BBST110—New Testament History & Literature

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Course Description: A survey of the setting, history, and canonical literature of the early Christian church. Emphasis is given to the major themes of the New Testament.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will identify the basic background, purpose, content, and major themes of each book of the New Testament. This outcome will be accomplished through the reading of the New Testament (NT) and the course texts, and assessed through quizzes.
2. Students will begin to analyze both the major Biblical themes and how it should be understood today. This objective will be accomplished through video lectures and interaction with the Biblical text and colleagues and will be assessed through both grading of discussion threads and the quizzes and exams.
3. Students will analyze NT texts and then apply these texts to discern the central ethic of Jesus, God’s desires for this world, and their moral implications for today. This objective will be accomplished through the discussion board and will be assessed through the grading of the discussion threads.

Course Texts:

- *The Bible.* (The NIV Study Bible is recommended, but any version may be used.)

Classroom Policies and Procedures:

Plagiarism: Biola University sees any form of plagiarism as a serious problem with serious consequences. Please refer to the academic integrity statement in the Student Handbook, Academic and Behavioral Standards section.

Grading Standards for Written Work: Whereas Biola University desires to maintain the highest standards with respect to the composition of all written work, any student paper exhibiting poor grammar, spelling errors, typographical errors, or other substandard academic expression shall have the overall grade for that paper reduced accordingly. Generally, a paper will be deemed substandard and ineligible to receive an "A" grade when it averages three or more compositional errors per page. Moreover, at the discretion of the professor, the substandard paper may be returned to the student for correction and resubmission with appropriate grade penalties. Students deficient in writing skills may seek assistance at the Biola Writing Center.
Grading:

1. Online Discussion - 35%
Each week you will post your response to the given question and then interact with the responses posted by your group members (the more interactions, the better your grade: 2 good interactions will receive a grade of B-). The post itself will be worth 75% of the discussion grade, and the interactions will be worth 25% of the grade. See the links under the Getting Started Module for further information on how the posts and responses will be graded along with specific parameters for student post length and examples. These posts will be graded for content. Occasional late posts will be given half credit, but if a student consistently posts after the due date, the grade may be lowered even more than half. The goal here is not to punish but to keep everyone on the same page so that we can truly have good class interactions on the discussion board. Not only will we learn more with good discussion, but we will create a great community. It is my hope that we all will become friends through this discussion board. To add a personal picture to your Discussions, go to the Getting Started Module and click on Add a Picture to Discussions.

2. Reading and Definitions - 10%
Students will read the course texts and define each of the Key Words for Review found at the end of each chapter of the Berding/Williams textbook and also read the corresponding biblical text, defining each New Testament content question on the Study Guide. The definitions of the Key Words and the defining of the Study Guide - NT content questions will be graded by the professor for completeness and accuracy of answers. These documents will be submitted on canvas for grading at the end of week 3 (for weeks 1-3) and at the end of week 6 (for weeks 4-6) as will a report of the percentage of reading done on time (late reading will be given half credit). Since the quizzes are taken at the end of each week, it is necessary to complete your reading and definitions on time.

3. Quizzes - 30%
Six quizzes will be given, at the end of each week. They will cover the biblical content for that week along with the Key Words for Review found in the course textbook. The quizzes must be taken before the date listed on the weekly schedule unless there is an emergency.

4. Tests - 25%
Two tests will be given: one covering the Gospels (worth 15% of the final grade), and the other covering Paul (worth 10% of the final grade, which will be given in class on Biola's campus in August). The tests will cover ONLY the video lectures -- not any of the readings or discussion posts. Students should take excellent and detailed notes on the outlines of these videos and study these notes really well before taking the exams.

5. Extra Credit - 2%
A 2% bonus will be added to your final course average if you read the entire New Testament between the end of the online portion of the course, August 9, and our first day of in class at Biola, August 18. This is not a slow, pondered reading, but a quick reading to get an overview of the entire New Testament at once. To make it a little easier, you can skip the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and just start with Luke, and then read the rest of the NT. Many students have found this to be a great read -- especially since we normally read a verse or two at a time in our normal routine of Bible reading. Enjoy!!
A Few Samples of the Discussion Board Instructions:

Discussion Week 1: Ethics-Matt

Briefly summarize each of the four options that some say is the center of the ethical system that should be used by Christians to determine right and wrong: Love, Jesus’ teachings, the Holy Spirit, or Freedom.

Keep the essay question next to you as you read the Gospel of Matthew, and keep a list of biblical references that apply to this question as you read along. Your discussion posts should be at least 750 words long and be an organized summary of the biblical teaching on each of the four potential answers: Love, Jesus’ Teachings, the Holy Spirit, or Freedom, citing numerous specific Scripture verses and scriptural principles from only the Gospel of Matthew.

Discussion Week 3: Revelation

New Essay Question: “What in this world does God want?”

Read through Revelation to find what God really wants in this world. As you read the text, keep a running list of items that you see that God wants. Your posts should then organize the themes that you found in your readings and give your conclusions as to what God wants. Again, your posts should be at least 750 words long and be based on both specific scripture and scriptural principles.

Initial posts should be made before Thursday at midnight PST, and you must respond to at least two of your group members’ posts before Saturday at noon PST.

Discussion Week 6: 1&2 Thess, 1&2 Tim, Titus, Philemon

What does Paul say about a Christian's character in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon? What principles does he want us to follow? What types of behaviors should we avoid? What behaviors should we practice? What advice does he give us? What areas of concern does he have?

Again, your posts should be at least 750 words long and be based on both specific scripture and scriptural principles from each reading for this section of the class.

Which of all of these character traits do you personal struggle with the most? What are you doing to improve in this area?

Initial posts should be posted before Thursday at midnight PST, and at least two interactions before Saturday at noon PST.