2014

285-19 Historical Jesus

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Description: A critical investigation to determine the authentic voice and profile of Jesus from sources of the first three centuries and a consideration of the consequences of such a search.

Objectives:
1. To introduce the question of the historical Jesus.
2. To provide the students with some of the tools necessary to analyze the early Jesus data to determine whether a saying or deed attributed to Jesus is authentic.
3. To investigate the early Jesus data from the perspective of the people of the “three centuries.”
4. To provide the students with the ability to read the sacred books of other religious traditions.
5. To challenge the students to see the implications of the investigation as they perceive the contemporary state of affairs and address their own “perspectives.”

Required Reading List:

Recommended Reading List:

Course Requirements
1. Attendance/Participation: The course emphasizes class discussion, so it will be important for students to attend regularly, complete assigned readings, written assignments and team assignments. You may miss one (1) class session. Absences beyond that will affect your grade. Missing two (2) classes will result in one full letter grade being deducted from your overall class grade assessment. Missing three (3) classes will result in you failing the course. Please let me know as far in advance of any unavoidable absences.
   a. Absence does not excuse you from competency relating to the topics presented and discussed or from syllabus changes. If you will be absent on a day when a test, scheduled report is to be presented, or other student presentation is scheduled, you must contact me prior to the class time. If this is impossible, you must contact me the following day.
   b. If you arrive late for class, i.e. after attendance is taken, please notify me of your presence at a break and ask that your absence be erased. Projects, presentation and paper assignments are expected on time. Late work will be penalized with a grade reduction up to one letter grade for each class period late.
Written Assignments: Specific guidelines that must be followed for each written assignment will be distributed with each assignment.

Evaluation: Students will be required to demonstrate a competence in the critical analysis of the material. This will be accomplished through in-class exercises, discussions, weekly assignments, and a written project with presentation assignment. The written project with presentation will be due the last class.

In-class exercises/discussions 20%
Weekly assignments 40%
Project/Presentation 40%

Grades indicate a professor's assessment of a student's academic performance and not a student's effort. In accordance with University policy, letter grades in undergraduate theology courses mean the following:
A = Exceptional academic performance (that is, uncommonly high academic achievement, which demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, uncommon skills in critical analysis and effective communication, and imagination)
B = Good academic performance (that is, high quality academic achievement; demonstrated competency in the discipline above the average or standard)
C = Satisfactory academic performance (that is, academic achievement that meets an average or standard level of competency in the discipline)
D = Minimal academic performance, sufficient to pass
F = Failure

If a course uses number grades, an 8-point scale determines the final letter grade for the course: A=92-100; B=84-91; C=76-83; D=68-75; F-67 and below. Effective in fall 2005, plus/minus grading may be used in undergraduate as well as in graduate courses. If a theology professor chooses to use plus/minus grades in conjunction with number grades, the following scale applies: A=94-100; A-=92-93; B+=90-91; B=87-89; B-=84-86; C+=82-83; C=79-81; C-=76-78; D+=74-75; D=71-73; D-=68-70.

Grading policy for the Theology Department see http://www.xavier.edu/theology/Grading-Policy.cfm

Tentative Schedule

May 18: Introduction; our own Gospels; 1st century world; The Quest for the Historical Jesus- Is it a relevance question?
READING: Introductions to The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology (NW); Profiles of Jesus (PJ); and The Complete Gospels (CG); Honor and Shame: Pivotal Values of the First-Century Mediterranean World (NW)
May 31: The Words of Jesus
READING: The Q Gospel and Gospel of Thomas (CG); The First-Century Personality: The Individual and the Group (NW)
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: TBD

June 7: Discussion of Reading - Jesus, the wordsmith; aphorisms, Chreia, “Social Gospel” of Jesus
READING: The Gospel of Mark and Matthew (CG); The Perception of Limited Good: Maintaining One’s Social Status (NW)
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: TBD

June 14: No Class

June 21: Discussion of Reading – The God of Jesus; non-Apocalyptic Jesus, The Lord’s Prayer, Jesus, the Son of Man/God, The Challenge of Jesus Words
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: TBD

June 28: Discussion of Reading – Other perspectives of Jesus
READING: The Signs Gospel, John, non-canonical Gospels (or should the “G” be just “g”?) (CG): Kinship and Marriage: Fusing Families Together (NW)
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: TBD

July 5: No Class

July 12: Discussion of Reading – The Deeds of Jesus; healing/exorcisms, the Meal, the Birth Narratives, the Death of Jesus, the Resurrection Accounts, Post Resurrection
READING: Clean and Unclean: Understanding Rules of Purity (NW)
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: TBD

July 19: Discussion of Reading – Reconstruction of the Profile of Jesus; implications for Religious Conversation
READING: How Jesus Groups Evolved: Understanding Group Development (NW)
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: TBD

July 26: Discussion of Reading and Papers/Presentations on Profiles of Jesus Project