

The Historical Jesus

RELI 3230A (Winter 2021)

Mondays 2:30-4:30pm

Professor Z. A. Crook

Office Hours: By Zoom, By Appt.

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Course Objective

- This course is less about Jesus than it is about how we conduct the 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 (and post-modern) historian. We will also consider how early Christian writers developed/altered their images of Jesus.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- write in a critical and nuanced manner about the challenges involved in the searches for the historical Jesus.
- describe the social world of the historical Jesus.
- describe the history of scholarship on Jesus.
- advance their ability to write in a clear, forceful, and persuasive way.
- hone their skills in academic research

Program Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- apply a theoretical perspective to a primary text.
- formulate and defend a thesis based on advanced research.
- engage with secondary sources and their peers in thoughtful informed discussion of topics related to the study of religion, orally and in writing.
- write a well-researched academic paper on a topic in religious studies that is free of grammatical and syntactical errors and uses proper citation and bibliographic style.

Evaluation (see below for due dates and detailed instructions)

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| 20% | Course Participation |
| 35% | Discussion Article Summaries (5% each x 7) |
| 5% | Research Essay Topic Declaration |
| 5% | Research Essay Outline |
| 20% | Research Essay |
| 15% | Final Take Home Exam |

Text Book and Readings

Anthony Le Donne, *Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). (Can be purchased directly from the Canadian distributor. If you did not receive an email from me about this, please get in touch)

Supplementary Reading posted in cuLearn.

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*.

Delivery:

- This is a **blended class**: every week I will record a short lecture and post it in cuLearn. You will watch the recorded lecture on your own time prior – but ideally within the recommended time-frame, and do the assigned reading for that week.
- Then, Mondays 2:30-4:30, we will meet via Zoom for class, all of us together. Our time together will be spent discussing the lecture module, and then discussing the assigned reading. We'll stop when we're done, or at 4:30, whichever comes first. Hopefully not 4:30.
- A Zoom link for each meeting will be sent to your Carleton account a couple of hours before the session.

Weekly Topics and Reading Schedule

Week 1	
No Module	
Jan 11 – 2:30-4:30pm: Mechanics of the Course and Why Jesus Matters	No Reading
Week 2	
Watch Module 1 (Jan 14-17)	
Jan 18 – 2:30-4:30pm: History and Historiography	Discussion Reading: Kloppenborg
Week 3	
Watch Module 2 (Jan 21-24)	
Jan 25 – 2:30-4:30pm: Textual Criticism: Do we have access to the words of Jesus?	Reading: Le Donne “Beginnings” + Part I

Week 4

Watch Module 3 (Jan 28-31)

Feb 1 – 2:30-4:30pm: A Jewish Jesus or...?

Discussion Reading: Arnal

Feb 4 (Friday; 10pm)

DUE DATE: Research Essay Topic Declaration

Week 5

Watch Module 4 (Feb 4-7)

Feb 8 – 2:30-4:30pm: The Jesus of the Gospels?

Reading: Le Donne Part II

Feb 15-19

Reading Week

Week 6

Watch Module 5 (Feb 18-21)

Feb 22 – 2:30-4:30pm: Social Locations

Discussion Reading: Malina

Feb 26 (Friday; 10pm)

DUE DATE: Research Essay Detailed Outline

Week 7

Watch Module 6 (Feb 25-28)

Mar 1 – 2:30-4:30pm: Israel and its Messiahs	Discussion Reading: Horsely
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Week 8

Watch Module 7 (Mar 4-7)

Mar 8 – 2:30-4:30pm: Parables	Discussion Reading: Hultgren
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Week 9

Watch Module 8 (Mar 11-14)

Mar 15 – 2:30-4:30pm: Birth and Death Narratives	Reading: Le Donne Part III
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Week 10

Watch Module 9 (Mar 18-21)

