

Reli(gious Studies) 304: Jesus and the Gospels
Spring 2012
MWF 3:00-3:50
Hum(anities Building) 328
Rice University
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Course description: We will explore the various portraits of Jesus in the New Testament and extra-canonical gospels, including the gospels of Thomas, Philip, Mary and Judas, in order to reconstruct each gospel's Christological interpretation of Jesus as well as the "historical" Jesus himself.

ADA Statement: Any student with disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.

Evaluation: 25% Quizzes, 25% Assignments (harmonized outline, initial solution to synoptic problem, presentation on extra-canonical gospel), 25% Mid-term, 25% Final.

Grading Scale: 100-94 (A), 93-90 (A-), 89-87 (B+), 86-84 (B), 83-80 (B-), 79-77 (C+), 76-74 (C), 73-70 (C-), 69-67 (D+), 66-64 (D), 63-60 (D-), 59-0 (F).

Extra credit: 2% each for documented attendance at the Mellon Seminar: Mapping Death guest lecture (Vernon Robbins 1/13 12:00-1:00pm Hum 226), any reading in the Tolle Lege series (Matthias Henze 1/31, Anthony B. Pinn 3/27, April D. DeConick TBA 7:00-8:30pm Kyle Morrow room Fondren library), any presentation of the Rockwell Symposium: Crafting Knowledge (4/12-15). Up to three (6%) total.

Required texts: Michael D. Coogan et al., eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Augmented Third Edition; OUP, 2007); Paul Foster, ed., *The Non-Canonical Gospels* (T&T Clark, 2008); Anthony Le Donne, *Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011); Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., ed., *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels* (Fifth Edition; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1992). Plus the gospel commentaries that you will check out from the library.

Schedule (subject to change):

M 1/9: First day of class: overview of syllabus and course

Looking ahead, you will need to choose a commentary on each of the four canonical gospels from among the commentaries in the library: Matthew starts at BS2575.2, Mark BS2580.3, Luke BS2593, John BS2615; also commentaries in the Anchor Bible series at BS192.2. Go there, browse the stacks, and write down the author and title of the four commentaries you choose, one for each of the canonical gospels. Looking even further ahead, for your 5 minute presentation you will also need to select an extra-canonical gospel from among those listed on the syllabus. In each case, once you have decided, email me the information.

W 1/11: Some ancient history

Coogan et al. eds. 453-460 (Canons of the Bible), 507-533 (Cultural Contexts, Timeline, Chronological Table of Rulers)

F 1/13: (Post)modern criticisms, methods, and approaches in a nutshell

- Coogan et al. eds. 460-505 (Textual Criticism, Translation of the Bible into English, Interpretation of the Bible, Contemporary Methods in Biblical Study)
- M 1/16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- W 1/18: Mark: structure and contents (QUIZ), text critical issues
Read the text in Coogan et al. eds. and know its structure and contents, i.e. prepare an outline of it. You may want to refer to Throckmorton ed. e.g. xxxiii-xl, for divisions of the text into pericopes
- F 1/20: Mark: commentary discussion: introductions
Read the introduction to your commentary and be ready to discuss it
- M 1/23: Mark: commentary discussion: specific passages
Read your commentary's treatment of a passage that interests you and be ready to discuss it
- W 1/25: Matthew: structure and contents (QUIZ), text critical issues
Read the text in Coogan et al. eds. and know its structure and contents, i.e. prepare an outline of it. You may want to refer to Throckmorton ed. e.g. xxxiii-xl, for divisions of the text into pericopes
- F 1/27: Matthew: commentary discussion: introductions
Read the introduction to your commentary and be ready to discuss it
- M 1/30: Matthew: commentary discussion: specific passages
Read your commentary's treatment of a passage that interests you and be ready to discuss it
- W 2/1: Luke: structure and contents (QUIZ), text critical issues
Read the text in Coogan et al. eds. and know its structure and contents, i.e. prepare an outline of it. You may want to refer to Throckmorton ed. e.g. xxxiii-xl, for divisions of the text into pericopes
- F 2/3: Luke: commentary discussion: introductions
Read the introduction to your commentary and be ready to discuss it
- M 2/6: Luke: commentary discussion: specific passages
Read your commentary's treatment of a passage that interests you and be ready to discuss it
- W 2/8: John: structure and contents (QUIZ), text critical issues
Read the text in Coogan et al. eds. and know its structure and contents, i.e. prepare an outline of it. Throckmorton ed. won't be of help; you may want to refer to your commentary for divisions of the text into pericopes
- F 2/10: John: commentary discussion: introductions
Read the introduction to your commentary and be ready to discuss it
- M 2/13: John: commentary discussion: specific passages
Read your commentary's treatment of a passage that interests you and be ready to discuss it
- W 2/15: Tatian's Diatessaron and the problem of harmonization
Anchor Bible Dictionary entries on Diatessaron and Tatian (Owlspage); and skim the text of the Diatessaron itself. Then, using your outlines of each gospel, prepare another outline in which you attempt to harmonize all four gospels. Be ready to discuss and TURN IN your harmonized outline (3 pages minimum length)
- F 2/17: Synoptic problem: getting started

