

**Religion 142. New Testament**  
**DePauw University**  
**Fall 2016**  
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 Office hours: M/T/W/R 2:15-3:15; other times by appointment.

Welcome to this overview of the New Testament. This course is designed to introduce you to the study of the documents of early Christianity and to help you grapple with critical issues of interpretation and assessment. I am excited about working with you and look forward to getting to know each of you. If you need to see me at a time when I am not having office hours, please make an appointment. I read email daily (but **not** at night or on the weekends).

### **REQUIREMENTS**

The most important expectation I have of you is that you will: (1) do the readings, (2) prepare answers to the discussion questions listed in the syllabus for each day's readings, (3) *bring copies of the readings* and of your discussion preparations with you when you come to class, and (4) participate in class discussions. This course is, above all else, dependent upon your careful preparation for, and willing participation in, our class conversations. It is not a lecture course but is reading intensive and discussion intensive. Let me warn you from the start: the Bible readings must be done with care. While we're in the gospels, the daily reading assignments will be long.

The best way you can prepare for exams is by reading assignments thoroughly and by thoughtfully responding to the discussion questions as you read. You should come to class every day with answers to those questions. Periodically I will collect copies (or have you share copies with one another) of your class preparations. The quality of your daily work will contribute to your participation grade.

You are allowed 2 cuts. Each additional absence will result in the deduction of two points from your final average. You can use your 2 cuts for anything you wish, but you only get 3. Those of you who are involved in campus activities (sports, newspaper, theater, etc.) may need to use your cuts for commitments in those areas. That's no problem, but you don't get three cuts in addition to "school related" absences.

DePauw University is committed to respecting students who seek to observe religious holidays during the academic year. If you need to miss class or reschedule an assignment for that reason, I will be happy to work with you. Absences due to religious observances count as cuts.

### **GRADING**

Your final grade will be primarily determined by 2 factors:

First, exams (80%). There will be 3 examinations during the term and a final examination at the end. Each exam is worth 20% of your final grade. If you become ill and are unable to take an exam, **you must contact me prior to the exam** and must provide a doctor's excuse for your absence. If you suffer a death in the family, **you must contact me prior to the exam** to set up an alternative exam time. If you are unable to take an exam because of involvement in a university-

related activity, **you must contact me prior to the exam** to set up an alternative time before the regularly scheduled exam. If you have not acquired an extension in advance, and you fail to show up for an exam, there will be severe penalties. It is possible, but not likely, that at my discretion you will be permitted to take the exam the next day. Such a make-up will automatically be docked 20 points. It is more likely that you will not be permitted to take the exam and will receive a zero. If you miss an exam and I do not hear from you on the day of the exam, you will receive a zero. There are no exceptions. What I'm trying to say here is this: exams are not optional, and except in extraordinary circumstances, they will be taken on time or not at all.

Second, class participation (20%). You should come to class ready to share ideas and to ask questions. Doing a good job in class discussions doesn't mean talking constantly, or even every class session. It means coming to class having prepared answers to the study questions and providing thoughtful oral comments on a consistent basis. In addition to providing suggestions for study, the syllabus makes periodic written assignments (*to do*). Bring your written responses with you to class and be prepared to have other students or me read them. Coming to class without a written assignment when one is due will count as an absence. I will collect written work from time to time, not for letter grades, but to check general quality.

Finally: small writing assignments may also be made to facilitate class participation as may pop quizzes.

My grading scale is as follows:

90-100	A	(90-92 = A-)
80-90	B	(88-89 = B+ / 80-82 = B-)
70-80	C	(78-79 = C+ / 70-72 = C-)
60-70	D	(68-69 = D+ / 60-62 = D-)

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I will observe the University policy on academic integrity, and urge you to consult the Student Handbook to familiarize yourself with that policy. Cheating in any form (on exams, papers, etc.) will result in reductions of grade or in your failing the class.

### **ADAA CONSIDERATIONS**

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and University administered activities and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services, for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Academic Success and Student Disability Services is located in Harrison Hall, 302 A, 765-658-6267. It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation faculty and staff members. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member receiving the letter.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

The following texts are required, as are the readings on E-reserve, which I expect you to print, read, and bring to class with you.

