

RELG 311: NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES I

MC GILL UNIVERSITY
School of Religious Studies
Fall 2016

I. COURSE DETAILS

<i>Instructor</i>	Frederick S. Tappenden, Ph.D.
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<i>Office</i>	Birks 016
<i>Office Hours</i>	Wednesdays, 11.30 AM – 1.00 PM, or by appointment
<i>Course Webpage</i>	myCourses
<i>Course Weight</i>	3 Credit Hours
<i>Location</i>	RPHYS 115
<i>Time</i>	Mondays and Wednesdays, 4.05–5.25 PM
<i>Prerequisites</i>	None
<i>Language</i>	Lectures will be in English. In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

According to the McGill University course description, RELG 311: New Testament Studies I is described as follows:

An introduction to the interpretation of the New Testament.

RELG 311 focuses primarily on the New Testament canon with the exception of the canonical gospels (which are studied in RELG 312). At the completion of the Fall 2016 offering of RELG 311:

1. Students will have a firm grasp of the modern academic study of the New Testament, including awareness of a variety of critical methods, interpretive strategies, and scholarly perspectives.
2. Students will have read closely a selection of early Christian writings—mostly canonical though some non-canonical—with special emphasis placed on their literary, socio-cultural, historical, and religious dimensions.
3. Students will be able to make interpretive judgments concerning the writings of the New Testament with respect to the historical and cultural milieu of the first and second centuries CE.
4. Students will be able to identify and trace the development of the various forms of early Christian thought and community evident in the New Testament.

5. Students will be able to distinguish and demarcate theological variety within the early Christ-believing movement, including varying understandings of Jesus and God, nuances within Paul's thought, and religious developments (theological and institutional).
6. Students will be able to read ancient texts from a variety of perspectives, considering questions of social location, personal and collective commitments, and the uses to which New Testament texts are put in ancient and modern communities.
7. Students will have developed critical thinking skills through written assignments and class discussions.

III. REQUIRED, RECOMMENDED, AND RESERVE TEXTS

The following books are **required** for this course. They can be purchased at Le James, the McGill University Bookstore (3544 Avenue du Parc), or through online book distributors. They also are on reserve at the McLennan Library.

1. Aymer, Margaret, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and David A. Sánchez, eds. *Fortress Commentary on the Bible: The New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014.
2. A copy of the New Testament; here are some *recommended* editions (note: you need only one)
 - a. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Edited by Michael D. Coogan. Fully Revised 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
 - b. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Including the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Books with Concordance*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge et al. Fully Revised and Updated. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006.

A Brief Note on Translations and Accessibility:

Choosing a translation can be difficult due to the plethora of options. The recommended translation for RELG 311 is the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Dynamic translations (e.g. New Living Translation), idiomatic or periphrastic translations (e.g. The Message), and classical translations (e.g. King James Version) are not acceptable for class use.

Many Bible translations can be accessed online. You can access the NRSV at the following web address: biblia.com/books/nrsv (along with a few other translations that you can study in parallel). Other helpful sites are www.ntgateway.com, www.earlychristianwritings.com, and www.sbl-site.org/educational/sitesofinterest.aspx; each of these can direct you to all kinds of online resources. Such online resources should always be used critically. *Though online access is convenient, it is not a substitute for the physical manuscript—students are expected to possess a print Bible and bring it to each class period.*

The following book is **recommended** and will be used throughout the course for many of the written assignments. For those students who wish to purchase the book, it is available at Le James. Additionally, the book will be on **reserve** and is also available as an eBook through the Library catalogue (and linked on myCourses).

1. Neufeld, Dietmar and Richard E. DeMaris, eds. *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*. London: Routledge, 2010. On reserve at McLennan; online through the McGill Library at mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/496235681.

The following books are on **reserve** through the McGill Library system (McLennan branch). They can also be accessed online (linked on myCourses). A selection of readings from each book is required for the lectures titled, “The Pastoral Epistles and Extra-Canonical Images of Paul” and “Petrine Traditions and The Acts of the Apostles.”

1. Ehrman, Bart D. *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make it Into the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. On reserve at McLennan; available online through the McGill Library at mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/252579895.
2. *The Apostolic Fathers*. Translated by Kirsopp Lake. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1924–25. On reserve at McLennan; available online as public domain text at HathiTrust.org: Vol. 1 (hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015042084189) and Vol. 2 (hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015042084197).

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be graded on the following requirements:

1. **Reading Journal and Class Participation (15%):** Students are expected to attend regularly all class sessions and participate in class discussion when appropriate. All assigned readings are to be completed *prior* to the class period in which they are listed (see Course Outline below). This includes both the New Testament (primary source) and textbook (secondary source) readings. Please bring your Bible to class with you. Class attendance and participation will be assessed weekly.

