

Jesus of Nazareth

RELI 3105A (Winter 2009)

Mon 11:30am-2:30pm; LA B249

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Office phone: 520-2600, ext. 2276

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Course Objective

- In this course we will search for the historical Jesus. We will consider the nature of the sources that are used to reconstruct the life and teachings of Jesus and touch on some of the methodological challenges that these sources pose for the modern reader. We will also consider how early Christian writers developed/alterd the image of Jesus.

Evaluation

Group Parables Projects (20%)

Research Essay (30%)

Participation (20%)

Final Exam (30%)

Text Books

Technically speaking, there is no text book for this course, though it will help you to re-read the relevant chapters from Ehrman. I also ask that you have a good Bible: either the HarperCollins Study Bible or the Oxford Study Bible. I have not ordered any of these, but they can be very inexpensively purchased at chapters.indigo.ca or amazon.ca if you do not own one yet.

On Reserve at the Library, or still in your collection of textbooks (wishful thinking?)

- Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (3rd or 4th edition only).

Weekly Lecture and Reading Schedule

- I am doing you a huge favour by not assigning a text book you have to buy. In return, I would like you to do **all** the reading each week. Only weeks 2 and 3 come anywhere near to a heavy reading load. Every other week is light in comparison to any other third-year course. You can also use the extra time to work on your group project or your paper.

Recovering the Tradition

Jan 5 Introduction to the Course, Review of Text Criticism (Ehrman 29)

Jan 12 Source Criticism (Read Matt and Mark, plus review the Ehrman Chapters)

Jan 19 Gospel Portraits of Jesus (Read Luke and John, plus review the Ehrman Chapters)

Foundation of the Tradition

- Jan 26 Imagining Social Locations for Q (text of Q provided)
Feb 2 The Earliest Gospel: Q¹ (text of Q¹ provided)
Feb 9 Israel and its Messiahs (R.A. Horsley, “‘Messianic’ Figures and Movements in First-Century Palestine”)
Feb 16 Reading Week

Development of the Tradition

- Feb 23 Editing Mark (“Redaction Criticism,” by Raymond F. Collins)
Mar 2 Matthew’s Use and Misuse of Scripture (“Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church,” E. Earle Ellis, pp. 75-101)
Mar 9 In the Beginning: Birth Narratives (Re-read Matt 1-2 and Luke 1-2)
Mar 16 Blaming the Jews (or, The Trial) (Matt 26:57-27:56 + Mark 14:53-15:40 + Luke 22:63-23:46)
Mar 23 No Class
Mar 30 Final Portraits of Jesus

Group Parables Project

- In the four weeks after Reading Week, we will dedicate the last hour of each lecture period to group projects on the Parables.

- Feb 23 Topic: What is a parable? What is a parable *not*?
- Directions: Illustrate the great variety of “parables.”
 - I want students to come away from this presentation with a sense of the complex nature of what constitutes a parable, and the difference between parables and allegories.
- Mar 2 Topic: Parables of the Kingdom:
- The Weeds in the Wheat (Matt 13:24-30)
 - The Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31-32//Mark 4:30-32//Luke 13:18-19)
 - The Leaven (Matt 13:33//Luke 13:20)
 - Treasure in a Field (Matt 13:44)
 - The Pearl (Matt 13:45-46)
 - The Great Net (Matt 13:47-50)
 - The Angered King (Matt 18:23-35)
 - The Landowner Hiring Workers (Matt 20:1-16)
 - The Wedding Banquet (Matt 22:1-14)
 - Ten Bridesmaids (Matt 25:1-13)
 - The Parable of the Invested Money (Matt 25:14-30)
 - The Seed Growing Secretly (Mark 4:26-29)
- Directions: What is the Kingdom of Heaven/God according to Jesus? A place? An event? A state of mind? Is it a present (for Jesus) reality or a future reality? Do any of the parables address who gets in and who doesn’t? What exactly *is* the Kingdom of Heaven/God “like”?