- David L. Barr, New Testament Story: An Introduction (Wadsworth, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2008) 053462748X
- New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV) with Apocrypha (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., college ed., 2001) 0195284844
- Robert J Miller, The Complete Gospels: The Scholars Version (Polebridge Press, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2010) 9781598150186
- E-Reserves on Moodle

### Schedule of Assignments

**8/25 Introduction to course**

**8/30 Barr, “Introduction: The Three Worlds of the Text” (2-25) and “Preparing to Hear the Stories” (26-53); Barr, ch. 2, “The Story Before the Writings: Storytelling in Earliest Christianity” (54-77) and ch. 8, “Stories Told: Approaches to Understanding the Gospels” (251-278).**

*To ponder, Intro:* what are the 3 worlds of the text? What does Barr identify as his “primary goal” in seeking to interpret the New Testament? How does a historical critical reading differ from a personal reading? What are the 3 “obstacles” (p.17 ff.) that he sees as a barrier to modern understandings of the original texts? Why does Barr stress our discontinuity with the New Testament age?

*To ponder, ch. 1:* Why did people in the ancient world feel a need to be “saved”? What worldviews in the New Testament were represented by monotheism (exclusive and inclusive), polytheism, and dualism? How did concepts like family, honor, shame, and social hierarchies play key roles in first-century life in the Greco-Roman world?

*To ponder, ch. 2:* Why were the New Testament texts written in Greek instead of Hebrew? What kind of “two-way” process did early Christians use to harmonize the Hebrew Bible with the “story” of Jesus? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the 5 “paradigms” Barr identifies as crucial to early Christian understandings of Jesus? Why did early Christians embrace diversity (5 images) rather than unanimity (1 image)?

*To ponder, ch. 8:* What does Barr mean (p. 252) when he says that our task is to hear the gospels as they were originally heard? Why does the New Testament contain 4 gospels rather than just 1? What are readers to conclude when gospel texts are not identical (as in the case of the empty tomb accounts)? Why does Barr reject harmonization and insist that we learn to read each gospel individually, in order to hear the distinct “voice” of each author? What is the “synoptic problem” and the solution offered by modern scholars? What does Barr mean when he says that gospels present us with “artistic portraits” rather than with “candid snapshots”? (271)

*Terms:* canon; genre; historical-critical method;; dynamic equivalence vs. word equivalence; New Critics; exile; Alexander the Great; Hellenism; Antiochus IV; apocalyptic; dualism; polytheism; monotheism; canon; gospel, savior; logos, epiphanies; scripture; paradigms; apostles; prophets; teachers; Final Prophet; messiah; Septuagint; Son of God; Suffering Servant; oral tradition; synoptic gospels; synoptic problem; Q source; M; L; elimination; combination; harmonization; Diatesseron; Tatian; narrative gaps; plot; literary reading

*To do:* look at the empty tomb texts on pp. 254-255, and write out answers to the questions Barr poses on p. 243.

**9/1 Barr, Ch. 9, “God’s Kingdom in a Tragic World: The Gospel According to Mark” (279-309)**

**Mark 1-12**

*To ponder, Mark 1-5:* Use your cross-referencing tools at the bottom of the NT text to discover and read the Hebrew Bible passages Mark references in 1: 1-14 and 2:10. How does Mark use (and combine) references from the Hebrew Bible to indicate Jesus’ significance? What is the function of the “wilderness? What is the content of Jesus’ proclamation (1:14), and what, if anything, does it say about Jesus’ relationship to God? What is the content of the “messianic secret” and why is it a secret? Does Mark’s Jesus *want* people to regard him as the messiah? Who is the “Son of Man” from Daniel 7 referenced in Mark 2:10? What is apocalypticism, and why does Barr argue that it saturates Mark?

*Hint:* if you’re having trouble defining apocalypticism, check the index in Barr. He discusses the “plot” of an apocalyptic story on p. 91 and provides an outline of apocalyptic sensibilities on 438-39. You can also check your notes from our first class meeting.

*Terms:* anonymity; pseudonymous; pericope; narrative gaps; wilderness; messianic secret; Kingdom of God; apocalypticism; Sadducees; Pharisees; Oral Torah; Galilee; apocalyptic discourse; Isaiah; Jeremiah; transfiguration; Caesarea Philippi

*To ponder, Mark 6-12:* why do the disciples have such a difficult time appreciating Jesus’ identity when the demons know him instantly? Why are the scenes in 8: 27-9:8 crucial to Mark? Barr identifies a series of 4 “surprises” that unfold in Mark and then claims that Mark “consists of two distinct movements, bound together by a scene of recognition and reversal. The first movement we can call the movement of power: Jesus seems to prevail against all opponents....The final movement we can call the movement of suffering: Jesus seems abandoned by all.” (283) Explain.