Reading Journal: We will develop skills in close, thoughtful, and critical readings of ancient texts, so you will find that you need to read and re-read the primary texts rather slowly and repeatedly. At times, the content of both the readings and the lectures will prove challenging. You might find yourself thinking: “Why does this text say this?” “That text means something different than what I thought.” “I’m not sure I agree with the professor’s perspective on this passage.” All of us will encounter the New Testament in different ways this term. As the course progresses, you are required to keep a journal in which you can freely explore and express your engagement with the New Testament.

Journaling provides a forum in which you can reflect on and develop your thoughts and opinions about readings, lectures, and class discussions. It gives you the opportunity not to summarize but rather to interact and engage with the readings and lectures. By design, journaling reflects your own interests and perspectives. As you read the course materials, or listen to the course lectures, what questions come to mind? What memories or experiences do you recall? What spheres of life does the New Testament text touch upon? Or, perhaps you find yourself struggling with the content of the course, and you simply need a forum through which to express that struggle. For these and many other potential experiences, the keeping of a journal is a highly beneficial practice.

The focus of this journaling assignment is simple: *you are to chronicle your journey through the New Testament this term*. Journals will be evaluated on the clarity and content of your writing/self-expression, which is to say you will not be graded on your experience itself. As a general rule, each journal entry should focus on your engagement with a specific New Testament text—either a whole work (e.g., Galatians), or a specific passage within a work (e.g., Galatians 2:1–10). Journals may be kept in whatever format you want: a MSWord file, a handwritten manuscript (though it *must* be legible), or even an audio or video format. You are encouraged to include content from outside the course (newspaper clippings, online blogs/discussion forums, magazine articles, movie/TV content, and the like), so long as these materials clearly relate to *your journey through the New Testament this term*. Journal entries should be 300–600 words in length (= 1–2 typewritten pages, or 3–4 handwritten pages, or 5–6 minutes for audio/video format). Throughout the term you are to complete six (6) journal entries; two are due on 28 September 2016, two on 31 October 2016, and two on 5 December 2016. Journals can be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of class, or online via the myCourses site.

2. **Short Writing Assignments (20%):** Throughout the semester, students will complete a series of short (3 page) analytical exercises; there will be a total of eight (8) assignments distributed, of which you must turn in four (4) for grading. These short papers will each be worth 5% of your final grade. These exercises are designed to help you build specific skills in the reading and interpretation of New Testament texts, and they also constitute part of your weekly class preparation. In the weeks when you choose *not* to write the short assignment, *you are expected* to read the assigned readings (see course outline below) to help you prepare for class and for the class discussions.
3. **Term Paper (30% [5% + 25%]):** Students are required to complete one research term paper of 2400–3000 words (approx. 8–10 page). This paper provides you the opportunity to examine a specific New Testament text in greater and more extended detail. More information will be handed out in class. All topics and passages must be approved by the instructor; students are to hand in a paper proposal (worth 5%) by **12 October 2016** and the final paper (worth 25%) by **23 November 2016**.
4. **Final Examination (35%):** Information pertaining to the final examination will be handed out in class. The date of the final examination is determined by the University and will be announced during the term. A supplemental examination will be available for this course.

Grade Breakdown:

Reading Journal (x6) and Class Participation	15%
Short Writing Assignments (x 4)	20%
Term Paper and Proposal	30%
Final Examination	35%
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Total	100%

V. ASSIGNMENT FORMAT, SUBMISSION, AND GRADING

Paper Format and Style: All papers are to be double-spaced, paginated, and typewritten in 12 pt. Times New Roman font; margins set at 1-inch (sides) and 1½ (top and bottom). All sources should be cited as in-line citations. An excellent guide to the preparation of essays, including citation styles, may be found at www.mcgill.ca/religiousstudies/ba/requirements-regulations/papers. This guide also reviews standards of academic integrity; if you have questions on how to avoid plagiarism please see the instructor.

Assignment Submission and Due Dates: All assignments are due in accordance with the Course Outline below. For convenience, I summarise the information here:

Short Writing Assignments: due *in class* on their respective due dates

Journal Entries 1–2: due no later than 11.59 PM on 28 September 2016

Journal Entries 3–4: due no later than 11.59 PM on 31 October 2016

Journal Entries 5–6: due no later than 11.59 PM on 5 December 2016

Term Paper Proposal: due no later than 11.59 PM on 12 October 2016

Term Paper: due no later than 11.59 PM on 23 November 2016

Any extensions of these deadlines must be arranged beforehand (barring unforeseen circumstances).

