282-01H The Jesus Seminar

Arthur Dewey
Preliminary Schedule:

Jan 13: Introduction: The Jesus Seminar
History and Objectives.
Reading Assignment:

Read the synopses on the Jesus Seminar at
http://www.westarinstitute.org/Seminars/seminars.html
Be sure to follow up on the links to Phases 1 and 2.

THE FIVE GOSPELS 1-38.
PARABLE WORKBOOK, 1-33.
COMPLETE GOSPELS 257-278, 279-303.
THE COMPLETE GOSPELS PARALLELS 1-5.
HEAR THEN THE PARABLE 3-76.

(THE JESUS SEMINAR AND ITS CRITICS 1-60. Not Required)

Jan 15-17: Questions from reading assignments
Gospel Relationships
Criteria for Judgment
Examples from PW (Group Work)
Reading Assignment [from Forum]:
Boring, "Criteria of Authenticity," 1,4.
Funk, "The Issue of Jesus," 1,1.
"From Parable to Gospel," 1,3.
"Unraveling the Jesus Tradition," 5,2.
Scott, "Essaying the Rock," 2,1.

Selection of Parables.
Reading Assignment: FORUM articles

Jan 24, 27, 29 Group Work: Preliminary Arguments,
Publication of Recommendations

Feb 5-10: *Plenary Session: Vote Taken on Parables.

Feb 12-19: Group Work: Preliminary Arguments
Publication of Recommendations.

Feb 21-28: * Plenary Session: Vote Taken on Parables.

Mar 3-7: SPRING BREAK

Mar 10-19: Group Work: Preliminary Arguments
Publication of Recommendations

Mar 19-22 WESTAR INSTITUTE: CHRISTIANITY SEMINAR, Santa Rosa CA.

Mar 21-28: *Plenary Session: Vote Taken on Parables

Mar 31-Apr 7: Group Work: Preliminary Arguments
Publication of Recommendations.

Apr 9-16: *Plenary Session: Reconsideration of Votes.

Apr 17-21 EASTER BREAK

Apr 23-25 Group Work: Preliminary Arguments
Publication of Recommendations

Apr 30-May 2: *Plenary Session: Reconsideration of Votes.
Final Assessments.
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May 7 (Wed) 12:00-1:50 pm: *** Exam Time: Summary Paper
*** All Students are to meet. No excuses for absence on final conversation.

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?
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keeps us from acting? What enables us to engage? What happens when we discover we are not alone?

Course Horizon:

It is hoped that through this course each member will:

1) genuinely participate in the contemporary critical discussion regarding the historical questions;

2) demonstrate the ability to use critical criteria for evaluating historical material;

3) discern the cultural and theological implications of this critical quest;

4) discover the responsibilities and enjoy the ways of collaborative intellectual endeavor.

Course Protocol:

A. The Formation of Group Areas of Responsibility: Mark, Matthew, Luke, Sayings Gospel (Q), Thomas. Each group will be responsible for a working knowledge of the particular Gospel material. Each group will also be responsible for particular reading assignments and for bringing the insights of these readings to the discussion and debate.

B. The Formation of small working groups (sub-groups) for specific sayings assignments. The parables under consideration will be divided among the groups and the individuals of each group will have the task to make the strongest argument for the inclusion/exclusion of the particular saying in the database for the profile of the historical Jesus. The sub-group will be responsible for making recommendations to the entire group at the Plenary Session. Each sub-group will furnish the entire group with documentation for voting. Each sub-group will be responsible for presentation and cross-examination before the entire session.

Depending on the speed of the course, we may be able to go beyond the initial intention of the course. There are a number of directions in which we can go. The entire group might want to consider various sayings, or groups of sayings, or even sayings from a particular slice of the tradition (e.g., Mark, Sayings Source, Thomas). An additional possibility would be a Saturday film festival in the Honors Quarters: such as the viewing and critical conversation of: “The Last Temptation of Christ,” “Jesus of Montreal,” “The Life of Brian,” and “Son of
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**Man.** etc. The collision of our analytical and imaginative work with this recent interpretive attempt may prove useful.

