

RELIGION 332: JESUS OF HISTORY, CHRIST OF FAITH

TIME: Tuesday and Thursday 3:40-5:25 P.M.

PLACE: Administration 206

INSTRUCTOR: Douglas E. Oakman, Ph.D. Office Admin-222 Phone 7317 Email oakmande@plu.edu
Your instructor is Professor of Religion and Dean of Humanities. His doctorate is in New Testament; and he specializes in the gospels and historical Jesus, the social world of Christian Origins, and the social-scientific criticism of the Bible. For publications, see <http://www.plu.edu/~reli/doc/oakman-cvpdf.pdf>.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Historical survey of “Life of Jesus” research; form and redaction criticism of the gospel tradition; the religious dimensions of Jesus’ life and thought. Prerequisite: one lower division course or consent of instructor.

This course fulfills line 1 of the General University Requirement in religion. If you have previously taken a line 1 course, you may not count this course towards fulfillment of the GUR in religion. You may count it as an elective. If you have questions, please consult with the instructor. Drop deadline for spring 2008 is February 20; withdrawal deadline is May 2.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. If you have questions concerning the services available for special needs at PLU, please call Counseling & Testing at x7602.

Please review carefully the expectations for academic honesty spelled out in both the current Student Handbook and in this syllabus. These expectations are important and will be considered in relation to each assignment submitted.

MAJOR COURSE OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Understanding Jesus of Nazareth, the New Testament gospels, and the Jesus tradition through a historical approach
- ✓ Engaging the religious subject matter of the gospels in a discerning way
- ✓ Becoming aware of important religious questions and of various traditions for dealing with them
- ✓ Familiarization with the tools of biblical studies
- ✓ Using library research to develop critical perspectives in biblical interpretation
- ✓ Developing the capacity to discuss religious issues openly and perceptively
- ✓ Clear articulation and expression of ideas in writing and speaking

EXPECTED COURSE OUTCOMES

All course grades reflect relative degrees of success, according to the instructor’s perceptions and judgment, in pursuing and attaining the course goals. Above-average grades in the course, therefore, reflect strong achievements related to the following outcomes:

- ✓ Evidences of a developing historical consciousness about Jesus and the gospels, demonstrated through knowledge of essential dates and events as well as the ability to envision relationships between religious concern and historical context
- ✓ Evidences of the capacity to handle critical conceptions of the course, especially methodologies necessary for understanding and interpreting the gospels
- ✓ Ability to employ scholarly library resources so as to enhance understanding of the gospels
- ✓ Critical awareness of Christian traditions that condition understandings of the gospels

- ✓ Critical awareness of personal presuppositions that condition understandings of the gospels
- ✓ Writing and speaking related to biblical study that demonstrates precise and clear conceptualizations

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 15% Regular attendance and substantial participation are expected (absences affect your grade)
- 10% [Methods and scholarship in Jesus Studies \(1000 words\)](#)
- 4% Research hypothesis, rationale, note cards, and working bibliography
- 25% [Historical research paper \(body: 4000 words minimum, requires substantial library research\)](#)
- 6% Each student participates in a group-led discussion (group receives the grade)
- 18% Two examinations by midterm (8, 10%), preliminary topic statement for research paper at time of Exam 1
- 22% Comprehensive final examination
-
- 100% NOTE: You are expected to read this syllabus carefully, adhere to all policies, and complete all assignments. Final grades will be weighted initially in accordance with this scale; passing grade requires acceptable work on both submitted papers and examinations. Failure to satisfy any course obligation = E for the course (absolutely no late work accepted after May 22).

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required

Marcus Borg and N. T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*. Harper San Francisco, 1999.

John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. Harper San Francisco, 1995.