All assignments can be submitted either as a hardcopy to the instructor during class periods, during office hours to Birks 016, or as a softcopy via the myCourses website. When submitting a hardcopy, please be sure the time, date, and signature of the receiver are noted on the submission. When submitting electronically, be sure that you receive confirmation of your submission via the myCourses system (myCourses will automatically note the date and time of submission). For a helpful overview of electronic submission via myCourses, see the video at the following web address: www.d2l.com/resources/videos/dropbox-tool-learning-environment-basics-for-learners. Please note that, barring unforeseen circumstances, appeals to technical difficulties experienced while trying to submit an assignment electronically is not a valid excuse for handing something in late.

Late Policy: Assignments are considered late if they are submitted after the prescribed times outlined in the *Assignment Submission and Due Dates* section above. Late assignments will be penalised one grade point per day (e.g., from B to B- for one late day; from B to C+ for two late days, etc.) up to a maximum of 3 grade points in accordance with the McGill University Grading Scale (e.g., from B to C; or B- to D). Exceptions will only be made for unusual circumstances such as illness or by prior arrangement (or at the discretion of the instructor).

Grading Scale: In keeping with McGill University's grading system, RELG 311 will be graded on the following scale.

Grade	GPA	%	Interpretation
A	4.0	85–100	Very Good
A-	3.7	80–84	
B+	3.3	75–79	Good
B	3.0	70–74	
B-	2.7	65–69	
C+	2.3	60–64	Satisfactory
C	2.0	55–59	
D	1.0	50–54	Conditional Pass
F	0	1–49	Fail

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest).

VI. RELATED COURSE INFORMATION

Electronic Devices in the Classroom: Mobile computing and communications devices are permitted in class insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Use of Facebook, Messaging Apps, and other social media is prohibited. Students are permitted to record lectures only with the instructor's permission.

Disabilities: If you have a disability and feel the instructor should be alerted, please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at (514) 398-6009 before you do this. We will make every effort to accommodate your needs and to help ensure successful learning. Such matters will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

Course Evaluations: End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

General Policy: My intent and desire is to assist and guide you in the learning of the material of this course, as well as to stimulate your own thinking. Should you have any questions and/or concerns with the course content, readings, assignments, etc., *please do not hesitate* to contact me by email or in person during office hours. I am also happy to listen to suggestions about how we use class time, the texts, and the assignments. If you need help at any point in the course, please

ask. During office hours I hold an open-door policy and look forward to hearing any questions and/or concerns that you may have.

Your responsibility is to come to class prepared, especially in terms of familiarity with primary sources for discussion, and to be willing to explore ideas. I ask that you be willing to take risks, venture new ideas, ask questions, critique your preconceptions, and respect the perspectives, questions, and statements of your colleagues.

VII. COURSE OUTLINE: LECTURE TOPICS, READINGS, AND DUE-DATES

Sept. 2 **Course Introduction**

Topics: General Introduction: The Critical Study of Scripture; Overview of Syllabus; Establishment of Discussion Groups

Sept. 7 & 12 **Introductory Issues**

Topics: Hermeneutical Complexity; Shape of the Canon; Textual History of the New Testament

Read: Acts 16:11–40; Neufeld & DeMaris, chs. 1 & 7; read *FCBNT*, pp. 5–30, and skim pp. 31–82

Due Sept. 12: Writing Assignment 1

Part 1: Paul, his Epistles, and his Communities

Sept. 14 **Paul the Man: Historical and Commemorative Figure**

Topics: Who was Paul?; Critically Engaging the Epistles and Acts; Sketching the Life of Paul; Paul's Network Strategy

Read: Galatians 1–2; Philippians 3; and 2 Corinthians 10–13; *FCBNT*, pp. 365–93

Sept. 19 & 21 **The Thessalonian Correspondence: The Travelling and Writing Paul**

Topics: Authorship and Pseudepigraphy; Epistolary Genre and Structure; The Thessalonian Correspondence: Eschatology, Empire, and Ethics

Read: 1 & 2 Thessalonians; *FCBNT*, pp. 573–88

Due Sept. 19: Writing Assignment 2

Sept. 26 & 28 **Galatians: The Embattled Paul**

Topics: The Jewish Paul and his Relation to the Judaisms of his Day; Scripture, the Covenant, and Jewish–Gentile Relations *in Abraham*; the Law and life *in Christ*.

Read: Galatians; *FCBNT*, pp. 503–25; Neufeld & DeMaris, ch. 5

Due Sept. 26: Writing Assignment 3

Due Sept. 28: Journal Entries 1–2

Oct. **1 Corinthians: The Social Paul**

3 & 5

Topics: The *ekklēsia*; Wisdom, Apocalyptic, and the Corinthians' Factionalism; Sex, Gender, and Ethics in the Orderly Worship of the Social Body.