**9/6 Barr, ch. 9 continued**  
**Mark 13-16**

*To ponder:* explain the significance of the Apocalyptic Discourse in ch. 13 and of the short vs. the long ending of ch. 16. What role do women play in Jesus’ movement? (15:40-41) Why does Judas betray Jesus in 14:10? What is the significance of Jesus’ speech in 14: 62? Why does Jesus feel abandoned by God on the cross? (15:34) Why does the curtain of the temple split at his death? Scholars generally argue that Mark

originally ended at 16:8. In what sense in your reading is 16:8 a fitting ending for this particular gospel? How do you assess Barr's interpretation (p. 298) that the women fear Jesus' resurrection because they realize "his death implies their own"?

*To ponder:* "Mark's intention is to show the relevance of Jesus for life in a time of suffering. The story is written this way...because it is written for a certain audience living in a certain situation to which (and from which) it spoke." (Barr, 304) What does Barr mean? In your opinion, what aspects of Jesus' ministry are most important to Mark?

*More info:* want to learn how crucifixion worked? See <http://www.joezias.com/CrucifixionAntiquity.html>.

*To do:* scholar Felix Just has a website (<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/>) with excellent charts to help you work with the structure and the content of the Gospels. Go to <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Christology.htm> and print out his sheet on Mark's Christology. You may also find his section-by-section outline of Mark useful.

**9/8 Exam 1**

**9/13 TBA: Fun!**

**9/15 Barr, ch. 10, "The Book of the New Community: The Gospel According to Matthew" (310-347)  
Matthew 1-16**

*To do:* jot down and bring to class answers to the following: according to Barr, how does the genealogy in Mt 1 function to connect Jesus with the story of God's past dealings with Israel? What role do Gentiles play in the genealogy?

*To ponder:* How does the story of Jesus in Mt 1-4 refer to the Moses-Exodus stories of the Hebrew Bible? How do Jesus' miracles reveal his authority? Why does he stress righteousness and obedience? Does he respect or reject the authority of Jewish law? How does Matthew's depiction of the disciples compare to Mark's?

*Texts motifs to note in ch. 1-4:* genealogy; flight to Egypt; death of the children; Jesus' baptism and temptation; the wilderness. Why does Matthew trace Jesus' divine sonship not to his baptism, deeds, or resurrection, but to his birth?

*Textual motifs in the Sermon on the Mount:* 5:17-- I come not to abolish but to fulfill the law; 6: 33--strive for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness; 7:15-23--beware of false prophets; not those who call me Lord, but those who do the will of my Father will enter the kingdom; 5:48--be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect

*Other textual motifs to note:* 8:10--many outside Israel will eat with Abraham, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into darkness; 10:1-5--Jesus commissions the 12 to proclaim the gospel to Israel; 10:34--I bring not peace but a sword, setting families against each other

*Terms:* infancy narrative; Gentiles; devout Gentiles; rabbinic Judaism; Pharisees; Zealots; Essenes; righteousness; Kingdom of God; Sermon on the Mount; Yavneh; Hillel; Shammai; Qumran

*To do:* by now you know that Matthew's structure differs from Mark's. For a great chart on gospel similarities and differences, print out Felix Just's page at [http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Four\\_Gospel\\_Chart.htm](http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Four_Gospel_Chart.htm). This page is also helpful: [http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Synoptic\\_Outlines.htm](http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Synoptic_Outlines.htm). There are also excellent charts on Matthew's themes, Christology, etc.

**9/20 Barr, ch. 10 continued**  
**Matthew 17-28**

*Textual motifs to note:* 12:49--whoever does the will of my Father is my family; 13:30--let both grow together till the harvest; 15:32-39--feeding of the 4000; 16:11--beware the yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees; 16:13-17:13--Caesarea Philippi/transfiguration; 19: 21, 28: be ye perfect—you will judge the 12 tribes of Israel; 21:8--entry into Jerusalem; 21:28 21:22-24--parables of the vineyard and the wedding; ch. 23: woe to you, scribes and Pharisees; you are not to be called rabbi; you have one instructor, the Messiah;; 25: 40--as you did it to the least of these....you did it unto me; 26:52-54--the scriptures must be fulfilled; 26:62-28:20--trial, crucifixion, resurrection.

