

JESUS AND THE GOSPELS

COURSE SYLLABUS

COLLEGE CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION: Background of the New Testament, formation of the Gospels, non-canonical traditions, and the ministry of Jesus with particular attention to his teachings.

The course is part of the General Education requirement in the area of Ultimate Questions. Such courses consider questions, issues and responses basic to religious and philosophical traditions. The courses are designed to stress the relevance of such concerns to contemporary experience and self-understanding. The courses include the reading and analysis of original texts. One goal of the course is to enable students to think critically and intelligently – and to write clearly and effectively – about the matters covered in ways that demonstrate the student’s understanding and skill in knowing about, responding to and expressing oneself so as to indicate that the student is able to evaluate and critique her/his own analysis and conclusions as well as those of others.

COURSE GOALS:

1. to provide the student with a sound working knowledge of the material covered in class and the readings;
2. to acquaint the student with a range of views related to the course and the backgrounds of those views;
3. to provide the student with on-going incentives to continue the study of the questions, issues and responses raised in the course, and to be able to critique and evaluate positions that the student will encounter in the future;
4. to engage students in direct analysis and expression of materials covered through small group work and class reports; and
5. to encourage the student continually to examine and re-examine his/her own ultimate questions, nature of the issues, and developing responses.

PERSPECTIVES: *This is a history course that will also deal with philosophy, literary developments and interpretations.* Please keep in mind that the field of Religious Studies is an academic discipline. While none of us approaches “Ultimate Questions” and especially the subject matter of this course as a “neutral observer,” or without “pre-understandings,” the course is not intended to indoctrinate students either for or against any religious, social, or political tradition. Students will hear me speak in different “voices,” such as **instructor of basic academic “stuff,”** sometimes **defender of position and/or theory,** and sometimes as **critic of the same position and/or theory.** When I speak **knowingly in my own voice,** I will identify that voice, offer other views, and respect the views of students. **We** will be pushed to present our own interpretations and views **in light of the basic “stuff,” considered analysis, and mutual respect.** Any question that is asked honestly is not a “foolish question.” I may respond with questions that are intended to clarify and sharpen the questioner’s inquiry.

COLLEGE ADVISABLE STATEMENTS:

1. Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) for this course first **MUST** meet with either Ms. Laurie Roth in the Office of learning Services (for learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD) of Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center (for all other disabilities).”
2. Concerning Academic Honesty, please consult the relevant sections in the College Catalogue and the Student Handbook. Bottom Line: the work you do is to be your work. Essentially, by our being in the course together, you and I are in a covenant of trust with each other. Trust me to do my best with integrity and sound scholarship, and I trust you to do the same with the work that is submitted for a grade. I trust you. You may consult with one another, the internet, etc. – but woe to plagiarists and those who “lift papers” from the internet! **BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT INTERNET SOURCES IN RESEARCH!** If you have any questions about a source’s accuracy/integrity or the extent of using a source without attribution, please see me first.

3. While the syllabus includes a grading grid, I reserve the right to make a **one way qualitative judgment** in developing a final grade. That means, for example, if you have a disaster on a test but do super work on most other factors, I **may** go beyond the end-term numerical grade. The qualitative judgment **will not reduce** the numerical total of graded factors in composing a final grade.
4. While the syllabus is intended to be similar to a contract between the student and the professor, there may be some changes or modifications, such as shifts of dates or changes in the anticipated subjects to be taken in class.
5. About Attendance. I intend to be on time at every class that the College is open, and I expect you to be there and on time, too. Legitimate reasons supported by credible evidence (from the Dean of Student's Office, etc.) will be acknowledged. **More than 3 unexcused "cuts" will reduce the "Participation" factor in the final grade.** If a religious holy day that you really observe and on which you are not to write or will be home for the observance, please inform me.
6. About "Participation." *Participation entails being present, plus keeping awake, alert, doing the readings being able to respond to questions, and making thoughtful contributions to class discussion.*

GRADING GRID: Total of 100 points. The results of which are:

A = 90-100,	Excellent, way beyond expectations, extra effort
B = 89-80,	Very good, better than expectations, competent
C = 79-70,	Average
D = 69-60,	Below average but passing
F = below 60,	Inadequate grasp of the material, failure

THIS COURSE:

Short Answer Test	10 points, Emphasis on Basic Terms
First Essay Exam	20 points, Emphasis on Synoptic Theories & Mark
Second Essay Exam	20 points, Emphasis on Matthew and Luke
Third Essay Exam	20 points, Emphasis on John
Final Exam	24 points, Emphasis on Others Gospels, Cumulative
Participation	6 points
TOTAL:	100 points

ABOUT THE EXAMS:

1. **Essay-style Exams** should be learning experiences. By studying and then responding, a person makes connections and is able to express herself/himself more maturely (as well as accurately) than in "objective quizzes."
2. I look for three factors in grading essays:
 - a. what did the student say that is expected (**accuracy**);
 - b. what did the student not say that is expected (**completeness**); and
 - c. how did the student say it (**style, spelling, grammar**).
3. I will distribute **the essay question choices** (including the Final Exam Essays) ahead of time. The same essay choices will be on the exams. You may engage in conversations with each other, form study groups, and/or go it alone in preparing for the exams. But when exam times come, you do your own work without notes or open books. I will offer as options, a Review Session on the exams according to the schedule below.

Test Dates:

Short Answer Test:	Friday, September 7.	
First Essay Exam:	Monday, October 1,	Optional Review, September 28
Second Essay Exam:	Wednesday, November 7	Optional Review, November 6

Third Essay Exam: Friday, November 30 NO REVIEW POSSIBLE. SORRY!

Final Exam: Dean's Choice Optional Review, December 12

REQUIRED TEXTS: We will really use these!

HarperCollins Study Bible with Apocryphal/Deutero-Canonical Books, New Revised Standard Version translation. The Student Edition is in the Bookstore. This is the book we will use. Please do not substitute other translations or "Study Bibles."
The Other Gospels, edited by Ron Cameron

READING and EXAMS ROSTER

Material Distributed in class and on the Course's Blackboard Site are to be read!

August 27-September 7: READ: Bible, Introduction; To the Reader; Exodus 12-17; Leviticus 19; 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2; Psalm 107; Isaiah 7, 9, 40; 52-53; Daniel 7; Zechariah 9; 12; Malachi 3; Wisdom 1-3. *These passages are among those were used by the early Christian communities and are reflected directly and indirectly in the canonical Gospels.*

September 7: Short Answer Exam

September 10-28: READ: Bible, Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. Try one a day. Stress Mark.

October 1: Essay Exam Stressing Synoptic Source Theories and Mark

October 3- 19: READ: Bible, Matthew. [FALL BREAK: 10/6-9]

October 22-November 7: READ: Bible, Luke and ACTS.

November 7: Essay Exam Stressing Matthew and Luke-Acts

November 12-30: READ: Bible, John. [November 20-26 Thanksgiving Recess]

November 30: Essay Exam Stressing John

December 3-10: READ: Cameron: Foreword through page 37, 107-130. Re-Read Canonical Gospels.

Final exam date set by Dean of the College

QUIZ-EXAM-REVIEW ROSTER

Short Answer Test: Friday, September 7.

First Essay Exam: Monday, October 1, Optional Review, September 28

Second Essay Exam: Wednesday, November 7 Optional Review, November 6

Third Essay Exam: Friday, November 30 NO REVIEW POSSIBLE. SORRY!

Final Exam Exam: Dean's Choice Optional Review, December 12