

REL2240: Introduction to the New Testament

Fall 2025 | 3.00 credits

I. General Information

Meeting days and times: T 4 (10:40 AM - 11:30 AM) R 4-5 (10:40 AM – 12:35 PM)

Class location: AND0021 & MAT0105

Instructor(s):

Name: Jeyoul Choi

Office Building/Number: Anderson Hall/107F

Phone: 3522732935

Email: jeyoul@ufl.edu

Office Hours: 2:00-4:00 p.m. (MWF) or by appointment

Course Description

An introduction to the writings of the New Testament in the context of the historical development of early Christianity. Includes selections from the Western canon.

The primary purpose of this course is to help students become familiar with the content of the New Testament, including key stories and figures that played important roles in the formation of early Christian movements. To accomplish this, students will engage with the major literary genres of the New Testament, including the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Pauline Epistles, the Deutero-Pauline Epistles, the General Epistles, and Revelation. A second goal of the course is to introduce students to the academic study of the New Testament. Drawing on a range of theories and methods from the field of religious studies, students will learn to interpret Christian Scriptures as historical products of the ancient Judaism and Greco-Roman world. Rather than treating the New Testament as a sacred text or divine revelation, the course approaches it as a collection of diverse literary works composed by different authors, whose confessional accounts of Jesus Christ and the early Christian tradition often reflect competing perspectives.

Prerequisites

N/A

General Education Designation: Humanities (H)

Humanities courses afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

All General Education area objectives can be found [here](#).

Course Materials

- 1) Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 5th Edition. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. (\$75)
- 2) The Harper Collins Study Bible (\$65) or a similar New Revised Standard Version Bible acceptable

Materials will be available through the following means:

- UF Book Store
- Course Reserve (Ares)

Materials Fee: N/A

II. Course Goals

Course Objectives

- The course will identify key figures, events, and narratives in the New Testament that shaped early Christian movements.
- The course will recognize some important genres of the New Testament.
- The course will apply various theories and methods in the study of the New Testament from an academic perspective.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.
- Learn how to communicate knowledge, thoughts, and reasoning clearly and effectively.
- Analyze key elements, biases, and influences that shape thought in understanding the New Testament. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.

III. Graded Work

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

Graded Components

Reading Responses (30%): Starting in the third week of the class, students will complete a 6-set of reading responses throughout the semester. The prompt of each post requires students to write

a response (400-500 words) that explains some important concepts and topics related to the study of the New Testament. The due date for each post is stated in the class schedule.

Midterm Exam (25%): Students will take a midterm exam that will be administrated via Canvas. The exam will cover the contents in the first half of the class. The questions will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice and true/false. Once the exam begins, students will have 40 minutes to complete it (15 questions). The exam will comprise 25 percent of students' overall grades for the course.

Final Exam (25%): Students will take a final exam that will be administrated via Canvas. The exam will cover the contents in the second half of the class. The questions will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice and true/false. Once the exam begins, students will have 40 minutes to complete it (15 questions). The exam will comprise 25 percent of students' overall grades for the course.

Attendance (10%): Regular attendance is required and will be tracked via Canvas Roll Call. Absences will only be excused with proper documentation for hardships such as illness, family emergencies, military deployment, or other acceptable circumstances. Policies regarding class attendance, make-up exams, assignments, and other course work are consistent with university regulations. See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.

Class Participation (10%): The class participation will be evaluated twice (in the eighth and sixteenth weeks of the semester) based the rubric provided below:

Class Participation Assessment Rubric:

50 points	Excellent (100%-93%)	Good (92%-89%)	Satisfactory (88%-85%)	Developing (84%-80%)
Frequency of Participation in Class	Student participates in class discussion more than once in each class	Student participates in class discussion once in each class	Student participates in class discussion once in each week	Student participates in class discussion occasionally throughout the semester
Quality of Comments	Comments always insightful & constructive; use appropriate terminology and balance between examples and reading materials	Comments mostly insightful & constructive; mostly use appropriate terminology; comments are too general	Comments are sometimes constructive with occasional signs of insight. Students does not use appropriate terminology; comments are not always relevant to reading materials	Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste.

Note:

The instructor will weekly record the participation of each student in every class and provide several opportunities for all students to participate in class discussions to meet the minimum requirements (the developing criteria) of the assignment throughout the semester.

Reading:

Students are expected to do all the reading for this class. Success in the course depends on the student's close reading of the material. Each week requires 40 to 60 pages of reading.

TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-94
A-	93.9-90
B+	89.9-87
B	86.9-83
B-	82.9-80
C+	79.9-77
C	76.9-73
C-	72.9-70
D+	69.9-67
D	66.9-63
D-	62.9-60
E	59.9-0

See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

IV. Summary of the Modules

Module 1: Introduction to the New Testament (Week 2 and 3)

While Christianity emerged as a Jewish sect and developed within a broader geographical area, the New Testament is a product of the ancient Greco-Roman world. It is believed to have been written in Greek by different authors before being translated into other languages. This module provides an overview of the ancient Greco-Roman world to help students situate the New Testament within its historical and social context. The module will explore how concepts and events of Judaism persisted and evolved in the Western context. Particular attention will be given to the political and religious characteristics of the Hellenistic world that influenced the development of the New Testament. Additionally, the module will introduce biblical criticism as

a product of modern Western scholarship, enabling students to approach the Scripture from a non-apologetic perspective.

