



This method of assessment requires that you build on critical reading and writing you are already doing and compose a more thoughtful, elegant paper that expands on a larger research question related to early Christianity.

Students will write an essay based on one of the four Roman social values that we study in this class. Students will engage in a **close reading** of the text and analyze with specific attention to a chosen social value, for the purpose of answering this question: what does this text teach about how early Christianity supported or subverted a particular Roman social value?

In the case of the re-sit, the choice has been made for you:

The **social value** that you will write on is: honour/shame.

The **primary source** from the required Ehrman book *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity* is “The Martyrdom of Polycarp.”

Secondary Sources: You must reference in your paper **four** secondary sources that meet the following criteria:

1. DeSilva’s chapter three from *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004), “The Cultural and Social World of the Early Church.” This provides you with an extensive definition of the value that will shape your reading of your chosen text.
2. At least one academic journal article.
3. Two specialized secondary sources, which you shall cite properly. Ehrman and Lynch provide references to secondary sources at the culmination of *each chapter*, so you have a head start. Please note: the Lynch text is **not** a scholarly source, so you can only use it for reference.

Parameters:

- Your paper must have a clear, well-written thesis statement that is underlined.
- Your paper must be approximately 1800-2000 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography.
- You will turn in your paper using the “Turn-it-in” system on Moodle.
- Your paper must be Times New Roman font size 12, with one inch margins.
- Please note: I have an inclusive language policy (i.e. “humankind” rather than “mankind,” or “God” rather than “he” or “He”).

Some advice:

- Do not waste time; get started by browsing through the Ehrman texts; what catches your eye?
- Do not expect immediate clarity; research requires *patience*.
- This is a short paper, not a dissertation; you do not need to marry your topic, only date it.

I will grade your paper based on your ability to demonstrate basic writing skills as well as knowledge and analysis.

Finally, while religion classes sometimes provide the opportunity for students to reflect on eternal questions of their own faith, still, the student must understand that this is an academic paper, not an opportunity for professing faith statements. Please see me for clarification if needed.