- Skim Throckmorton ed. v-xl, but read vii-viii, so that you are able to use the synopticon. Then using the synopticon, got through Matthew, Mark, and Luke pericope by pericope in Coogan et al. eds., and color code them: where all three overlap (triple tradition), color orange; where Matthew and Luke but not Mark overlap (double tradition), color blue; the rest leave uncoded. With that done as a visual aid and reference, try to explain the overlap. Be ready to discuss and TURN IN your explanation (3 pages minimum length)
- M 2/20: Synoptic problem: some details
Brown (Synoptic Problem; Owlspace)
- W 2/22: Synoptic problem: more details
- F 2/24: MID-TERM EXAM, in class
- 2/25-3/4: Spring break
- M 3/5: Historical Jesus: back to details
Brown (Historical Jesus; Owlspace), Murphy (Jesus the Jew; Owlspace)
- W 3/7: Historical Jesus: further details
Le Donne ix-52
- F 3/9: Historical Jesus: further details
Le Donne 53-92
- M 3/12: Historical Jesus: further details
Le Donne 93-135
- W 3/14: Canonization in antiquity
Examples of Christian canons (Owlspace); and refer back to Coogan et al. eds. 453-460 (Canons of the Bible)
- F 3/16: Canonization in modernity: collections and editions of New Testament apocrypha
Foster ed. vii-12
- M 3/19: Gospel of Thomas
Read the text and Foster ed. 13-29
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
For your presentation on an extra-canonical gospel, respond to one or more the following questions: What is the portrait of Jesus in this text? What does it tell us about the historical Jesus, if anything, and how can we know whether it does or doesn't? In what ways might the text be related to or even a response to other gospels? What can be learned here about early Christianity in general? Why is this gospel worth reading?
- W 3/21: Gospel of Peter
Read the text and Foster ed. 30-42
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- 3/22-23: Mid-term recess
- M 3/26: Gospel of Mary
Read the text and Foster ed. 43-53
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- W 3/28: Jewish-Christian gospels
Read the fragments and Foster ed. 54-67
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- F 3/30: Gospel of Philip
Read the text and Foster ed. 68-83

- Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- M 4/2: Gospel of Judas
Read the text and Foster ed. 84-109
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- W 4/4: Protevangelium of James
Read the text and Foster ed. 110-125
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- F 4/6: Infancy Gospel of Thomas
Read the text and Foster ed. 126-138
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- M 4/9: Papyrus Egerton 2, Fayum Gospel, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840
Read the fragments and Foster ed. 139-170
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- W 4/11: Secret Gospel of Mark
Read Clement's letter and Foster ed. 171-182
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- F 4/13: Epistola Apostolorum
Read the intro and text (Owlspace)
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- M 4/16: Pilate Cycle (e.g. Gospel of Nicodemus)
Read the intro and text (Owlspace)
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- W 4/18: Toledot Yeshu
Read the text and Klauck (The Anti-Gospel; Owlspace)
Presentation/s (5 minutes or less, each):
- F 4/20: Last day of class: wrap-up discussion, review for final exam (take home)
- 4/21-24: Study days
- 4/25-5/2: Finals
- 5/2: FINAL EXAM due in basket in Hum 225b by 5:00PM