- Mar 9 Topic: Parables of Justice:
- The Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1-12//Matt 21:33-46//Luke 20:9-19)
 - The Unjust Judge (Luke 18:2-8)
 - The Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21)
 - The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)
 - The Parable of the Guests (Luke 14:7-15)
 - The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)
 - Directions: Did Jesus have a political agenda? If so, who were his targets? How do you think they felt about that? How might this have influenced how the Romans saw him?
- Mar 16 Topic: Parables About What?
- The Two Debtors (Luke 7:41-43)
 - The Man with Two Sons (Matt 21:28-32)
 - The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9)
 - The Two Builders (Matt 7:24-27)
 - The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
 - The Great Dinner (Luke 14:16-24)
 - The Faithful and Unfaithful Slave (Matt 24:45-51//Luke 12:41-46)
 - The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:3-8//Matt 13:3-8//Luke 8:5-8)
 - The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)
 - The Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8)
 - Thanking the Slave (Luke 17:7-10)
 - Is there anything that unites these parables? Based on these, and the parables from the previous weeks, what do you think Jesus' point was of speaking in parables? Why this medium, and what might the cost of that medium have been?
- This project will require a lot of work.
 - You'll need to read carefully the parables in your topic, and read books on parables (bibliography provided below). It is too much work for one person, which is why I've made it a group project
 - I recommend you start right away
 - The projects are marked out of 20. 16 (80%) of those marks come from my assessment of the group (everyone in the group gets the same mark from me); the other four points come from **peer evaluations**.
 - With the peer evaluations, each group member evaluates the efforts of each of the other members of the group, including him- or herself. I will interpret the results and add them to my score. By interpret I mean this: if you give yourself a 4 and everyone else in the group gives you a 1, I'm going to "interpret" that! Likewise, if you all give each other and yourselves fours, I'm going to "interpret" that!
 - E.g., Student A is in a group that gets 13/16 from me, and all of Student A's peers feels he was deadwood (they all give him zeros): he gets 13/20. But everyone agrees that Student B in the same group did the lion's share of the work (gets fours from everyone): that student gets 17/20.

- The biggest risk of this project, as I see it, is that you get all theological on me. Make sure to read academic commentaries on the parables; that should help ensure your own comments on the parables are academic, and not theological. Just remember, I don't want to know what the parables mean to us today, why they're interesting to you as a Christian, or what they mean for Christian faith or life today. That is what I mean by "theological." I don't mean that trying to understand the theology of the parables is off-limits (after all, Jesus clearly had a *theology*; it might not be easy to get at it, but it's a legitimate enterprise in a *historical* course). We're trying to figure out what the parables meant then, or how they functioned then, or what they were in their original settings.
- The other big risk is that you spend your whole time giving plot summaries of the parables and gushing about how interesting they were. Everyone is responsible for reading the parables for each week, even if you are in a different group, so it will be redundant if you spend your presentation summarizing them.
- Once the groups have been formed, you will get in touch with each other to arrange dividing the work, digesting it all, coming up with a presentation plan. Each of you will want to rehearse your part of the presentation so that it is polished and practiced, and so that you know it fits within your time allotment (as a group and as an individual).
- Group formation will work like this: **after the first class**, you each email me to let me know your order of preference for the four groups. That way, if by the time you write to me two of the groups are full already, I know which of the two remaining groups NOT to put you in. There is no moving between groups once you are in one.

Peer Assessments will look like this:

On a scale of 0-4, assess how much each of your peers contributed to the project. Give yourself a grade as well.

0 = SFA;

1 = did some work but not nearly enough;

2 = did a good amount, but not equal share;

3 = did close enough to an equal share of the work;

4 = carried way more than his/her fair share.