Gospel of Thomas [Library reserve, available in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, editor James M. Robinson]

Ben Meyer, "Jesus Christ," 3:773-796 in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Doubleday, 1992. [Library reference]

Douglas E. Oakman, "The Radical Jesus: You Cannot Serve God and Mammon," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 34 (2004): 122-29. [Electronic distribution]

Burton H. Throckmorton, *Gospel Parallels: NRSV Edition (Bible Students)*. 5th ed. Thomas Nelson, 1992. Bring a complete Bible to every class in addition to Throckmorton.

Recommended

Patrick Alexander *et al.*, *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Hendrickson, 1999. [Library reference]

"Christology," 81:1354-1359 in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Prentice Hall, 1990. [Library reference]

Michael Coogan *et al.* (eds.) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version*. 3d ed. Oxford University Press, 2001. This superior study Bible includes the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical literature, maps, annotations, and helpful essays.

James D. G. Dunn, "Christology (NT)," 1:979-991 in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Doubleday, 1992.
[Library reference]

"Jesus," 78:1329-1337 in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Prentice Hall, 1990. [Library reference]

E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. Penguin USA, 1996.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago, 2007.

N. T. Wright, "Jesus, Quest for the Historical Jesus," 3:796-802 in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*.
Doubleday, 1992. [Library reference]

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Participation: Regular attendance is required, since the in-class dialog is critical for appropriation of course content. If you miss more than three classes, for any reason, you are in danger of failing the course. Instructor evaluation of participation focuses on verbal contributions in class related to the course subject matter. Students are also expected to demonstrate that assigned readings have been completed on time and contribute to learning through small group activities.

Office Hours: Office hours are Tuesday 12:30-3:00 P.M. and Friday 11:00 A.M.-1:30 P.M. If these times are inconvenient, please make an appointment for another time.

General Expectations: 1) Assume responsibility for your own learning: Complete all readings and assignments on time, ask questions or talk with instructor, take careful notes in class, have a knowledge of basic information, acquaint yourself with library resources that will deepen your understanding and give alternative views (paper assignments designed with this in mind).

2) Related to 1), you should put in a minimum of 12-16 hours of work per week outside of class.

3) Discussion in class should be respectful and sensitive, yet honest and probing as well. Stating views clearly, giving warrants for views, appreciating diverse perspectives, and enhancing insight into course material will be prized qualities in all discussion sessions.

4) I attempt to treat everyone with the same standard and with utmost fairness. I expect, in return, honest dealings. Basic expectations for honesty and sanctions for dishonesty are stated in this syllabus.

5) Additional course resources are available on my web page: <http://www.plu.edu/~oakmande>.

PAPER POLICIES

Academic Honesty: The PLU Student Handbook states what minimally constitutes dishonesty in the writing of college papers. You are responsible to know this. Serious infractions will result in failure of a paper assignment or even the course. If you are unsure, discuss with me and consult a writing handbook or the informative link on my webpage.

Paper Drafts: I do not read rough drafts, but I am happy to discuss paper ideas, organizational outlines, or research progress with you. Make use of the Academic Assistance Religion tutor or the Writing Center to receive feedback on written drafts.

Paper Formatting: Papers that do not adhere substantially to the following parameters will not receive an 'A' or 'B' grade:

1) Basic format must follow *SBL Handbook of Style* and Turabian (Chicago). These are the standards!

- 2) Papers should be typewritten, stapled, and be properly formatted, including: cover/title sheet, proper page margins, page numbers, footnotes or endnotes, and “Works Cited.” No binders please.
- 3) Absolutely no papers accepted as email attachments; all papers must be submitted in hardcopy.

Paper Grading Criteria and Expectations: 1) Papers must satisfy all requirements of each assignment; students demonstrate their comprehension of the assignment through satisfying all expectations. Also, success with general course goals is reflected in all paper grades.

