

# Introduction to Early Christianity

RELI 2207A (Fall 2008)

Tue-Thu. 1:00-2:30; Room 415 SA

Professor Z. A. Crook

Paterson Hall 2a43

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Course Website: <http://www.carleton.ca/~zcrook/RELI2207.htm>

**Course Objective:** This course introduces you to some of the historical methods used by academics in the study of Christian origins and the writings of the New Testament. These methods, and their results, will be illustrated by focusing on selected kinds of writing that appear in the New Testament. In all, we seek not only to understand the writings of the New Testament, but also to understand what social, historical, cultural, and communal forces created them. The approach of this course is entirely historical and never faith-based; the truth or divine inspiration of the writings is never presupposed and in no way governs how we approach them; rather the writings are approached in the same spirit as one would approach other ancient writings – Homer, Aristotle, the Epic of Gilgamesh.

## **My Commitments to You:**

1. To represent the secure results of 150 years of academic and historical work on the New Testament and Christian Origins, and the sorts of questions academics ask of the New Testament.
2. To guide you through the material and through the implications of academic work on the New Testament, either by way of my lectures, through questions and discussions in class, or by way of office visits and conversations. But my job here is NOT to defend the academic study of the New Testament.

**Your Commitments to Me:** If you cannot commit to the following, you will probably not enjoy this course, and might find it very difficult even to pass it.

1. Although I may not yet be in a position to understand why academics draw the conclusions they do on every matter we will encounter, I am open to this intellectual adventure. I always retain the right to challenge my professor, but I will do so on the basis of the academic methods to which we are being introduced in this class, and not through appeals to religious authority, family or church teachings, or personal religious convictions. I am open to learning new things, even if they pose a challenge to positions I have long held.
2. I understand that my writing skills should be up to university standards. I should be able to write grammatically correct English sentences and paragraphs in structured essays. If written expression is a difficult area for me, I will do whatever is necessary to bring my writing up to university standards (such as visit a writing tutor). I will not blame my professor for expecting university-level work, nor complain that “This is not supposed to be an English class.”

## Evaluation

Map Quiz – 10% (Sept 18, last 20 mins of class)

**Synoptic Problem Work Group 10% (Oct 6) (see on-line syllabus for PDF)**

Midterm – 15% (Oct 21, in class)

**Fulfillment of Scripture Work Group 10% (Nov 4) (see on-line syllabus for PDF)**

Research Report – 20% (5 pages, Nov 20)

Translation Comparison 10% (3 pages, Nov 27) (see on-line syllabus for PDF)

Final Exam – 25% (2 hours)

## Texts

Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 2007 (4<sup>th</sup> edition).

*Harper Collins Study Bible* New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books

On-line readings available on the website syllabus.

- **Warning:** if you are looking for 2<sup>nd</sup> hand versions of Ehrman, beware that there are first and second editions of this book that are quite different. Make sure to buy the 4<sup>th</sup> edition for this course.

## Weekly Lecture Outline and Required Reading

- lectures are delivered in such a way as to reward those who have done the required reading

Sept 4	Introduction to the course (Ehrman Chapter 1)
<b>Sept 9</b>	Ancient Judaism (Ehrman pp. 35-45)
Sept 11	Diaspora Judaism (Ehrman Chapter 15)
<b>Sept 16</b>	Social World 1 (Personality, Gender) (no reading)
Sept 18	Social World 2 (Honor and Shame, Patronage) (no reading) + <b>Map quiz (last 20 mins)</b>
<b>Sept 23</b>	The Manuscripts of the New Testament (see on-line syllabus for readings)
Sept 25	Textual Criticism (Ehrman Chapter 29)
<b>Sept 30</b>	Gospel Genre and Transmission of Material (Ehrman Chapter 3-4)
Oct 2	Markan Themes, Issues, and Ending (Gospel of Mark)
<b>Oct 7</b>	Synoptic Problem <b>Work Group</b>
Oct 9	Synoptic Problem (Ehrman Chapter 6)
<b>Oct 14</b>	Editing Mark (Ehrman Chapter 7)
Oct 16	Matthean Themes and Issues (Gospel of Matthew)
<b>Oct 21</b>	<b>Midterm</b>
Oct 23	History of the Quest for the Historical Jesus (no reading)
<b>Oct 28</b>	Portraits of Jesus (Ehrman Chapter 13, 16)
Oct 30	Life of Paul (Ehrman Chapter 18)
<b>Nov 4</b>	Jesus as the Fulfillment of Scripture <b>Work Group</b>

