4AAT1006 The New Testament: Gospels and Letters

(Level 4 – 15 credits)

2015–16: Semester 1

K1.28, Thursdays, 4-6 pm

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Module Syllabus
1. Introduction

Outline / What is our topic?

Module Aims and Learning Outcomes
- This module is an introduction to the study of the New Testament for students who may have some, little or no knowledge of it and of its critical analysis.
- By completing this module students will gain a general familiarity with the contents of the New Testament and of the major approaches to these texts.
- The books of the New Testament will be considered within their historical contexts as literary compositions.

Module Content
There will be ten lectures on different subjects, designed to provide a holistic understanding of the books of the New Testament, in terms of origins and themes.

Lectures, seminars and participation / How can I get involved?

Preparation for Lectures
The course text book will be: Bart Ehrman, A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings (4th or 5th ed.; OUP, 2008/12) [BE]. Readings for lectures are noted below, using 4th edition. The New Testament [NT] preferred text is the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]. You should try to read material relating to each lecture ahead of the class. Completion readings and attention to lectures will both be essential in preparing for the exam.

What to Bring to Lectures
Please bring the course textbook and a Bible to each lecture.

KEATS & Maughan Library / Where do I find relevant sources?

For help with locating information in the Maughan Library, see the “Subject Resources” page for TRS: http://libguides.kcl.ac.uk/trs

2. Module plan & Readings

Readings for each lecture are the corresponding chapters in the text book. For further on each subject, and for bibliography for your essay-writing, please consult the module area on the electronic platform KEATS. You will find here full reading lists for each lecture, and useful websites, along with other additional information.

1. 24 September
   BE: Chap.1, 30, What is the New Testament?/Do we have the Original New Testament [5th ed.: 29].
   Prof. Joan Taylor

2. 1 October
   Synoptic Gospels: Mark. Narrative criticism. NT: Mark; BE:
Chap. 6 Jesus, the Suffering Son of God [5th ed. Chap. 5].
Prof. Joan Taylor

3. 8 October
Prof. Joan Taylor

4. 15 October
Synoptic Gospels: Genre/ Matthew. Redaction criticism. NT. Matt; BE: Chap.8 Jesus the Jewish Messiah [5th ed. Chap. 7]
Rev. Canon Prof. Richard Burridge

5. 22 October
Prof. Joan Taylor

Reading week
No class

6. 5 November

7. 12 November
Disputed letters of Paul/Pastorals: NT: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians; 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus; BE: Chap.24 In the Wake of the Apostle [5th ed. Chap. 23].
Prof. Joan Taylor

8. 19 November
The Gospel of John and John’s letters; NT: John, 1-3 John; BE: Chap. 11 Jesus the Man Sent from Heaven [5th ed. Chap. 10]. Rev. Robin Griffith-Jones

9. 26 November
The Letter to the Hebrews, James, Jude, 1 and 2 Peter; NT: Hebrews, James, Jude, 1 and 2 Peter; BE: Chaps. 2 and 27 Christians and Jews; Christians and Pagans [5th ed. Chap. 25 and 26].
Prof. Joan Taylor

10. 3 December
The Book of Revelation; NT: Revelation; BE: Chap. 29 Christians and the Cosmos [5th ed. Chap. 28]
Prof. Joan Taylor
3. Assessment / How will my work be assessed?

(If you are a Study Abroad student at King’s in Semester 1 only, please also see Section 4 below.)

- Unseen written exam (3 hours, contributing 100% to your module mark): **3 out of 10** questions must be answered. The examination will take place in Period II (May-June 2016).

The most recent exam past papers will be available in the relevant KEATS module area before the start of teaching. Earlier past papers are still available in the Library. Note that in previous years there were 4 questions to be answered.

NRSV Bibles will be provided. Prior to this exam there will be a revision class in which guidance will be given about topics for revision and methods of study.

**Revision Class for Exam: K1-28, Thursday 6 May, 4-6 pm**

**FORMATIVE ESSAY**

Due: **BEFORE 4 pm, Monday, 9 November, 2015**

For tuition and exam preparation during the module, there is the option to submit one formative essay of 1,500 words, which is not part of the final assessment but designed to give you practice in writing essays at university level and to prepare your exam essay writing. You will be marked via KEATS and you can make an appointment to have an essay tutorial two weeks after the essay due date, for feedback and advice. This will be with the graduate teaching assistant (GTA) Mina Monir.

The formative essay is an invaluable exercise that will help you prepare for the exam. The essay topics for the exam are very similar to the formative essay topics and therefore any work you do for the formative essay will have a direct pay off in terms of exam revision.

**FORMATIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS**

Write one essay of 1500 words, using both the text book (Ehrman) and at least three further scholarly books from the course bibliography (on KEATS) or from your wider reading.

