

Rel. 114 Syllabus, Spring, 2012. Monday-Wednesday-Friday, 7:50-8:40 AM. Instructor: Dr. Walter Wagner. Office and Campus Mailbox: Bahnson Hall. Campus e-mail: [mewhw01@moravian.edu](mailto:mewhw01@moravian.edu). Other email: [walterwagn@gmail.com](mailto:walterwagn@gmail.com). Home telephone: 610-974-8242. Office conversations by arrangement-appointment. Office in Bahnson Hall (Moravian Seminary).

## ***JESUS AND THE GOSPELS, Religion 114***

### **COURSE SYLLABUS**

#### **The purposes of 100-level courses. From College Statement:**

- Introduce students to basic vocabulary/concepts, methodologies, and applications of the discipline(s) relevant to the course.
- Explore the broad subject matter of a given field (generally a survey course).
- Encourage development of strategies/skills (and tools) that could be applied across disciplines (ex.: writing, computing, speaking, reading).
- Encourage critical thinking and advancing/acknowledging different ways of knowing.
- Deliberately prepare students for relevant 200 level courses in the discipline(s) relevant to the course
- Generally 100 level courses have no prerequisites.

**COLLEGE CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:** Exploration of what we can know historically about the life and activities of Jesus. Comparison of the four gospels of the Christian New Testament, so that their separate messages and emphases can be discerned. Gospels that present different views of Jesus and his teachings but were not included in the Christian Bible will also be studied.

#### **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; 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 From Dr. Wagner (often hereinafter referred to as WW):**

***This course deals with history, philosophy, literary developments and interpretations. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT THE FIELD OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES IS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE.***

Regardless of one's background, no one approaches the literature about and person of Jesus 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 a 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 with mutual respect.** Any question that is asked honestly is not a "foolish question." I may respond in ways intended to clarify and sharpen the questioner's inquiry. We will consider views of Jesus and Gospels in non-biblical materials and also in Islam.

#### **COLLEGE ADVISABLE STATEMENTS:** with slight WW modifications

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 staff 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. You may consult with one another, the internet, etc. – Ⓢ but woe to plagiarists and those who “lift” from the internet! **BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT INTERNET SOURCES!!** If you have questions about a source’s accuracy/integrity, please see me first.

2. 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.
3. 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. My motto is “Let there be no surprises.”
4. 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 2 UNEXCUSED “CUTS” WILL REDUCE 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.
5. 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. Cell/Smart phone are to be turned OFF during class. No texting, tweeting or surfing during class.*
6. About Incompletes and missed quizzes and tests: Unless disasters, epidemics, etc. that are substantiated through student services and the Dean’s office, the rule is not to grant Incompletes or make-ups.

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

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

### **THIS COURSE:**

First Quiz: Interpretation Matters	10 points, Emphasis on Basic Terms.
Second Quiz: Synoptic Matters:	10 points, Emphasis on Mark, Matthew, Luke
First Essay Exam	20 points, Emphasis on Mark, Matthew, Luke. <b>March 1</b>
Second Essay Exam	20 points, Emphasis on John.
Final Exam	30 Points, Other Views and Cumulative.
Participation:	10 points
<b><u>TOTAL:</u></b>	<b><u>100 points</u></b>

### **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.

**Due Dates For Tests:**

**First Quiz:** In Class, 15 minutes. January 25.

**Second Quiz** In Class, 15 Minutes, February 3

**First Essay Exam:** Full Period, March 1

**Second Essay Exam:** Full Period, March 26

**Final Exam:**

I am willing to run review sessions for the Essay Exams, time and place to be arranged according to our schedules.

**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 other “Study Bibles” for our work in the course.

*The Other Gospels. Non-Canonical Gospel Texts*. Edited by Ron Cameron

There will be *numerous* handouts by Prof. Wagner

**ABOUT THE TEXT BOOKS**

The course deals with “Jesus and the Gospels.” That will include biblical scholarship, various interpretations of the “canonical Gospels,” and Gospels and versions of Jesus’ identity, etc. that were not accepted by most Christian communities.

1. The translation and edition of the Bible

a. to keep us together, we will use the *New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha-Deuterocanonicals*. **NO EXCEPTIONS, PLEASE.**

b. **The HarperCollins Study edition is required.** Again, it will keep us together. Plus, it contains introductory and supplementary essays, charts, maps and notes that will be important and helpful.