*To ponder:* Barr says Matthew's depiction of the disciples in the Caesarea Philippi story is more positive than Mark's. Why? In what ways does Jesus repeatedly castigate the scribes and the Pharisees? What's the point of the parables of the wheat and the chaff, the vineyard and the wedding? Barr says that Matthew transforms Mark's story of Jesus' passion "from one of suffering to one of obedience," thus providing the church with a paradigm of how to live faithfully before the final judgment. Explain. Finally, why does Judas betray Jesus in 26:14-15?

*And:* Barr thinks that we cannot understand Matthew's rejection of the Pharisees unless we understand the emergence of rabbinic Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. He argues that both rabbinic Jews and Jewish Christians claimed to be the proper continuation of historic Israel. This, says Barr, accounts for both the "Jewish" and the "anti-Jewish" material in Matthew. What does Barr mean by this claim?

**9/22 Barr, "Charter Stories: Being God's People" (168-173); Library of Congress Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/scrolls/>). Click on all chapters.**

**"The Community Rule," translated by Geza Vermes at [http://humweb.ucsc.edu/gweltaz/courses/history/hist\\_163/texts/serekh\\_vermes.pdf](http://humweb.ucsc.edu/gweltaz/courses/history/hist_163/texts/serekh_vermes.pdf)**

*To ponder:* who were the Essenes and what was the Qumran Community? Why are the documents at Qumran important for the study of the New Testament period?

*To do:* What specific similarities and differences can you identify from the text of "The Community Rule" between the religious group behind Matthew's gospel and the

religious group behind the Dead Sea Scrolls? Cite exact texts. Jot down your list and bring it to class.

**9/27 Barr, ch. 11, “The Gospel as Heroic Narrative: The Story of Luke-Acts” (348-369)  
Luke 1-9:49**

*To ponder:* what is the 3 part structure of Luke, and how does it parallel the structure of Acts? Make a list of the ways Luke’s genealogy and birth narrative parallel or differ from Matthew’s. How does Luke compare and contrast John and Jesus? What’s different about Luke’s portrayal of Jesus’ baptism? temptation in the wilderness? basic message? Look carefully at Luke 4: 14-30. How does it compare/contrast to Mark and Matthew? Make a list of how the Sermon on the Plain compares to the Sermon on the Mount. In what ways does Luke’s version of Peter’s confession and the transfiguration depict the disciples more positively than Matthew or Mark?

*Terms:* prayer, Holy Spirit, Temple, the poor, kingdom of God, Samaritan, synagogue, parousia, Jerusalem

*Textual motifs to note:* genealogy, birth narrative, baptism, temptation, return to Galilee and beginning of ministry (4:14ff). As you read this gospel, note what Luke has to say about the marginalized (such as women, the poor, etc.). Sermon on the Plain; 6: 36 (be merciful as your Father is merciful); role of women (8: 2-3 and elsewhere); Peter’s confession and the transfiguration (9: 18-with 45).

*To do:* by now you know that Luke’s genealogy is very different from Matthew’s. Print out Felix Just’s chart at <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jesus-Generalogies.htm>. See the differences between the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain, print out <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Luke-SermonOnPlain.htm>.

**9/29 Barr, ch. 11 continued  
Luke 9:50-24:53**

*Textual motifs to note:* (9:51 (he set his face to go to Jerusalem); 10: 37 (the one who showed mercy); 13: 33 (it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem); 17:21 (the kingdom of God is among you); 18: 34 (what he said was hidden from them); 24:26-27 (was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer?); 24: 45 (he opened their minds to understand the scriptures); 24: 47 (beginning with Jerusalem).

*To ponder:* In what ways does Luke downplay apocalypticism and the parousia? How does Luke emphasize concern for the marginal people of society? What is the significance of geography for Luke’s story? Why does Judas betray Jesus in 22:3?