Read: 1 Corinthians; *FCBNT*, pp. 427–71; Neufeld & DeMaris, chs. 3 & 10

Due Oct. 3: Writing Assignment 4

Oct. **2 Corinthians: The Weak Paul**

12 & 17

Topics: The Integrity of the Epistle; Reading through Reconstructed Chronology; Jewish Apocalyptic, Religious Experience, and Apostolic Praxis; Paul's Fools Speech—Authority and Weakness; The Collection for Jerusalem.

Read: 2 Corinthians; *FCBNT*, pp. 473–501; Neufeld & DeMaris, ch. 8

Due Oct. 12: Paper Proposal

Oct. **Romans: Paul, the Universalist**

19 & 24

Topics: Paul, Christianity in Rome, and Integrity of the Letter; Reading Roman's Rhetorically—the Diatribe; Law, Sin, and "I"; Metaphors for Salvation; Jew and Gentile in Pauline Soteriology.

Read: Romans; *FCBNT*, pp. 395–426

Due Oct. 19: Writing Assignment 5

Oct. 26 **Philippians and Philemon: The Imprisoned Paul**

Topics: Paul and Imprisonment; Suffering, Joy, and Oneness *in/with Christ*; Social Relations in the *ekklēsia*.

Read: Philippians and Philemon; *FCBNT*, pp. 543–56 and 613–20

Due Oct. 26: Writing Assignment 6

Part 2: Commemorative Figures and Early Christian Diversity

Oct. 31 **The Deutero-Paulines: The Pseudepigraphical Paul**

& Nov. 2

Topics: Collecting and Editing Paul's Letters; Determining Pseudonymity; Making Sense of Paul's Failed Expectations: 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians; The *ekklēsia* and the Household.

Read: Colossians, Ephesians, and skim (again) 2 Thessalonians; *FCBNT*, pp. 527–42 and 557–72; Neufeld & DeMaris, ch. 2

Due Oct. 31: Journal Entries 3–4

Due Nov. 2: Writing Assignment 7

Nov. **The Pastoral Epistles and Extra-Canonical Images of Paul: The Domestic Paul**
7 & 9

Topics: The *ekklēsia(i)* in Asia Minor; Sound Doctrine and Good Citizenship; Trajectories toward the Canon; The Structure of the Household

Read: 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus; *Laodiceans* (Ehrman, pp. 165–66), *3 Corinthians* (Ehrman, pp. 157–59), and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Ehrman, pp. 113–21); *FCBNT*, pp. 589–611

Due Nov. 9: Writing Assignment 8

Nov. **Petrine Traditions and The Acts of the Apostles—Paul and Peter: Co-workers or Adversaries?**
14 & 16

Topics: Reception History of Galatians 2.11–14—Apostolic Figures as Ideological Representatives; Dressing Peter as Paul (or the opposite?) in 1 Peter; 2 Peter and the Letters of Paul; Peter and Paul Refurbished in Acts

Read: 1 & 2 Peter and Acts; *1 Clement* 5 (*The Apostolic Fathers*, v.1 [Online]); *FCBNT*, pp. 309–26, 327–63, and 667–90

Nov. 21 **No Class (Reading Day)**

Task: Work on your Term Paper

Nov. 23 **James: Reading James Reading Paul**

Topics: James in Galatians and Acts; Embedded Wisdom and Jesus Traditions; James and Paul on Abraham

Read: James; *FCBNT*, pp. 655–66

Due Nov. 23: Term Paper

Part 3: Early Christ-Devotees and their Neighbours

Nov. 28 **James, Hebrews, and The Johannine Epistles—Judaisms and Christianities: Postures and Positions**

Topics: Problems and Procedures in Demarcating Judaism(s) and Christianity(/ies); James' Jewish-Christian Voice; Splitting Alternatives in Hebrews; Boundary Definition in the Community of the Beloved

Read: Hebrews, 1, 2, & 3 John; *FCBNT*, pp. 625–53 and 691–710

- Nov. 30 **Petrine Traditions, Jude, and the Apocalypse of John: Christian Responses to the Imperial Order**
Topics: Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire; Review of 1 Peter—Good Citizenship and the Sharing of Christ’s Sufferings; Internal Accountability and External Image in Jude and 2 Peter; Violence and Symbolism in the Apocalypse of John
Read: Jude, Revelation, and skim 1 & 2 Peter; *FCBNT*, pp. 711–14, and 715–771
- Dec. 5 **Course Conclusion**
Topics: Overview of Course Content and Major Themes; Final Exam Preparation
Due Dec. 5: Journal Entries 5–6