	0	1	2	3	4
Student 1	x				
Student 2				x	
Student 3				x	
Student 4				x	
Student 5					x

Some Parables Sources:

James Breech, *The Silence of Jesus: The Authentic Voice of the Historical Man* (Toronto: DoubleDay,

1983. (Carleton)

Charles E. Carlston, *The Parables of the Triple Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). (Prof. Crook's Collection)

J.D. Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1973). (Carleton)

C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London, Nisbett, 1935). (Carleton)

David Gowler, *What Are They Saying About The Parables?* New York: Paulist Press, 2000). (Prof. Crook's Collection)

Herman Hendrickx, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: Chapman, 1986). (Prof. Crook's Collection)

Arland Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). (Carleton)

Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963). (Carleton)

Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989). (Carleton)

Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). (Carleton)

Dan Otto Via, *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967). (Carleton)

In addition to these, you can find valuable information on individual parables in commentaries on the gospels.

- Note: For these projects, all of you are using the same books. In most cases, Carleton only has one copy of each book, and it is difficult to obtain books we own through inter-library loan. So I ask that you not hoard books. Keep in mind that Ottawa U and/or St. Paul's will have many of these books too.

Research Essay Topics (30%; due March 30)

- Page limit: 10 pages (**not including** bibliography or title page, **but including** end/footnotes).

Topics

- Choose a general topic from below.
- For any topic you choose, please come see me as many times as you can: before choosing a topic, before starting research, before writing a full draft. Consultations with me can save you a lot of wasted effort and disappointment; students who come to my office at least once to talk about their papers **always** do better than they do alone, and unless I've already been cleaned out leave with some of my books too.

1) Choose any story from the gospels, whether found in one, two, three or all of them. Write an essay with any of the following foci: 1) Assess the historicity of the story; 2) If a story is present in more than one source, assess the differences among the stories; attempt to answer the question: Why did the gospel writers change the story? The successful paper will be well-researched, grounded in examples from and analysis of primary texts, and reflect familiarity with the relevant criteria in the search for the historical Jesus.

2) Was Jesus an apocalyptic prophet who believed the end of the world was immanent, or was he a teacher of subversive wisdom (like the Cynics)? The successful paper will be well-researched, grounded in examples from primary texts, and reflect familiarity with the relevant criteria in the search for the historical Jesus.

3) Read any one of the following modern novels about Jesus and write an essay on it:

- Anthony Burgess, *Man of Nazareth* (1979)
- Norman Mailer, *The Gospel According to the Son* (1997)
- Christopher Moore, *Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal* (2003)
- Nino Ricci, *Testament* (2002)
 - Any of these novels can be very inexpensively purchased at www.abebooks.com
- To give your paper the appropriate focus (Biblical Studies, not Eng Lit) focus your essay on ONE of the following areas:
 - 1) the novelist's use of early Christian sources;
 - 2) meaningful differences or similarities in the way an episode from the gospels has been depicted;
 - NB. This topic should probably be limited to students with experience in literary analysis.

4) Offer an analysis of a film treatment of the life of Jesus.

- To give your paper the appropriate focus (Biblical Studies, not Film Studies) focus your essay on ONE of the following areas:
 - 1) the novelist's use of early Christian sources in the making of the film;
 - 2) how episodes from the gospels have been depicted, and the affect;
 - Be sure to consult some of the recent scholarly writing on Jesus and Film.
 - NB. This topic should probably be limited to students in Film Studies.

5) Discuss the historical value of the Gospel of John. Focus either on a specific passage from John that you want to argue is particularly historical or unhistorical, or on a general explanation for John's different itinerary for Jesus. The successful essay will be well-researched and reflect a very close reading of the gospels in question.

Other Advice for your essays:

- I will read as many versions of your outline and early drafts as you want. I'll read outlines at any time (even the night before the essay is due) but I will not read rough drafts after March 25. Send those to me by email is best (keep in mind the version you hand in for marking must come only in hardcopy).
- The most important feature of your paper is that **you must generate a thesis statement** which you set out in the paper to prove or defend by referring to the extensive research you have done. This is a research essay, not a mini-commentary; do not simply rephrase what the passage says;

it is also not a “fishing expedition” to find out what something means. Argue a point, and make that point very clear in your introduction.