2) Excellent papers manifest the following formal and substantive qualities:

- No, or only occasional, spelling errors—frequent misspellings or typos evidence carelessness
- Use of proper grammatical constructions throughout
- Use of proper formatting, as well as citation and bibliographic style
- Clear focus, leading ideas well defined, strong unity and coherence throughout
- Freedom from major errors of fact
- Independent discussion and sustained thought (depth)—secondary authorities are used only as a starting point for an independent line of argument or exploration
- Comprehensive perspective (breadth)—all important aspects of the subject are covered
- Balance—personal religious beliefs and opinions are subject to critical review, differing points of view are dealt with fairly and objectively, major results of biblical scholarship are integral to the discussion

3) All assigned grades reflect the individual quality of your effort as well as the quality of your effort relative to others in the class and at PLU.

4) Papers that improperly cite research materials, or quote or paraphrase research materials in plagiaristic fashion, will receive (depending on the severity of problems) a grade no higher than ‘C.’ Such papers may even fail and cause lower grade for the course.

5) Any grade may be discussed with me, and any miscalculated numerical grades are quickly corrected. However, if you think a *qualitative* grade should be changed, you must submit your request for reevaluation in writing. This written request must specify, with reference both to these “General Paper Grading Criteria” and to the criteria specific to that assignment, why you think the grade is incorrect. Statutes of limitation: written requests for reevaluation must be submitted within one week of receiving the grade in question; further, I grant only one such review per student per course.

Course Research and the Internet: Quality research materials must be incorporated into paper assignments. The internet is largely used in this course as a research engine, not as a cited resource. I want students to encounter the many library tools and materials available for biblical study as well as to develop their own research strategies in connection with them. The final paper is designed in stages to encourage extended research and allow use of Interlibrary Loan.

- 1) No more than 10% of research materials may be drawn from web pages, and only scholarly resources are acceptable. Wikipedia is *not* a scholarly resource and should *not* be cited (think about why).
- 2) Any research material drawn from the internet must be evaluated as to scholarly quality and properly cited (Chicago style).
- 3) It is the researcher’s responsibility to avoid plagiarism and evaluate the quality of research materials by accepted academic standards.

Late Papers: It is best to get all papers in on time and not to fall behind. Ordinarily, a late paper is reviewed as to its quality, but will receive no higher than a ‘C’ grade. A paper over a week late fails, but must still be submitted to pass the course. Remember: Failure to satisfy any course obligation = E for the course.

PROJECTED COURSE SCHEDULE

It is your responsibility to know what is happening each day and to come appropriately prepared. Please pay careful attention to the schedule for things that are due on a given day. These items are underlined.

Always bring Throckmorton and a complete Bible to class. If your knowledge of the Old Testament is limited, over the first weekend read the following passages: Ex 12 (Exodus), 19-20 (Giving of the law at Sinai = “Ten Commandments”); Deut 6 (Covenant); Jer 31 (New Covenant promise); 2 Sam 7 (Messianic promise to David); Isa 40-55; Dan 7-12 (Apocalyptic literature); Wis 12-19 (critique of idols). (Abbreviations follow Oxford Study Bible.) These passages will help you to understand better our historical frameworks. The following schedule is closely observed:

Critical issues in the Quest of the Historical Jesus (QHJ)

Day: Thur 2-7

Topic: Syllabus; traditional images of Jesus; Jesus in the creeds of the Christian Church

Day: Tues 2-12

Topic: Quest of the Historical Jesus (QHJ); synopsis, synoptic problem, source criticism; John or the Synoptics?

Readings: Mark 1-12; Throckmorton v-xl

Day: Thur 2-14

Topic: Problem of the Historical Jesus (PHJ)

Readings: John 1-12; Meyer, “Jesus Christ”

The faith of Jesus

Day: Tues 2-19

Topic: Apocalyptic expectations and the kingdom of God, religious groups in Jesus’ day

Readings: Mark 13 and parallels (par.) in Matthew & Luke; Daniel 7-12; Borg/Wright, pts. I-II