Nov 6	Ancient Letter Writers (no reading)
<b>Nov 11</b>	Paul and His Opponents (Galatians)
Nov 13	1 Corinthians (Ehrman pp. 316-26 + 1 Corinthians)
<b>Nov 18</b>	Pseudepigraphy (Ehrman Chapter 23)
Nov 20	Apocalyptic Literature (Ehrman Chapter 28 + Revelation) <b>Papers Due</b>
<b>Nov 25</b>	No Class
Nov 27	Non-Canonical Jesuses (Ehrman Chapter 12) + <b>Translation Comparison Due</b>

## Email Communication

- Carleton's Connect Mail is the official mode of email communication for all matters having to do with the university and with this course. All communications sent by connect are official, and you are expected to get them. It is not an option to claim you did not get some announcement or request because you have another email address. You can configure your connect account to forward university emails to another address, but you must be reachable through your connect account.

## Map Quiz (Sep 18)

- You will be provided with maps to study from and on which you will be tested.
- the quiz will involve two types of questions – you will be asked to identify items that I have marked the map (i.e., identify what a, D, P, 2, and 8, etc. refer to on the map); you will also be asked to mark certain items on the map (i.e., place Qumran and the Sea of Galilee on the map).
- you will be tested on the same maps which you were given to study.

## Midterm (Oct 21): (one hour time limit)

- On the midterm there will be 10 short-answer definition questions.
- These questions will appear in the form of terms or names, which you will define as fully as possible. These questions will be marked out of 5, and should take no more than 4 minutes to answer.
- Your answers will be high quality if they are detailed and accurate, and if you can show why the term is important in the context of this course, or why, in other words, the term appeared on the quiz at all.
- I will go over examples of good and poor answers in class before the midterm.

## Research Report (due Nov 20):

### Suggested Topics (69 in total)

Apocalypticism	Banditry
Second Temple	Taxation
Covenant	Money/Standard of living
<b>Pharisees</b>	Literacy
Sadducees	Humour
Zealots/Sicarii	Sickness and Disease
Messiah	Healing

Resurrection	Magic
Son of Man	Travel
Son of God	Purity
Honi the Circle Drawer	Leprosy
Hanina ben Dosa	Poverty and Wealth
Apollonius of Tyana	Dining
Pontius Pilate	Honour and Shame
Flavius Josephus	Kinship/Family
Philo of Alexandria	Fictive Kinship
James the Brother of Jesus	Patron-Client Relations
Parables	Benefactions
Herod the Great	Mark's Messianic Secret
Corinth	The Cynics
Thessalonica	Logos
Rome	Paul vs. Peter
Caesarea Maritima	Emperor Cult
Sepphoris	Mystery Religions
Philippi	Sacrifice
Ephesus	Voluntary Associations
Thessalonica	The Synagogue
Alexandria	The practice of Pseudepigraphy
Galatia	Pseudepigrapha
Qumran	Apocrypha
Jerusalem between 30BCE – 70 CE	Scroll and Codex
Women in Early Christianity	Non-Canonical Writings about Jesus
Women in the Ancient World	Non-Canonical Writings about other
“Homosexuality” in the Ancient World	early Christian characters
Burial Practices	Allegorical Interpretation
Slavery in the Ancient World	

NB: You may come up with a topic on your own, but if you do not clear it with me first, you risk choosing an inappropriate topic and doing poorly because of it.

- This is a background report on some topic that helps us to understand earliest Christianity, but it will make your paper stronger if you can tie your topic to specific passages in the New Testament, or to specific people who appear there. In other words, being able to illustrate why your topic is interesting in the context of Christian Origins or New Testament Studies will make your paper stronger and more interesting.
- This paper is historical and not theological. You cannot write this paper from the perspective of a modern Christian, but rather must treat your topic in the context of the ancient world before there was anything called Christianity (end of the 1st century CE). It might help you, if you are Christian, to write the paper as if you are not a Christian in order to save yourself from presupposing positions of Christian faith that will undermine your attempt to understand these topics historically. This is a common practice among scholars of all religions who are also followers of that religion – it is called “bracketing” religious faith: acknowledging that one’s faith can govern one’s view of history, and acknowledging that this does not result in a proper historical investigation.