*To ponder:* Explain Barr’s claim that whereas Mark depicts the crucifixion as a tragedy, Luke depicts Jesus as an ideal martyr, a victor over evil. “There is not (as in Mark a reversal of the action, but rather a steady growth from the birth stories to the resurrection. The action is an ever-ascending progression, ending in triumph and victory.” (369)

*And:* be able to do a detailed comparison of one incident shared by Matthew and Luke and to draw implications for the two gospels based on the similarities and differences between the selected passages.

**10/4 Barr, ch. 11 (369-389)  
Acts 1-15**

*To ponder:* how does Luke depict the apostles assuming the authority and power of Jesus? (Point to specific texts.) What does Barr mean when he says that in Luke “everything moves toward Jerusalem; in the Acts everything moves away from Jerusalem”? (301) What is the dispute between the Christian Hellenists and the Hebrew Christians? What is the significance of Peter’s encounter with Cornelius? How does Luke think Jewish and Gentile Christians should relate to one another? Why does Luke repeatedly describe the apostles as “witnesses” to Jesus? What church offices are emerging in Acts? Why does Paul emphasize his former life as a Pharisee as part of his preaching? How does Luke use signs and wonders to establish Paul’s authority? In 28:26-28, the text claims that salvation has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen. Where else do you see that theme in the first 15 chapters of Acts? List specific texts.

*Textual motifs to note:* 1: 4 (he ordered them to stay in Jerusalem); 1: 7 (it is not for you to know the times, but you will be my witnesses); Pentecost; Peter’s first sermon (2:14 ff); 2:36 (God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified); 4: 34 (compare the Christian community to Jesus’ words in Luke 4:8); death of Stephen (7:56, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God); Paul’s vision (9: 3 ff); Peter and Cornelius (10: 15, What God has called clean, you must not call profane); Jerusalem conference (15:6)

*Terms:* Hellenists and Hebrew Christians, Devout Gentile, Jerusalem, Rome, Samaritans, Cornelius, Pentecost, Sadducees, witness, signs and wonders, widows (e.g. 6:1, 9:39), prophets and teachers (13:1 and elsewhere), apostles and deacons, Gamaliel

*Felix Just:* has several excellent outlines and analyses of Acts at <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Acts.htm>.

**10/6 Exam 2**

**10/11 Barr, ch. 12, “Irony and the Spirit: The Gospel According to John” (380-408)  
John 1-16**

**MOODLE: “Wisdom”**

*To ponder:* what purpose does the prologue play in John’s gospel? How does the author use descent and ascent as organizing principles for this gospel? How does Barr see signs/fulfillment as a means of organizing this gospel? Darkness and light? In what ways is John similar to the synoptics, and in what ways is this gospel different? What is the Spirit (see ch. 14)? How and why does John depict Jesus’ followers as persecuted? Why is there no Lord’s Supper? “The synoptic gospels present an inaugurated eschatology. Which viewpoint does John represent?” (Barr, p. 400). Why does Judas betray Jesus in 13:27?

*Textual motifs to note:* 10: 30 (the Father and I are one); themes of glory; 12: 16 (the disciples do not understand till after Jesus is glorified); 12:31 (now is the judgment of the

world); 12:44-50 (Barr's "turning point"); 15: 18 (you do not belong to a world that hates you); 16: 28 (I came from the Father to the world and now return to the Father); 17:33 (in the world you face persecution). For a great chart comparing John and the Synoptics, see Felix Just, <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>.

*To do:* Using the reserve reading and Barr as sources, bring written answers to the following: What is Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible? What is the Logos (Word) in John, and how does it relate to the Wisdom passages assigned above?

**10/13 Barr, ch. 12 continued  
John 17-21**

*To ponder:* "John has quite abandoned the apocalyptic view of history....In fact, John shares much with the Gnostic view of the world, which emphasizes being (ontology) not time (history).... This "beyondness" of John's Jesus raises acutely the question of his actual humanity." (Barr, p. 401) Pick 3 significant ways that John 18-19 differs from the synoptics and try to account for those differences in light of John's theology and style. Why does Barr think chapter 21 was added to this gospel? Why was there controversy about including John in the canon, and what does Barr mean when he says that "the claim of chapter 21 seems to represent the transition between the earlier anonymous tradition and the second-century tradition of apostolic authorship"? (p. 419)

FALL BREAK

**10/25 Barr, ch. 3, "The Earliest Christian Literature: The Thessalonian Correspondence" (78-93); Barr, ch. 4, "Paul's Letters to His Followers: The Reflective Paul" (103-114)  
1 Thessalonians, Philippians**

*To ponder, 1 Thessalonians:* what was the typical structure of a letter written in antiquity? How does the structure of Paul's letters compare? Define pseudepigrapha and pseudonymity and concept of authorship in late antiquity. How does Paul use oral traditions regarding Jesus in I Thessalonians? How does he use apocalypticism? What is Paul's relationship to the Thessalonians? What are the issues worrying the Christians at Thessalonica? What texts do you find crucial?