2. **Cameron’s** book provides the texts of a number of other accounts about Jesus.

**ABOUT HANDOUTS, ARTICLES AND BLACKBOARD COURSE DOCUMENTS**

1. Some handouts and Blackboard Course Documents are straight-forward academic materials.

2. Some handouts are articles related to “Jesus in the News” or similar items.

3. Some handouts and Blackboard Course Documents are articles that deal with matters related to

4. Because there versions of Jesus apart from the four Gospels in the New Testament, I will address those versions in early Christianity (including some clearly novelistic items; some Gnostic writings such as the Gospel of Thomas), and the Muslim Qur'an and Hadith.

**READING and EXAMS ROSTER**

**MATERIAL DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS AND ON THE BLACKBOARD SITE ARE TO BE READ AS IF THEY ARE CLASS PRESENTATIONS UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE**

**DATE****READ FOR THIS CLASS**

January 16: **Getting Started. No assignment yet. *Interpretation Matters, Part 1***

January 18: *Interpretation Matters, Part 2*. **READ: Bible, xiii-xxv.** Look at xxx-xxxiii, xxxix-lxvi; *Cameron*, Foreword (9-10), 15-19. At least glance through the Handouts distributed in class. You will need to go through these more carefully soon.

January 20: *Interpretation Matters, Part 3*. **READ: Bible, Exodus 12-17; Leviticus 19; Wisdom 1-3; Daniel 7, Isaiah 53, Psalms 107, and Psalm 22.**

January 23: *Interpretation Matters, Part 4*. Blackboard Document on Greco-Roman & Jewish Titles; **READ: Bible, Mark 15-16**

**January 25: FIRST QUIZ: INTERPRETATION MATTERS 15 MINUTES.** Class continues. Oral presentation, Mark 15:1-16:8

January 27: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. Canonical Gospel Characteristics. READ Bible: pages 1665-1667; Handout distributed in Class

January 30: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS** Synoptic Problem, Part 1. READ Bible, pages 1653-1663, then 1722-1724; then 1759-1760; Mark 1:1-13; Matthew 3:1-4:17; Luke 3:1-4:15.

February 1: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. Synoptic Problem, Part 2. READ Bible: Matthew 5-7, Luke 6:17-23; 14:34-35; 8:16; - you'll get the idea.

February 3: **SECOND QUIZ BRING BIBLE TO CLASS.**: Synoptic Matters. READ Mark, Please at one sitting!

February 6: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ with focus on Mark, 1-12

February 8: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ with focus on Mark 13-16

February 10: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS** READ Matthew at one sitting

February 13: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS** READ Matthew 1-13

February 15: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS** READ Matthew 14-28

February 17: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS** READ Luke at one sitting, Continue into Acts 1:1-2:47

February 22: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS** READ Luke 1-18

February 24: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ Luke 19-24, Acts 1:1-2:47

February 27: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. Session on Parables

February 29: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. Session on "Miracles"

March 1: **FIRST ESSAY EXAM. FULL PERIOD**

**March 3-11 SPRING BREAK . NO CLASS**

March 12: Introduction to John. **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. Reading of the Prologue

March 14: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ Whole Gospel preferably at one sitting

March 16: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ John 1-12

March 19: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ John 1-12

March 21: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ John 13-20

March 23: **BRING BIBLE TO CLASS**. READ John 13-21, and 1-2-3 John

**March 26: SECOND ESSAY EXAM. FULL PERIOD**

March 28: Memories Developed & Created, Gnosticism, Nag Hammadi, Secret Gospel of Mark

**March 30: READ CAMERON, Pages 9-10, 15-19, Infancy Gospel of Thomas**

**April 2: READ CAMERON, Gospel of Thomas, Part 1.**

**April 4: READ CAMERON, Gospel of Thomas, Part 2**

**April 6-9 BREAK NO CLASS**

**April 11: READ CAMERON, pages 76-103**

**April 13: READ CAMERON, pages 165-182.**

**April 16: Handouts: Gospel of Judas and Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)**

**April 18: READ CAMERON pages 107-121 and Jesus in the Qur'an and Islamic Tradition, Part 1**

**April 20: Jesus in the Qur'an and Islamic Tradition Part 2**

**April 23: Catch-Up**

**April 25: Catch-up**

**April 27 (LAST CLASS) Catch-Up Review**

**FINAL EXAM:**