

Christian Origins and the New Testament
Loyola University, Chicago, Institute of Pastoral Studies
(IPS 416-001 Class #1849)
Wednesdays, 6:30 – 9:30 pm
Holy Family Satellite

Instructor:

Jim L. Papandrea, M.Div., Ph.D.
Office hours by appointment

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to and overview of the New Testament. Students explore the world of Jesus and his interpreters from both an historical and a biblical perspective and learn about the religious and cultural world of Palestinian Judaism during the Roman occupation. The course considers the life and teachings of Jesus in Galilee; the beginnings of the Christian movement in the revelatory experience of Christ risen and the preaching of the gospel focused on his life, death, and resurrection; the missionary movement of the Church into the Greco-Roman world (the life and writings of the apostle Paul); and finally the development of the four canonical gospels, each with their unique portrait of Jesus Christ and the path of discipleship. Throughout the course, students make connections between then and now, Christian origins and the world of today.

Purpose of the Course:

The purpose of this course is to gain an understanding of the message and literature of the Christian Scriptures, along with an insight into the faith and historical context of the people who produced these documents, in light of modern scholarship and in relation to contemporary society. The course will give an overview of the New Testament documents, and students will be encouraged to engage the primary texts of the Bible. It is hoped that each student will reflect on the philosophical principles of Christian spirituality, and as a result apply this thinking to his or her own personal religious beliefs. The goal of this class is to provide a non-threatening atmosphere in which students can reflect on the issues of biblical faith, and begin to interpret the Christian Scriptures and Tradition for the contemporary context.

Course Requirements:

Each class meeting will consist of lectures, group discussion, and other educational media, possibly including films. Questions and discussion during the lecture are encouraged. Reading assignments are to be done before each class meeting. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless previous arrangements are made with the instructor. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course. All work for this course must conform to accepted standards of academic ethics, including, but not limited to the understanding that plagiarism is unacceptable, and will result in an automatic grade of "F" for the assignment in question. The internet, and especially search engines, should NOT be used as primary research tools. This syllabus is tentative, and maybe updated or changed at the instructor's discretion.

Class participation: Attendance, reading preparation, and class discussion will affect the course grade, especially in the case of a borderline final grade. Since this class only meets once each week, attendance is expected at every class meeting, and unexcused absences will affect a student's final grade. Class participation counts for 10% of the final course grade.

Papers: There will be three 5-7 page essays. All papers for this course must be double-spaced, with standard sized margins and a font size of 10 - 12. The font must be easy to read, such as Times New Roman or Palatino. Cover sheets must include the student's name, course name, the instructor's name (spelled correctly) and the date. All papers for this course should conform in style to a standard scholarly format. If in doubt, consult A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations by Kate Turabian, or The Chicago Manual of Style.

Essay #1: The first essay will be an exegesis paper on a gospel passage. Students will be assigned a gospel text and will write an interpretation of the text. Essay #1 will count for 30% of the course grade.

Essay #2: The second essay will be an exegesis paper on a passage from one of St. Paul's letters. Essay #2 will count for 30% of the course grade.

Final Essay: The final exam will be a take-home essay, also 5 - 7 pages, and will focus on synthesizing the biblical and philosophical concepts found in the New Testament, in light of contemporary scholarship. The final exam will count for 30% of the course grade.

Required Reading

The Bible (NAB or NRSV)

Brown, Raymond E., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Supplemental Reading

Brown, Raymond, and John Meier. Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity

Bruce, F.F. Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free

Johnson, Luke. The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation

Keck, Leander. The New Testament Experience of Faith

Martin, Ralph. Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology

Meeks, Wayne. The First Urban Christians

Stark, Rodney. The Rise of Christianity

Thompson, M.M. The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel

Note: The instructor reserves the right to add to or change the reading list, and to add supplemental reading assignments during the course of the class.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Class #1

Introduction
Methodology and Historical-Critical Issues
The Intertestamental Period

Class #2

The Historical/Cultural Context of the New Testament
The Historical Jesus

Read: Mark

Class #3

The Synoptic Gospels

Read: Matthew and Luke

Class #4 – FIRST ESSAY DUE

The Gospel of John
The Person of Christ in the Gospels

Read: John

Class #5

The Book of Acts: Peter
The Book of Acts: Paul's Conversion and First Missionary Journey

Read: Acts, chapters 1-15

Class #6

The Book of Acts: Paul's Second Missionary Journey
Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians

Read: Acts, Chapters 16-18
I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians

Class #7

The Book of Acts: Paul's Third Missionary Journey
Paul's Letters to the Galatians, Corinthians & Romans

Read: Acts, chapters 19-21
Galatians
I Corinthians, II Corinthians
Romans

Class #8 – SECOND ESSAY DUE

The Book of Acts: Paul in Caesarea & Rome
The Prison Epistles
The Pastoral Epistles

Read: Acts, chapters 22-28
Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, Ephesians
Titus, I Timothy, II Timothy

Class #9

The General Epistles

Read: Hebrews
James
I Peter, II Peter
I John, II John, III John
Jude

Class #10

The Apocalypse

Read: Revelation

Class #11

New Testament Christology – A Trajectory
Closing comments and course wrap-up