*To ponder, Philippians:* Paul cites a Christian hymn in 2: 6-11. Is his purpose to speak of a preexistent Christ or to make a comparison between Jesus and Adam? What difference does it make for Paul's message? How does Paul see the relationship between the story of Jesus and that of his own life and the lives of the communities he serves? Who are Euodia and Syntyche, and why does Paul address them? What do we learn in this letter about the difficulties Paul is facing in his life and the issues debated in the church at Philippi?

*And:* by now I assume you are aware that Felix Just has charts for every New Testament book.

**10/27 Barr, ch. 4, "Paul's Letters to His Followers: Written for Gentiles" (114-127)  
Galatians (esp. 2-3)**

*To ponder, Galatians:* Barr identifies a range of Jewish responses to Gentiles; explain. Why does Paul omit an opening thanksgiving in Galatians? What attitudes toward Jewish ritual law can you find in this letter? Why is Paul so angry? Who are the opponents and the radicals? How does Paul's discussion of the Jerusalem conference and other consultations (1: 15-2: 14) compare to Acts? How does Paul use allegorical interpretation in Gal. 4: 21-31? Look at the baptismal statement in 3: 23-29. What kind of equality is Paul proclaiming for Gentiles, slaves, and women? How does 3: 28 draw upon Genesis 1: 27? What does this mean: "For freedom Christ has set us free....only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (5: 1, 13-14)

**11/1 Barr, ch. 4, "Paul's Letters: Gentiles Who Ignore the Law" (127-140)  
I Corinthians**

*To ponder:* what were the four squabbling factions in the Corinthian church? What does Paul want the Corinthians to do with regard to Jewish law? What does he mean in ch. 1 when he says that Gentiles did not find God in wisdom nor did Jews find God in signs, but that Christ is revealed in foolishness and weakness? In what sense is Christ God's wisdom (*sophia*)? Why is Paul giving the Corinthians advice about sexual morality in ch. 5 if his point to the Galatians was that they were free from the law? Why does he urge believers not to marry in ch.7? What is the "impending crisis" (7: 26)?

*And:* what chain of being does Paul outline in 11: 3-11? Compare 11: 3 with 11: 11-12; is he arguing for a gender hierarchy or not? What does Paul mean by the advice on dress that he gives women worship leaders in 11: 13? Why does he say in 14: 34 that women should be silent during worship, since in 11: 13 he told women how to dress when they led worship? How does any of this correspond to his rejection of gender distinctions in Gal. 3: 28? Or to his stress on love in I Cor. 13? Why is he offering advice about ecstatic gifts of the Spirit in I Cor 14? What capsules of earlier Christian theology does he pass along in 11: 23-26 and 15: 3-7? What comparisons does he make between the First Adam and the Second Adam in ch. 15? How does Paul explain the resurrection of the body in ch.. 15?

**11/3 Exam 3**

**11/8 Barr, ch. 6, "Paul for a New Day: The Trajectory of the New Community" (184-194); Barr, ch. 6, "The Trajectory of the Emerging Institution" (194-200)  
Colossians, 1 Timothy**

*To ponder, Colossians:* what criteria do scholars use to determine Paul's role in the production of disputed letters? What reasons (pro and con) are there to think of Paul as the author of Colossians? What is the main concern of Colossians? How does the characterization of Paul differ here from that of earlier letters? How does the author use images of family and body? Locate and define the household code (instruction) in Colossians. How can the author reconcile that advice with his words in Col 3: 10-11? Some scholars have argued that the household codes represent a pagan genre imported into Christianity—how do you assess that position?