- For example, a paper on Luke’s Special Songs cannot simply talk about what is in them, or where they come from, or why you like them, etc. etc.. The paper must make an argument about the material (i.e., “Luke inherited the songs that appear in his opening chapters, though he edited them slightly”).
- Your thesis does not have to be original in the field of historical Jesus studies, but the more interesting and strong it is the better your paper will be. *Weak Thesis*: The author of the Gospel of Matthew is unknown to us (weak because it’s too obvious); *Strong Thesis*: The author of the gospel of Matthew was a Jew undergoing a contest over identity with other Jews (strong because it’s pointed, and will require a close analysis of the data and presentation of evidence, as well as a strong argument).
- This is a historical class that presupposes a willingness to engage the material critically and dispassionately – I am not interested in hearing what you believe, and statements of faith in this paper will seriously undermine your work as an historian (which is what you are aspiring to be in this class). Please be very clear that there are places for statements of faith and for approaching these texts in a way that is faithful to a religious tradition, but the university classroom is NOT that place.
- You are expected to consult **a lot** of material in order to draw a responsible conclusion, and one that is in dialogue with the research that has been done (this also means consulting material other than introductory encyclopedia entries, etc.). Writing research papers is about proving what you want to say, and doing research is how you get to do that, or by doing the research you find out that you cannot make the claim you were hoping to.
- You may not under any circumstances use information taken from the World Wide Web (WWW). You are required to use traditional articles, books, encyclopedias, etc. **However**, there is a difference between WWW material and electronic resources. Some encyclopedias now come on CDROM; some journals offer their articles electronically because Carleton Library subscribes to them in electronic form. You can access these on your computer from home or in the library. But just because you’re seeing them on your computer, or just because you downloaded them from/through the library website, does not make them WWW sources; it makes them electronic resources. Electronic resources are fine; WWW sources are not; feel free to ask me for clarification at any time.
- **Back up what you say**; you will be penalized for making unsubstantiated statements, *especially* if they are false, and even more so if they are false *and* theologically motivated. You are not, by any means, expected to know everything – that’s why we do research, so that we can learn.
- In terms of research, you are expected to consult **at least** 10 items. These items can include **a variety** of articles/essays, books and commentaries. You can also consult dictionary or encyclopedia entries to get you started and to introduce you to a topic, but these cannot form the

backbone of your paper. Since commentaries only require you to read a few pages on your given passage, they count for less; be sure to include all the commentaries possible. Failure to consult adequate material will affect your mark.

General Rules for Papers

*Papers cannot be submitted electronically.

All written assignments must come close to the page limit, 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 manipulation of any of these things in order to make a shorter paper appear longer or a longer paper appear shorter will be noticed. Efficiency of language and focus on a task are required for working within assigned page or word limitations.

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 limitations may be returned unread and ungraded for resubmission; late penalties are retroactive to the due date, regardless of when I discover the problem.

Late Penalties: **Written assignments are due on the specified date.** There will be a penalty of 2% per day (including weekends) which builds 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 can be brought to me directly or they can 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 not necessarily be marked in an expeditious manner (depending on my schedule).

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.

Always keep a copy of your paper in multiple computers if you can (emailing it to yourself is an excellent way of backing something up that is almost totally secure).

Final Exam

The Final Exam will consist of 2 essays (some choice will be offered) in three hours on themes, information and skills drawn from the lectures. More will be said about the exam as exam period approaches.

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 “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

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.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

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

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

1. For Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations are required to contact a co-ordinator at the Paul Menton Centre (ext. 6608) to complete the necessary *letters of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss their needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first in-class or CUTV test. This is to ensure sufficient time is available to make the necessary accommodation arrangements. Deadlines for submitting forms for formally scheduled exam accommodation: November 7 for December examinations and March 6, 2009 for April examinations.

2. 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)

3. For Pregnancy:

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services (613-520-5622) 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: (Area Code 613)

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 th floor Library