Mar 22 – 2:30-4:30pm: The Problem of Miracles	Discussion Reading: Craffert
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March 26 (Friday; 10pm)

DUE DATE: Research Essay Final Version

Week 11

Watch Module 10 (Mar 25-28)

Mar 29 – 2:30-4:30pm: An Apocalyptic Prophet?	Discussion Reading: Allison v. Crossan
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Week 12

Watch Module 11 (April 1-4)

Apr 5 – 2:30-4:30pm: Extra-Canonical Jesuses	Discussion Reading: Franzmann
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Week 13

Watch Module 12 (April 8-11)

Apr 12 – 2:30-4:30pm: Whose Historical Jesus?

Discussion Reading: Marsh

Email Communication

- Carleton Connect is the official mode of email communication for all matters having to do with the university and with this course. All communications sent to your Connect account are considered official by the university, 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. Also, I am forbidden to put into an email any information which could be deemed personal unless it is addressed to a Connect account (because hotmail etc. accounts are not secure, whereas Connect is secure).
- Covid-19 Addendum: students checking their Carleton email regularly (twice a day) is even more important in these times when instructions cannot be easily given out in class time. Email will be the way you get 90% of your instructions, requests, comments, etc. So, it is very important that you be on top of your Carleton email account.

Course Participation (20%)

- Assessment of participation is a combination of quantity and quality
- Opportunities for earning participation points:
 - Start of Class Questions: Since questions cannot be asked during the “lectures” (which will be recorded and watched before each class), it is my hope that students will bring questions with them for the start of each live meeting.
 - Discussions about the Assigned Readings.
- By “quality” I mean: did others in the class benefit from your participation, because, for example, you raised excellent points that made for enriching discussion. It is conceivable, therefore, that a person could speak three times in the whole course and get higher participation marks than a person who spoke every day.

Articles Summaries (35%; 7 summary exercises, worth 5% each; due at the beginning of relevant class)

- Write a 300 word summary for 7/9 of the Discussion Readings (or do more, and I’ll count only the 7 highest results).
- It goes without saying that economy of language is key here, since you must accurately summarize articles that are about 10,000 words in 300 words **at most** (cuLearn will hold you to the word limit).
- To be submitted on cuLearn with a deadline 5 mins before the live meeting at which we will discuss that reading. No late submissions allowed (so with so much advance warning, maybe don’t leave it to the last minute, because technical difficulties with home wifi and cuLearn are common).

Research Essay Topics (30% total; due 10pm, Friday March 26) (*see process due dates below*)

- Page limit: 10 pages (**not including** bibliography or title page, **but including** 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** gospel pericope: canonical or non-canonical, single, double, or triple tradition. 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 X writer 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 imminent, 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 in the novel.
 - 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 of that depiction;
 - Be sure to consult some of the recent scholarly writing on Jesus and Film.
 - NB. This topic should probably be limited to students with experience 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 Research 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 drafts after March 23. Send those to me by email (keep in mind the version you hand in for marking must come only through cuLearn).
- 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 and analysis of the passage/topic/novel/film you have chosen. 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 reading about what you (or others) 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.
- In the past I have forbidden the use of World Wide Web (WWW, ‘the internet’) material. However, life in quarantine has made traditional library research difficult. Therefore, you are allowed to consult anything you find on the WWW. This offer, however, should make you very

afraid!! You are required to be judicious, careful, and critical in your use of them. This is why I used to forbid use of the WWW, to save students this work. You will be held responsible for reproducing indefensible claims that you find on the world wide web. If in doubt, consult with me.

- **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 (and websites if they are scholarly). You can also consult dictionary or encyclopedia entries (as well as websites) 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.