Module 2: Gospels (Week 4, 5, 6, and 7)

The Gospels in the New Testament contain various stories of Jesus and his followers in ancient Israel. While the primary goal of this module is to help students understand the key events and narratives related to Jesus as described in the four canonical Gospels, it also explores how different authors portray these stories through their own perspectives. The module introduces students to a literary approach to understanding the Gospels, emphasizing the unique views of each author. According to the Synoptic Gospel theory, the Gospel of Mark may have served as a foundational document for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke at a later stage. The module will examine how the authors of Matthew and Luke may have edited and adapted Mark's material to craft their own texts, aiming to appeal to a broader audience beyond the Jewish community. Additionally, the module will analyze how the author of the Gospel of John incorporates Hellenistic literary features into his Gospel, in contrast to the other three synoptic Gospels.

Module 3: Historical Jesus (Week 9)

Many Christians regard the New Testament as a historical document. To what extent can we rely on it as a historical source? What can we say about the historicity of Jesus based on the New Testament? This module addresses these questions by drawing on biblical criticism, examining the evidence and limitations in using the New Testament for historical inquiry.

Module 4: Paul the Apostle (Week 10, 11, and 12)

Paul the Apostle is arguably the most significant figure whose writings are deemed to constitute more than half of the New Testament, playing a crucial role in the formation of early Christianity. As a highly educated Pharisee whose native language was Greek, Paul was instrumental in shaping Christianity as it gradually appealed to non-Jewish audiences within the larger Greco-Roman society. What are the continuities and innovations he introduced in transforming the event of Jesus—originally a Jewish apocalyptic movement—into a broader movement that reached the Hellenistic world? This module investigates this question by examining Paul's writings and theology, in which he became a bridging figure between ancient Judaism and Hellenistic religion.

Module 5: Other Epistles (Week 13)

Some of Paul's writings in the New Testament are categorized as the "Deutero-Pauline Epistles," which may not have been authored by him. What are the scholarly reasons for this categorization? What does this, paradoxically, reveal about the late first- and early second-century Greco-Roman world and the Christian communities within it? This module explores these questions.

Module 6: Apocalypse (Week 14)

This module examines the Book of Revelation, the final book of the New Testament, as a genre of first-century Jewish Christian apocalyptic literature. The term "apocalypse" means "unveiling" or "revelation." This text was written to offer hope to Christians persecuted under the Roman Empire. Although it has often been neglected in contemporary Christianity, the Book of Revelation presents compelling themes such as the final judgment, souls, redemption, heaven,

and hell—topics that have been extensively developed in Western thought. This module explores the various interpretations of the text across different historical and social contexts.

V. Calendar

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
August 21, 2025	Course Introduction	N/A	N/A
August 26, 2025	Module 1: Introduction to the New Testament	Ehrman, Chapter 1—What is New Testament? The Early Christian and Their Literature, Chapter 2—Do We Have Original New Testament?, and Chapter 3—The World of Early Christian Traditions (p. 1-48)	N/A
August 28, 2025	Module 1: Introduction to the New Testament	Ehrman, Chapter 1—What is New Testament? The Early Christian and Their Literature, Chapter 2—Do We Have Original New Testament? and Chapter 3—The World of Early Christian Traditions (p. 1-48)	N/A
September 2, 2025	Module 1: Introduction to the New Testament	Ehrman, Chapter 4—The Jewish Context of Jesus and His Followers and Chapter 5—The Traditions of Jesus in Their Greco-Roman Context (p. 49-81)	N/A
September 4, 2025	Module 1: Introduction to the New Testament	Ehrman, Chapter 4—The Jewish Context of Jesus and His Followers and Chapter 5—The Traditions of Jesus in Their Greco-Roman Context (p. 49-81)	Reading Response 1
September 9, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Mark (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 6—The Christian Gospels: A Literary and Historical Introduction and Chapter 7—Jesus, the Suffering Son of God: The Gospel According to Mark (p. 82-104)	N/A
September 11, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Mark (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 6—The Christian Gospels: A Literary and Historical Introduction and Chapter 7—Jesus, the Suffering Son of God: The Gospel According to Mark (p. 82-104)	N/A
September 16, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Matthew (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 8—The Synoptic Problem and Its Significance for Interpretation and Chapter 9—Jesus, the Jewish Messiah: The Gospel According to Matthew (p. 105-133)	N/A