*To ponder, 1 Timothy:* what is the main concern of 1 Timothy (and, according to Barr, of the other Pastoral letters?) How does the underlying story differ from the story of Paul in earlier letters? What are indications in 1 Timothy that the church is a much more developed institution than in earlier letters? How would you reconcile 1 Tim 2: 15 (“she will be saved through child-bearing”) and 1 Tim 5: 14 (“I would have the younger widows marry, bear children”), with 1 Cor 11: 14 (“to the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am”) or with 1 Cor 7: 33 (“the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband”)? Who are the widows in ch. 5, and why is the author so concerned about them? What is the attraction of chastity and virginity to the Christian women who join the author’s opponents?

*To do:* look at the features of developing Pauline Christianity Barr enumerates on p. 203. List those which apply to the form of Christianity evident in 1 Timothy and provide illustrative examples from the biblical text.

**11/10 Barr, ch. 6, “The Trajectory of World Denial” (200-204) and “The Trajectory of Mystical Experience” (204-208)**

**MOODLE: Acts of Paul and Thecla (stop at first ending), online at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/noncanon/acts/plnthec.htm>**

**MOODLE: Lance S. Owens, “An Introduction to Gnosticism and the Nag Hammadi Library,” <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhlintro.html>**

**MOODLE: Elaine H. Pagels, “*The Gnostic Jesus and Christian Politics*,” University Lecture in Religion, Arizona State University, 1982.**

**MOODLE: “Hymn of the Pearl,” <http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/library/hymnpearl.htm>**

*To ponder:* what are the Acts of Paul and Thecla? In what way does this literature represent an ascetical version of Christianity? How does this document raise questions about gender roles and hierarchy? How does it reinterpret Paul’s understanding of the body? How does Thecla claim spiritual authority? Why might women have been drawn to this form of Christianity? How does it compare to the version of Christianity we saw in 1 Timothy?

*To ponder, Gnosticism:* when and how did we come to have copies of Gnostic Christian writings? What are the principle characteristics of Gnosticism? What is gnosis? In what ways did Gnostic Christians either reject or rework Paul’s teaching? How did they depict Jesus? What does Owens mean when he says that Gnostics often understood God to contain a union of two disparate natures? Who were the “orthodox,” and why did they attempt to destroy all traces of Gnostic Christianity?

**11/15 Miller, Gospel of Thomas, “Introduction” and text (279-303)**

*To ponder:* How old is the Gospel of Thomas, and what relation does it have to Q or to the synoptics? What similarities do you see to the synoptics? In what ways (form or content) does it differ? What is Jesus talking about when he tells his listeners (22: 3-4)

that when they “make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner . . . and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female. . . then you will enter [the kingdom]”? How is salvation tied to becoming whole? Why is it that nursing babies (22: 1-3) only seven days old (4:1) are the ones chosen to enter God’s realm?

*To do:* bring to class a list of 3 instances where Thomas’ material seems to parallel the synoptics; 3 instances where it uses material also in the synoptics to make a different point; and 3 instances where it uses themes also in John to make a different point. Cite specific texts.

**11/17 Miller, Gospel of Mary, “Introduction” and text (333-342)**

**MOODLE: Molly Worthen, “Housewives of God,” The New York Times, 14 November 2010.**

*To ponder, Gospel of Mary:* What is the conflict between Peter and Mary in the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, and what is its significance for the study of early Christianity? What does the text mean in 4: 5-7 when it says that “the Human One [also translated as Son of Man] exists within you. Follow it. Those who search for it will find it.” Look at 10: 11-13. How has the author divested “Son of Man” of the apocalyptic overtones it carried in the synoptic gospels? The text cautions in 10:13 that the disciples should not lay down any additional rules—meaning what, exactly?

*To ponder, Worthen article:* How do the complementarians use Scripture to understand the role of women in Christianity? How do the egalitarians’ interpretations differ? Consider the complementarian claim that “men and women have different spiritual dispositions.” What biblical texts do they use to prove this point? How do you think the authors of 1 Timothy, the Gospel of Mary, or The Acts Of Paul And Thecla would assess the complementarians and the egalitarians?

**11/22 TBA**

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**11/29 Miller, Gospel of Judas, “Introduction” and text (343-357); The Infancy Gospel of Thomas, “Introduction” and text (379-390)**

*To ponder from Judas:* Why does Jesus laugh at the disciples when they offer thanks to God (1:7)? Why is Judas the only disciple able to stand before Jesus (1:15)? What is the significance of the disciples’ vision in 2:9-17, and why does Jesus tell them in 2:30 to cease sacrificing? In 3:3-8, what distinction is Jesus making between the destiny of ordinary people (like the eleven disciples) and the destiny of the “holy race”? What is the meaning of Judas’ vision in 3:11-14? Why does he follow a star and enter a cloud in 6: 7-10? What does Jesus mean when he praises Judas above all others as the one who “sacrifice the man who bears me” (15:4) How does Judas die in this gospel?