1. Did the New Testament canon arrive ready-made in the mid 2nd century?
2. How persuasive is the four source hypothesis for the synoptic Gospels?
3. What is the most likely authorship, date and context of either the Gospel of Mark, Matthew, or Luke.
4. What are the distinctive features of the portrayal of Jesus in Matthew and Luke? How do they compare?
5. How does the character of Paul further key themes in the Acts of the Apostles?
6. What does baptism mean for Paul in the Letter to the Romans?
7. What are the principal issues for the church in the Pastoral letters?
8. How is Christ defined in relation to the Temple in the Letter to the Hebrews?
9. Is John’s Jesus more God than man?
10. How much does the Book of Revelation counter Roman imperial ideology?

Scope of assessment
The exam questions will be similar to the formative essay topics. You will need to show that you have not only completed readings and considered material in the lectures but that you have also engaged additionally with material in the course bibliography (on KEATS).

What is a good essay/exam answer?

- Good essays and examination answers will demonstrate a nuanced grasp of a topic on the literary text, an awareness of historical context and a capacity to develop a well-reasoned argument that is convincingly supported by reference to suitable evidence and is presented in a structured manner using clear English.
- For more details please see the link to marking criteria below (“Essential Information”).

Essential information: How do I submit my essay?

- The Faculty of Arts & Humanities cover-sheet needs to be the first page of the submitted essays; please follow this link: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/trs/study/handbook/assessment/taught/submission.aspx
- The candidate number (e.g. W01234) on the cover-sheet needs to be accurate and of the present academic year. Your work cannot be attributed to you on the College systems, if this information is incomplete or wrong.
- The word limit includes all footnotes/endnotes, but excludes the bibliography, which you should provide. There is a 5% tolerance: no penalty will be incurred for essays that are up to 5% over the word limit. Beyond that tolerance band, two marks will be deducted for every 5% of excess words until 50% is reached. After 50%, three marks will normally be deducted for each further 5% of excess words.
- The MHRA reference style has been adopted for this module. Please find the Quick Guide to Reference Styles in TRS in the TRS Handbook online. The presentation of your work, including the insertion of page numbers, quality of referencing and bibliographical information and the standard of English, has a strong bearing on the mark given for it.
- Submission BEFORE 4pm: Your work must be submitted via the assessment submission section of the KEATS area for the module, by the published deadline, i.e. before 4pm on the relevant day.
  Work with a TurnitIn time stamp of 4.00pm counts as a late submission (see next point).
- Mitigating Circumstances Forms: if you cannot come to the exam, MCFs can be downloaded from the Policy Zone of the College website.
- Plagiarism: Please make sure that you understand the College rules on plagiarism. Information is available at: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/library/help/plagiarism/index.aspx, and you should also have been enrolled on a KEATS plagiarism module.
• **Collusion** also counts as misconduct. Think twice before circulating your work to other students.

4. Study Abroad Students: Semester 1 only

If you are studying at King’s in Semester 1 only, then you must submit a final essay in lieu of the summer examination as follows:

• **Final essay in lieu of exam**: 5000 words in place of a 3 hour exam, comprising 100% of the module mark. Please choose two essay questions from the list for formative essays and write 2500 words for each one (including notes). In this case you may not choose topics you have written on for your formative essay. Your formative essay will give you practice in writing essays in the subject area, but you will need to choose alternative topics for your assessed work.

Due: Monday, 7 December 2015 **BEFORE 4pm** in hardcopy to the TRS Office.

**BOOKS**

The course text book is an essential resource:

ALSO USEFUL:

**NB. These books and other NT Introductions provide bibliographies of contemporary scholarship which you should go to for further study when you write essays and prepare for the exam. Do not write essays only using the course text book. It is your beginning point.**

Other Books for Guidance and Important Bibliographies (for full course bibliography see KEATS)

**General**

*The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (4 vols. + Supplementary Volume, Abingdon, 1964-)

**Introductions to the New Testament**


**Methods of Interpretation**

For further useful books and articles on individual books of the New Testament consult the bibliographies in the New Testament introductions above, where you will find lists, and visit the relevant sections of the university library. See the full course bibliography on KEATS. Reading lists are arranged by topic and lecture. You are not expected to read everything on each list – there are suggestions in view the possibility that some works may not be available when you visit the library, though you ought to search other libraries to which you have access, especially the Senate House Library, located behind the British Museum. Nevertheless, the more you read the better: you will be required to demonstrate, in the summer examination, not only that you understand the essential features of any particular topic, but also that you are familiar with different interpretations of that topic. It is never enough, therefore, to rely either upon a single book or upon lecture notes.

Some supplementary bibliographical items may be recommended during the module.