- You must use and consult at least 6 sources for this paper, not including the textbook or Bible.
- You may not, under any circumstances, use material from the WWW. Full text articles accessed through the library web-site do not count as WWW material, and are fine to use. Your research must be drawn from traditional library materials.
- For almost any topic, start with the Anchor Bible Dictionary (a 6 volume encyclopedia with introductory essays and good bibliographies on myriad topics) – BS 440 .A54 Ref.
- Learn to use the ATLA Religion Database (available on the Carleton Library Website: go to <Online Resources>, then choose <Journal Article and Other Databases>, then under Subject choose <Religion>). The librarians can help get you started. This is a search-engine that allows you to find articles and essays in religion and theology.
- Get started on your paper early. Carleton Library does not have a large collection for Biblical Studies; expect to have to use Interlibrary Loan, or to go to St. Paul's (223 Main Street). If you leave your research to the last minute, you may find items taken out already and not be able to get them in time. This will reflect in your mark, since it will affect the quality of your research. St. Paul's is a non-circulating library, which means nothing can be signed out; but Carleton Students are allowed to use the library. Students who come to my office at least once to talk about their papers as they're writing them always do better than they do alone.

\*Papers cannot be submitted electronically.

- All written assignments must be double spaced (not 1 or 1.5), must have default margins (usually 2.5cm), must not appear in a font size smaller than 12 point, and must include page numbers. The absence or manipulation of any of these things will result in a lower mark.
- All citations and bibliographies must be carried out according to the Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style, PN 147 S276 in the Reference section of the Library: section 7.2 (and all the subsections, pp. 46-54) will give you information on how to cite practically any material you'll come into contact with for the purposes of this paper. Your ability to reproduce this proper style will factor into the marking of your written work.
- Papers that venture too far from these requirements and limits may be returned ungraded for resubmission (and late penalties will accrue retroactively from the due date).
- Late Penalties: Written assignments are due on the specified date. There will be a penalty of 2% per day (including weekends) until the penalty reaches 100%. Extensions will only be granted for personal medical and family emergencies (for which documentation must be provided); extensions are not granted because of essay conflicts, work schedules, or the like. Late papers must be placed in the Religion and Classics Drop Box (beside the door of 2a39 Paterson Hall). Do not slip papers under my door; do not hand them to anyone else. Late papers will be marked according to my schedule, whereas it is my goal to return all other assignments within a week of their submission).

- Proofread your work several times carefully before handing it in, or ask someone whose writing skills are strong do it. Needless and countless errors of spelling, grammar, and syntax are a serious impediment to effective writing and communication, and these will affect your grade.
- Retain Copies of Work Submitted: It is crucial that you retain a hard copy of all assignments/take home tests submitted in every course. Also remember to do a computer/disk back-up.

### **Translation Comparison (due Nov 27)**

- See PDF on website syllabus.

### **Final Exam**

- Final exam will be 2 hours in length
- The final will involve a selection of short-answer questions, passage identifications, and long-answer questions. The precise layout of the exam will be made clear to the class well before the final exam.

## REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

### COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

### PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*to use and pass off as one’s own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit to another.*” This can include:

- Copying from another person’s work without indicating this through appropriate use of quotation marks and footnote citations.
- Lengthy and close paraphrasing of another person’s work (i.e. extensive copying interspersed with a few phrases or sentences of your own).
- Submitting written work produced by someone else as if it were your own work (e.g. another student’s term paper, a paper purchased from a term paper “factory”, materials or term papers downloaded from the Internet, etc.).
- Handing in “*substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors...involved.*” (University Senate)

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They range from a mark of zero for the plagiarized work to a final grade of “F” for the course, and even suspension from all studies or expulsion from the University.

### GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B+ = 77-79 (9)	C+ = 67-69 (6)
A = 85-89 (11)	B = 73-76 (8)	C = 63-66 (5)
A - = 80-84 (10)	B - = 70-72 (7)	C - = 60-62 (4)
D+ = 57-59 (3)	D = 53-56 (2)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. No academic credit
WDN	Withdrawn from the course
ABS	Absent from the final examination
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	“Failed, no Deferral” – assigned when the student is absent from the final exam and has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

### WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from Fall term courses is November 7th, 2008. Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter (full year) and Winter term courses is March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

### REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

#### For Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary *Letters of Accommodation*. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible. Please note the deadline for submitting completed forms to the Paul Menton Centre is November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (for fall/winter term courses) / March 6<sup>th</sup> 2009 (for winter term courses).

#### **For Religious Obligations:**

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton’s Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance. (613-520-5622)

#### **For Pregnancy:**

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

### PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to complete a **final** term paper or write a **final** examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply in writing within five working days to the Registrar’s Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar’s Office will be considered.

### ADDRESSES

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Classics and Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar’s Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608	500 Unicentre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 <sup>th</sup> floor Library