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
September 18, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Matthew (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 8—The Synoptic Problem and Its Significance for Interpretation and Chapter 9—Jesus, the Jewish Messiah: The Gospel According to Matthew (p. 105-133)	Reading Response 2
September 23, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Luke & The Acts of the Apostles (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 10—Jesus, the Savior of the World: The Gospel According to Luke and Chapter 11—Luke's Second Volume: The Acts of The Apostles (p. 134-175)	N/A
September 25, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Luke & The Acts of the Apostles (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 10—Jesus, the Savior of the World: The Gospel According to Luke and Chapter 11—Luke's Second Volume: The Acts of The Apostles (p. 134-175)	N/A
September 30, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Luke (NRSV Bible), The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 12—Jesus, the Man Sent From Heaven: The Gospel According to John and Chapter 13—From John's Jesus to the Gnostic Christ: The Johannine Epistles and Beyond (p. 176-216)	N/A
October 2, 2025	Module 2: Gospels	The Gospel of Luke (NRSV Bible), The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 12—Jesus, the Man Sent From Heaven: The Gospel According to John and Chapter 13—From John's Jesus to the Gnostic Christ: The Johannine Epistles and Beyond (p. 176-216)	Reading Response 3
October 7, 2025	Midterm Review	N/A	N/A
October 9, 2025	Midterm	N/A	Midterm Exam via Canvas
October 14, 2025	Module 3: Historical Jesus	Ehrman, Chapter 15—The Historical Jesus: Sources, Problems, and Methods, Chapter 16—Excursus: The Historian and the Problem of Miracles, Chapter 17—Jesus in Context, Chapter 18—Jesus, the	N/A

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
		Apocalyptic Prophet, and Chapter 19—From Jesus to The Gospels (p. 237-305)	
October 16, 2025	Module 3: Historical Jesus	Ehrman, Chapter 15—The Historical Jesus: Sources, Problems, and Methods, Chapter 16—Excursus: The Historian and the Problem of Miracles, Chapter 17—Jesus in Context, Chapter 18—Jesus, the Apocalyptic Prophet, and Chapter 19—From Jesus to The Gospels (p. 237-305)	N/A
October 21, 2025	Module 4: Paul the Apostle	First Epistle to the Thessalonians (NRSV Bible), Ehrman, Chapter 20—Paul the Apostle: The Man and His Mission and Chapter 21—Paul and His Apostolic Mission: 1 Thessalonians as a Test Case (p. 306-338)	N/A
October 23, 2025	Module 4: Paul the Apostle	First Epistle to the Thessalonians (NRSV Bible), Ehrman, Chapter 20—Paul the Apostle: The Man and His Mission and Chapter 21—Paul and His Apostolic Mission: 1 Thessalonians as a Test Case (p. 306-338)	Reading Response 4
October 28, 2025	Module 4: Paul the Apostle	The First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 22—Paul and the Crisis of His Churches: 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon (p. 339-371)	N/A
October 30, 2025	Module 4: Paul the Apostle	The First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 22—Paul and the Crisis of His Churches: 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon (p. 339-371)	N/A
November 4, 2025	Module 4: Paul the Apostle	The Epistles to the Romans (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 23—The Gospel According to Paul: The Letter to The Romans and Chapter 24—Does the Tradition Miscarry? Paul in Relation to Jesus, James, Thecla, and Theudas (p. 372-386)	N/A
November 6, 2025	Module 4: Paul the Apostle	The Epistles to the Romans (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 23—The Gospel According to Paul: The Letter to The Romans and Chapter 24—Does the Tradition Miscarry? Paul in Relation to Jesus, James, Thecla, and Theudas (p. 372-386)	Reading Response 5

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
November 11, 2025	Veterans Day	No Class	N/A
November 13, 2025	Module 5: Other Epistles	The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, The Epistle to the Colossians, and the Epistle to the Ephesians (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Readings:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 25—In the Wake of the Apostle: The Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles and Chapter 26—From Paul’s Female Colleagues to the Pastor’s Intimidated Women: The Oppression of Women in Early Christianity (p. 397-434)	N/A
November 18, 2025	Module 6: Apocalypse	The Book of Revelation (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Reading:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 30—Christians and the Cosmos: The Revelation of John, <i>The Shepherd of Hermas</i> , and <i>The Apocalypse of Peter</i> (p. 490-508)	N/A
November 20, 2025	Module 6: Apocalypse	The Book of Revelation (NRSV Bible) <u>Supplementary Reading:</u> Ehrman, Chapter 30—Christians and the Cosmos: The Revelation of John, <i>The Shepherd of Hermas</i> , and <i>The Apocalypse of Peter</i> (p. 490-508)	Reading Response 6
November 25, 2025	Thanksgiving Week	No Class	N/A
November 27, 2025	Thanksgiving Week	No Class	N/A
December 2, 2025	Final Exam Review	N/A	N/A
December 4, 2025	Reading Day	No Class	N/A
December 9, 2025	Final Exam	N/A	Final Exam

V. University Policies and Resources

Students requiring accommodation

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course. For additional information, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

In-class recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to

social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party-note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Mario Poceski (mpoceski@ufl.edu, [3522732937](tel:3522732937)). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1308](tel:352-392-1308)) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1261](tel:352-392-1261)).

Resources available to students

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575), or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575) for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call [352-392-1161](tel:352-392-1161) for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call [352-392-1111](tel:352-392-1111) (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call [352-733-0111](tel:352-733-0111) or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call [352-273-4450](tel:352-273-4450).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Teaching Center](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.

- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information](#).
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information](#).