2014

252-01H Introduction to Christian Scriptures

Arthur Dewey

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Introduction to Christian Scriptures

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Rome

Hermeneutical Presuppositions: Agenda & Horizons
The Nature of the Evidence
Traditions; Literary Issues; Socio-historical Context
The Question of Origins

2. THE FIRST CENTURY WORLD

The Economic Realities
The Social Lines
The Acoustics of the Ancient World
3. EDGES OF THE EVIDENCE

The View from Outside
The Matter of Cultural Default
Gospel Interrelationships

4. THE HISTORICAL JESUS

The Nature of the Evidence
The Crafting of the Kingdom
Prepare:
  The Sayings Gospel
  Thomas
  Didache

N.B. THE COMPLETE GOSPELS and THE COMPLETE GOSPEL PARALLELS are needed for this material.

5. **EARLY GOSPEL TRADITIONS: SAYINGS GOSPEL, THOMAS, DIDACHE**

  The Oral Explosion
  Learning the Accent of Jesus

Prepare:
  Philemon
  1 Thessalonians
  Galatians
  1 & 2 Corinthians
  Philippians
  Romans
N.B. THE AUTHENTIC LETTERS OF PAUL are needed for this material.

6. **PAUL:** PHILEMON, I THESSALONIANS; GALATIANS; 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS; PHILIPPIANS; ROMANS

   The Matter of Rhetoric
   The Magna Charta of the Subhuman
   At Home in the Spirit
   The Utopian Battle

   Prepare:
   Signs Gospel
   Peter
   Mark
   Matthew
   Luke

N.B. THE COMPLETE GOSPELS AND THE COMPLETE GOSPEL PARALLELS are needed for this material.

7. **LATER GOSPEL TRADITIONS: SYNOPTICS**

   The Imaging of Jesus
   The Waves of Communal Experience

   Prepare:
   Revelation

N.B. THE OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE WITH APOCRYPHA or equivalent needed for this material.

8. **REVELATION**

   Distance Learning
   Living in the Belly of the Beast
   Liturgical Burlesque
Prepare:
Ephesians; Colossians
James
Letters to Timothy and Titus

N.B. THE OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE WITH APOCRYPHA or equivalent needed for this material.

9. PAULINE TRADITIONS: EPHESIANS; DEUTERO-PAULINE LETTERS

  The Body is no longer Headless
  Silencing the Women
  Settling in for the Duration

10. JOHN

  Egerton Papyrus
  John (first and second Versions)

N.B. THE COMPLETE GOSPELS and THE COMPLETE GOSPELS PARALLELS needed for this material.

11. ACTS AND THE SECOND CENTURY

  The Romance of Acts
Marcion
Gospel of Mary
Dialogue of the Savior

N.B. THE COMPLETE GOSPELS and THE OXFORD ANNOTATED or equivalent needed.

12. THE GROWING INSTITUTION

John 1, 2, 3
The Pastorals
Acts of Paul and Thecla
Ignatius
Jude
1 & 2 Peter

N.B. THE OXFORD ANNOTATED needed for this material.

13. CONTINUING ISSUES: ORIGINS AND CANON

** The Syllabus will be modified according to student presentations, subject elaborations and other assignments.
Required Texts:


THE OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE WITH APOCRYPHA (paper) or HARPER COLLINS STUDY BIBLE WITH APOCRYPHA (paper) or critical equivalent.

Note: These books are not in the Xavier Bookstore. You can go online and get them all from Amazon. This would be the least expensive route to pursue.

Recommended:


Stephen Harris, UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT, latest ed.


The CORE

Xavier University unabashedly offers a CORE studies program for every undergraduate. Often poorly advised students do not see or appreciate the point of the CORE. Xavier’s CORE attempts to give every undergraduate not only the basis of a genuine liberal education but also the foundation of the Jesuit habit of imagination. This habit of imagination can be articulated with the following questions. Each student needs to return to these questions throughout the semester and enfold one’s classroom engagement in this extended and unending conversation.

**Magis** – Are we open to the depths of our experience? Can we detect mystery in the very heart of things? How do we begin to speak of it? What relationships do we find ourselves enmeshed? Can we learn from others? Are we willing to discover and enter new horizons? Are we willing to deal with the complexity of ourselves and of others? Can we dare to ask the ultimate question of meaning: why are we here?

**Reflection** – What skills, languages and habits of imagination do we need to respond to our ever-growing experience? How do we determine if we are on the right track? Where do we go for help in such matters?

**Discernment** – What is going on in the depths of our experience? Are we open to being surprised by what we find? How do we sort out our relationships in a responsible fashion? What do we discover about the multiple dimensions of our experience and relationships? How do we act towards those we encounter? Why do we do so? How does all this build our world? What future lies in store?

**Cura Personalis** – How do we take seriously all who enter into our discussion and search? How do we deal with the diversity, complexity and depth of these encounters? Do we recognize “the other” in such encounters?

**Solidarity** – What does it mean to say that we are all in this together? What must we do to see the complexity and depths of this connected existence – over space and time? What surprises come in trying to stay connected to this ever-growing picture? What tasks are indicated?

**Service rooted in Justice and Love** – What are we doing for the future of our world? What can we do when we see that people are in need or are subject to injustice? What keeps us from acting? What enables us to engage? What happens when we discover we are not alone?
OBJECTIVE:

To attain a fundamental competency in critically reading and interpreting the Early Christian Writings.

This will be done by:

* Becoming competent in analyzing selected texts through historical critical tools;
* Understanding the complexity and diversity of the traditions;
* Detecting the context and fundamental questions of the traditions;
* Engaging dialogically in “God-Talk” in time and space.

Requirements:

1] Critical reading of assigned materials  2] Presentation of Student Analyses***
5] Final Essays/ Exegesis/Oral TBD

***Students may make a class presentation on contextual issues, such as: the underlying cultural default for a particular text or on the socio-political context; a competing voice in the tradition; an examination of the social-historical presuppositions of a text; analysis of comparative gospel texts.

Master Classes for Theology Majors in each section. Theology Majors also will be required to attend 2 Master Classes, which will be explained and set up during the semester.

Students are required to be present at Final Exam Class:

10:00 -10:50 MWF  10:00-11:50 Wednesday May 7

Grades:
The Grade will reflect the competency the student has demonstrated by the end of the course. Mid Term essays, class assignments, presentations/reports, and response papers will be critiqued and will be able in some instances to be improved.

The following grade weight is approximate: (Mid Term (30%) + Final (30%) + Class Participation (10%) + Presentation/DSS Visit (15%) + Exercises/Response Papers (15%)) Emphasis will be placed on the final demonstration of competence. This can outweigh earlier indicators.

For the Theology Department’s Policy on Grades see: http://www.xavier.edu/theology/grading_policy.cfm

This class will employ the +/- Grading system, adopted by the Theology Department:
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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>94-100</td>
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<td>92-93</td>
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