We shall then draw out the implications of the project. What has happened to our historical imaginations in the process? What does all this mean for Theology? What possibilities does this have for our culture and for a critical perspective on our society?

C. Every group and each member of the seminar will be responsible for a final report to the seminar leader. The details of this report will be discussed.

D. Those anxious over grades are advised to withdraw. There will be no obsession with grades in this course. Such a stance is antithetical to the cooperative effort of the class. Anyone who is not pulling his/her weight in this Scholars course will be consulted when indications warrant it.

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

This class will employ the +/- Grading system, adopted by the Theology Department:

Required Texts:

- PARABLE WORKBOOK (online My Course)
  (Salem OR, Polebridge, 2012)

[http://www.westar institute.org/Jesus_Seminar/jesus_seminar.html](http://www.westar institute.org/Jesus_Seminar/jesus_seminar.html)

NOTE: These books are not in the Xavier Bookstore. You can go online and get The Five Gospels, The Complete Gospels, The Complete Gospels Parallels, Hear Then the Parable, and Re-Imagine the World via Amazon.

[http://www.westar institute.org/index.html](http://www.westar institute.org/index.html)
[http://www.westar institute.org/Contact/contact.html](http://www.westar institute.org/Contact/contact.html)

Selected Forum Articles.

*** Forum Articles:
- Cameron, "Parable and Interpretation in the Gospel of Thomas," 2,2.
- Cotter, "Children Sitting in the Agora," 5,2.
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Dewey, "Quibbling Over Serifs," 5.2.
Funk, "Gospel of Mark," 4.3.
Hedrick, "The Treasure Parable in Matthew and Thomas," 2.2.
Hollenbach, "From Parable to Gospel," 2.3.
Horsley, "Jesus and the Spiral of Violence," 5.4.
King, "Kingdom in the Gospel of Thomas," 3.1.
Smith, "No Place for a Son of Man," 4.4.
Vaage, "Q and the Historical Jesus," 5.2.

Highly Recommended:

THE OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE
Edward Beutner, ed., LISTENING TO THE PARABLES OF JESUS (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press. 2007)
Kathleen Corley, WOMEN & THE HISTORICAL JESUS (Santa Rosa: Polebridge. 2002.
Robert W. Funk, A CREDIBLE JESUS (Santa Rosa: Polebridge. 2002.
HONEST TO JESUS (San Francisco: Harper. 1996).
S. Freyne, THE NEW TESTAMENT WORLD.
Roy W. Hoover, PROFILES OF JESUS (Santa Rosa: Polebridge. 2002).
J. Jeremias, JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF JESUS.
J. S. Kloppenborg, Q PARALLELS.
Robert J. Miller, THE APOCALYPTIC JESUS: A DEBATE (Santa Rosa:
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THE JESUS SEMINAR AND ITS CRITICS (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 1999).
Bernard Brandon Scott, JESUS RECONSIDERED: Scholarship in the Public Eye (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2007).

Older, but significant:

R. Bultmann, HISTORY OF THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION.
R. Cameron, THE OTHER GOSPELS.
J. D. Crossan, DARK INTERVAL.
IN PARABLES.
M. Dibelius, FROM TRADITION TO GOSPEL.
C. H. Dodd, THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM.
R. Edwards, A THEOLOGY OF Q.
S. Freyne, THE WORLD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
J. Jeremias, JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF JESUS.
THE PARABLES OF JESUS.
W. Kissinger, THE PARABLES OF JESUS. A HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.
J. Kloppenborg, THE FORMATION OF Q.
B. Malina, NEW TESTAMENT WORLD.
B. L. Mack, A MYTH OF INNOCENCE.
N. Perrin, JESUS AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE KINGDOM.
REDISCOVERING THE TEACHING OF JESUS.
B. B. Scott, Jesus, SYMBOL-MAKER FOR THE KINGDOM.
A. Wilder, THE LANGUAGE OF THE GOSPEL. EARLY CHRISTIAN RHETORIC.
JESUS' PARABLES AND THE WAR OF MYTHS.