Pagels and King note elsewhere that this gospel does not tell us much, if anything, about the historical Jesus or Judas. But it does reveal, they argue, a good bit about second century Christian debates about suffering and death. What theological position about

these issues is Judas rejecting? How does Judas' understanding of creation and God differ from that represented in the canonical gospels?

*To ponder from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas:* the introduction argues that this apocryphal gospel appealed to the “unsophisticated religious imagination of ordinary early Christians.” What do you make of this youthful Jesus, who does works of wonder at the same time that he maims people for life if they anger him? Why do the scholars and Pharisees say in 19:10 that they have never seen someone of “such glory and such virtue and wisdom?” What do you think is the point of this gospel?

**12/1 Barr, ch. 13, “The Dawn of a New Day,” (429-470)  
Revelation 1-22**

*To ponder:* Revelation can be a confusing read, since the narrative is hard to follow as well as often symbolic. So remember that Revelation is an example of apocalyptic literature and shares characteristics with other apocalypses (such as?!) from the period. Review pp. 438-39 to remind yourself of common characteristics of the genre of apocalypticism. Study pp. 440-444 to learn the common symbolic meanings of the numbers and colors featured in Revelation.

*Further:* But Revelation does not always employ the conventions of apocalypticism—sometimes it deliberately overturns them. How are the following texts surprising? See 5:5-6 (Judah is revealed not as a voracious Lion but as a slain Lamb); 12:10-11 (the faithful conquer not by might but by martyrdom as does the Lamb); 19: 11-21 (Christ and his armies make war not with a battle sword, but with the Word of God); 21: 1-4 (history ends not at Armageddon but in a new Jerusalem open to all).

*Finally:* Barr has argued elsewhere<sup>1</sup> that we can read Revelation as three interrelated stories with a common theme. Story one (1-3) is a theophany: a divine presence visits John on earth and commands him to write letters to seven churches. Story two (4-11) is a throne visitation; John is taken up to God's heavenly throne, sees the slain lamb open a scroll with seven seals and experiences the announcement that the divine kingdom has come. Story three (12-22) is a vision of holy war, with seven plague events culminating in the marriage of the lamb and the bride and the recreation of Eden as the new Jerusalem. The author's goal, Barr concludes, is to give three concurrent perspectives of Jesus—first, as active in the Christian churches of John's day; second, as the crucified lamb already ruling the world in heaven; and third, as the messiah who during his own life and in the future eschatological battle decisively defeats evil through his patient suffering. What is the nature of divine power as represented by a slain lamb? Is Revelation's Jesus a warrior? By what power do Jesus' followers triumph?

**12/6 Revelation: reread**

**MOODLE: Barbara R. Rossing, “Apocalyptic Violence and Politics: End-Times Fiction for Jews and Christians,” Reflections (Spring, 2005), 16-22.**

*To ponder:* Rossing argues that Revelation is not a text that glorifies violence, but rather depicts Jesus and his faithful followers triumphing precisely because they choose to

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<sup>1</sup> David L. Barr, “The Story John Told,” Reading the Book of Revelation (SBL, 2003), pp. 14-21.

suffer violence rather inflict it. How persuasive is her argument? What do you make of her distinction between “conquering” and “making war”?

*And:* Let’s try to situate John’s community within early Christianity. Why does Barr argue that it was separatist and sectarian, at odds both with conservative Jewish Christianity and more liberal Pauline Christianity?

*And:* As you know, theories of what Revelation means abound. Barr does not read Revelation as though John were Nostradamus, predicting a future that is already written in stone. What does he think the purpose of prophetic writing is? Is prophecy a revelation of what must be or what may be?

*Finally:* “John’s portrayal of Jesus-as-victim and Jesus-as-victor are both inadequate,” Barr contends, “until the two images permeate each other.” Explain—that’s central to his understanding of Revelation. How does your reading of Revelation differ? What do you think the point is?

## **12/8 Final Thoughts**