Research Essay: Process and Submission Instructions

1. Topic Selection
 - **Due:** Friday February 4, 10pm
 - tell me in a single paragraph which topic you have chosen, why, and what you hope to learn from it.
 - **Worth:** 5% of the course grade
 - **Submit:** copy your text directly into the available window in cuLearn.
2. Outline
 - **Due:** Friday February 26, 10pm
 - Outline can be as detailed (or not) as you want, but keep in mind that the more detailed it is, the more help I can be. Point-form is fine.
 - **Worth:** 5% of the course grade
 - **Submit:** as an attachment into cuLearn.
3. Final Version
 - **Due:** Friday March 26, 10pm
 - 10 pages (page count include your foot notes, but it does not include your title page and bibliography)
 - **Worth:** 20% of the course grade
 - **Submit:** as an attachment into cuLearn.

NB: Because not all the topics require research to the same extent, I cannot make an Annotated Bibliography a part of this process. But I am *very happy* to look over your bibliography if you have any concerns about the scholarly merit of the items you have found.

General Rules for Research Essays

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.

The Religion Program has adopted the Chicago Manual of Style (17th ed.) for all papers in Religious Studies. There is an on-line guide here:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html. Please use the Notes and Bibliography style, not the Author-Date style. 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.

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 Take Home Exam (15%)

The Final Exam will consist of two broad synthetic essays on themes, information and skills drawn from the entire course. Much more will be said about the exam as the exam period approaches.



Humanities

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

Academic Dates and Deadlines

This schedule contains the dates prescribed by the University Senate for academic activities. Dates relating to fee payment, cancellation of course selections, late charges, and other fees or charges will be published in the Important Dates and Deadlines section of the Registration Website.

Online Learning Resources

While online courses offer flexibility and convenience, they also present unique challenges that traditional face-to-face courses do not. [On this page](#), you will find resources collected by Carleton Online to help you succeed in your online courses; Learning Strategies and Best Practices, Study Skills, Technology and Online Interaction and Engagement.

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.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as “*presenting, whether intentionally 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 that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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 can include a final grade of "F" for the course

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Process](#)

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals.

Parental Leave: The Student Parental Leave Policy is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of a pregnancy, birth or adoption and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a child or for health-related parental responsibilities.

Religious obligation: Carleton University accommodates students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities is available through the [Paul Menton Centre](#) by evaluations that are carried out on an individual basis, in accordance with human rights legislation and University policy, and with the support of relevant, professional/medical documentation.

Survivors of Sexual Violence

Individuals who disclose that they have experienced sexual violence will be provided support services and will be treated with dignity and respect at all times by the University and its representatives. A person affected by sexual violence is not required to report an incident or make a complaint about sexual violence under the formal complaint process of the Sexual Violence Policy in order to obtain support and services, or in order to receive appropriate accommodation for their needs.

[Supports and services available at the University to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support.](#)

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. [More information.](#)

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean."

The [system of grades](#) used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion, is listed below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value.

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

[More information](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

Carleton University strives to provide a safe environment conducive to personal and intellectual growth, free of injustice and characterized by understanding respect, peace, trust, and fairness.

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) governs the non-academic behaviour of students. Carleton University is committed to building a campus that promotes personal growth through the establishment and promotion of transparent and fair academic and non-academic responsibilities.

[7 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

1. Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the

instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due. The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. In all cases, formative evaluations providing feedback to the student should be replaced with formative evaluations. In the event the altered due date must extend beyond the last day of classes in the term, the instructor will assign a grade of zero for the work not submitted and submit the student's earned grade accordingly; the instructor may submit a change of grade at a later date. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

2. In cases where a student is not able to complete term work due to illness or injury for a significant period of time/or long term, the instructor and/or student may elect to consult with the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses) or Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) to determine appropriate action.

[More information of deferred Term Work](#)

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made.

The application for a deferral must:

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office no later than three working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [here](#).

[More information on Final Exam Deferrals](#)

Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#). Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for

Financial and Academic withdrawal!

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. You can do this via the [MyCarleton Portal](#). A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load.

Department Contact Information

Bachelor of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall
Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Graduate) 2A39 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
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MEMS (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
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