Day: Thur 2-21

Topic: Jesus’ family and origins

Readings: Mark 6:1-6; Matt 1-2; Luke 1-2; John 1; Crossan, Prologue, ch. 1

Day: Tues 2-26

Topic: John’s baptism; Jesus’ message and work

Readings: Mark 1 and par.; Crossan, ch. 2

Hand in: Exam #1, research paper topic statement

Day: Thur 2-28

Topic: “Miracle” and the modern mind

Readings: Mark 1-8; Matt 8-9; John 2; Crossan, chs. 3-4

Day: Tues 3-4

Topic: Parable and allegory

Readings: Mark 4; Matt 13, 18; Luke 10, 12, 15; Crossan, ch. 5

DAY: THUR 3-6 NO CLASS, Instructor Away at a Professional Meeting (Research Paper Day)

Day: Tues 3-11

Topic: Form criticism, Sermon on the Mount

Readings: Matt 5-7; Luke 6; [Oakman, "The Radical Jesus: You Cannot Serve God and Mammon"](#)
(electronic version of this article on my website)

Day: Thurs 3-13

Topic: Jesus' activity and his death

Hand in: Paper due: [Methods and scholarship in Jesus Studies](#)

Day: Tues 3-18

Topic: Passion narratives, making sense out of the death of Jesus; theories of the Atonement

Readings: Mark 11-15 and par.; Borg/Wright, pt. III; Crossan, ch. 6

Renewal of faith in Jesus and the Christ of faith

Day: Thur 3-20

Topic: Resurrection traditions

Readings: Mark 16 and par.; Borg/Wright, pt. IV; Crossan, ch. 7

MARCH 21-31 SPRING BREAK

Day: Tues 4-1

Topic: Resurrection and christology, the development of christology

Readings: Borg/Wright, pt. V; Crossan, Epilogue

Day: Thur 4-3

Topic: Resurrection and christology, the development of christology

Hand in: Exam #2

Day: Tues 4-8

Topic: Q's view of Jesus, Gospel of Thomas

Readings: Gospel of Thomas (library reserve or Patterson/Robinson translation
on line at: http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/nhl_thomas.htm)

Day: Thur 4-10

Topic: Mark's view of Jesus

Readings: Gospel of Mark (read straight through in one sitting); Borg/Wright pt. VII

Hand in: [Due: Research paper hypothesis, rationale, notecards, and working bibliography](#)

Day: Tues 4-15

Topic: Matthew's view of Jesus

Readings: Matthew (read straight through in one sitting); Borg/Wright pt. VI

Day: Thur 4-17

Topic: Luke's view of Jesus

Readings: Luke (read straight through in one sitting)

Day: Tues 4-22

Topic: Historical and christological implications of the Redaction Criticism of the Gospels

Day: Thur 4-24

Topic: Group-led discussions (two groups of 3-5 each)

Day: Tues 4-29

Topic: Group-led discussions (two groups of 3-5 each)

Day: Thur 5-1

Topic: Group-led discussions (two groups of 3-5 each)

Faith, myth, and the Jesus of history

Day: Tues 5-6

Topic: Johannine "signs," dialogues, monologues

Readings: John (read straight through in one sitting); Borg/Wright pt. VIII

Day: Thur 5-8

Topic: History and myth in John, the Johannine Christ and the Nicene Creed

[Hand in: Historical research paper due](#)

Day: Tues 5-13

Topic: The Jesus of history, the Christ of faith, and the myths of our time

Day: Thur 5-15

Topic: Review

Hand in: (Course evaluations)

Day: Tues 5-20

Topic: Final examination, 3:00-4:50 p.m. in Administration 206

All students are asked at the beginning of the course for permission to return papers through a file cabinet in Administration-227. If this permission is not granted, the student must receive papers directly from me.

I will keep old papers for no longer than a few months after the course is finished. So if you plan to get your papers back, make sure you do so before I dispose of them. If you want the final course papers back through the mail, plan to leave a self-addressed, stamped envelope of adequate size.