be adequately prepared for this assessment, which will primarily be multiple choice and quote identification. Make-up tests will be given only for excused absences.

**Final Exam (35%)**
At the end of the semester, a final examination will be given on the date assigned by the College. Similar in form and content to the midterm, the final exam will be a cumulative assessment of the student’s critical engagement with and understanding of the material covered throughout the semester.

**Interpretive Essays (20%)**
Over the course of the semester, each student will write 4 interpretive essays. You must write your essays prior to the discussion in which you attempt to answer at least one of the prompt questions listed in that week’s Critical Discussion in the course schedule. Essays should be double-spaced, standard 1" margins, Times New Roman 12-pt. font. Each essay is worth 8% of the grade.

**Participation (10%)**
To receive full credit for participation, students must a) fulfill all attendance requirements (see separate section below) and b) participate actively in all lectures and critical discussions. The critical discussions are especially important for participation grades, as they allow students to demonstrate their careful engagement with the lectures, biblical material, and secondary readings. Whether a class session is a lecture or a discussion, materials assigned for any particular day must be read in advance.
GRADE POINT EQUIVALENTS:
A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = 59-below

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Absences and Tardiness – All students are required to attend the first session. Those who do not attend the first session will be automatically dropped from the course. Students with more than one absence will receive an "F" for the course. Since this class meets only five times, missing a single class meeting is equivalent to missing three weeks of a regular term. If you cannot attend a class you must let the instructor know via email as soon as possible. In case of absences you are responsible for obtaining all handouts and assignments. Tardiness may result in a deduction in your class participation grade. Excessive tardiness may count as an absence.

Participation – Participation is not the same as attendance. Participation requires students to come to class prepared to actively participate, which makes the classroom experience more meaningful. However, participation is not just speaking out in class. The contributions made by the student should be related to the course content and meaningful to the class discussion.

Late Assignments – Late assignments will be deducted one letter grade each day until submitted.

Accommodation of Special Needs- Huntingdon College makes every reasonable accommodation for disabilities that have been processed and approved through our Disability Services Committee in accord with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to request disability-related services at Huntingdon College, students must self-identify to the Disabilities Intake Coordinator, Camilla Irvin, and provide appropriate and up-to-date documentation to verify their disability or special needs. After the accommodations have been approved by the Disability Services Committee, the 504 Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Olenik Dorman, will notify your professor(s) of the committee’s decision. If you have any questions regarding reasonable accommodation or need to request disability-related services, please contact Disability Services at (334) 833-4577 or e-mail at disabilityservices@huntingdon.edu.

Academic Honesty – Plagiarism is literary theft. Failure to cite the author of any language or of any ideas which are not your own creation is plagiarism. This includes any text you might paraphrase, as well. Anyone is capable of searching the Internet or any printed media; your research paper is intended to broaden your knowledge, stimulate your creativity, and make you think, analyze, and learn. It is not consistent with the College Honor Code, nor with scholarly expectations to submit work which is not the product of your own thinking and research. Severe penalties will result upon the submission of any work found to be plagiarized, including potential failure of the entire course. It is easy and simple to properly cite all sources used in your paper. Take no risks – cite your sources.
CLASS SCHEDULE:

Note: For additional readings, please refer to the page, REL 102 EB, on the New Testament Connections website (http://ntchc.yolasite.com/) using the login and password, huntingdon. This website is the website used for the traditional, semester course at Huntingdon. Occasionally, artwork and comments are linked in the schedule below.

Week 1: The World of the New Testament

Reading Assignment


   a) To be read in conjunction with 1 Thessalonians

Critical Discussion

Focus Text: Mark 1:1-15
View the following image:
http://cruciality.wordpress.com/2009/07/24/christ-is-our-peace-a-reflection-on-ephesians-211%e2%80%9322/chagall-the-white-crucifixion-1938/

Read this introduction to the painting:
http://www.humanitiesweb.org/human.php?s=g&p=a&a=i&ID=378

Questions: What is the appropriate place of the Old Testament in the interpretation of Jesus? How should the Old Testament be used to understand who Jesus Christ is? How does the painting, White Crucifixion attempt to do this? How does the text from Mark?

Week 2: Who is Jesus, and what did he say?

Reading Assignment

1) Matthew 1-4; 5:1 - 7:28; 8-20


3) John (all)
Critical Discussion

Focus Text: John 1:1-5
Reading: Antonia Tripolitis, Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), 36-46. (see http://ntchc.yolasite.com/)

Questions: How has John’s understanding of Jesus been affected by Greco-Roman religion? How is John reinterpreting the person of Jesus? To what extent should we reinterpret the person of Jesus according to our own cultural ideas and values?

Writing Assignment

Interpretive Essay #1 due

Week 3: Why did Jesus die?

Reading Assignment

2) Mark 12:18-27; 14:1 - 16:20
4) John 11:45 – 21:25

Critical Discussion (Part 1)


Questions: What are your preconceptions about the terms “resurrection” and “heaven”? How does Wright’s assessment of resurrection and heaven compare or contrast with your preconceived ideas? Why is Wright concerned that persons rethink these hallmarks of the Christian faith?

Critical Discussion (Part 2)

Reading: Matthew 5:1-48
Watch the following YouTube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av3H0_7HgSg (YouTube video title: “Obama makes some brilliant statements about religion”)

Questions: Should Christians follow the example of Jesus in what they say and do? Why or why not? If not, why does Matthew 5 say what it says? How far should one take the popular expression, WWJD (What
Would Jesus Do?), in living their lives? Is Obama correct that we cannot do exactly what our religion says, all the time, in a pluralistic society? Does being a Christian and living in the world sometimes conflict? Why or why not?

Writing Assignment

Interpretive Essay #2 due

Midterm Exam

Week 4: Paul’s Letters and the beginning of the Church

Reading Assignment

1) Acts (all)
2) Galatians (all)
3) Philemon (all)
4) Philippians (all)
5) 1 Corinthians 1-14

Critical Discussion (Part 1)

Watch the following video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TXsxEyFGsE (YouTube video title: “The snake handling”)

Questions: How do you understand the role of faith and healing? How does the video on snake handling compare with your understanding and the texts from Acts, Mark, and Luke? Is physical healing of any kind a sign of one’s faith? In other words, are persons physically healed because they have faith? If persons are not healed, does that mean they are unfaithful?

Critical Discussion (Part 2)

Focus Texts: 1 Cor 15; 1 Thess 4:13-18
Watch the following video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z50Jv-PXYb4&feature=PlayList&p=50C20BE6F6931261&index=0&playnext=1
(YouTube video title: “Nightline: Bishop Tom Wright [Life after “Life-after-death”]”)
Questions: What is the importance of the resurrection for Paul? Why do you think this was a difficult concept for the Greco-Roman world to accept? Is this idea equally difficult to accept in the 21st century?

Writing Assignment

Interpretive Essay #3 due

Week 5: Paul’s Letters, the General Epistles, and Revelation

Reading Assignment

1) Romans

2) James

3) 1 Peter

4) Revelation 13-14; 19-22

Critical Discussion

Focus Text: Rom 11

Questions: What does Paul have to say about the relationship of Jews and Gentiles? How is Paul’s understanding of Christ more inclusive rather than exclusive? Do you find Hamilton’s position responsible in comparison to Romans 11?

Writing Assignment

Interpretive Essay #4 due

Final Exam