

NT 3013

JESUS IN HISTORY AND TRADITION

Dr. Marion L. Soards
Fall Semester 2013

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky

This course seeks to establish an "objective" view of Jesus in history (or, at least, to comprehend the limits of such an attempt) and to understand how we received the portraits of Jesus that we possess. In this study, students will develop the ability to differentiate early Christian memory from early Christian confession, so that they may recognize the crucial distinction between fact and faith and the inevitable and equally crucial relationship between the same—thus, they will be able to evaluate contemporary scholarship concerning Jesus in a sophisticated manner and to think about the relationship between historical data about Jesus and the vitality of Christian faith.

Course Requirements

1. Students should attend all classes.
2. Student should prepare for the classes by reading the assignments as delineated in this syllabus and by being prepared to discuss the readings and the materials that will be presented by the various members of the class.
3. Each student will be part of a team (of approximately 3-4 students). Each team will be responsible for working together to prepare and to present a report on one of the five books related to the study of the life of Jesus that are recognized for our work in the course. A presentation is to outline the context, content, method, and results of the book under consideration.
4. In relation to the group projects, each member of each team will submit (for grading) an individually prepared book review on the book dealt with by her/his team. Instructions for the preparation of this book review are given in a handout separate from this syllabus.
5. Each student will write a critical review of the movie, *Jesus*, that will be viewed in the last session of the class. The style and content of this review will be discussed in class prior to the viewing of the movie.

Grading

1. Twenty percent of the grade will be based on one's attendance and preparation as made evident through cogent participation in the sessions (see especially items ##1 and 2 above).
 2. Twenty percent of the grade will be based on one's contribution to the preparation and presentation regarding the group book project. Peer input will help determine this portion of the evaluation for the course (see item #3 above).
 3. Twenty percent of the grade will be based on one's critical book review (see item #4 above).
 4. Forty percent of the grade will be based on a paper of approximately 3000 words that critiques (saying both "what is right" and "what is wrong" with) the movie, *Jesus*, discussing how the movie deals with what is (or can be) known about Jesus. In the first place, there is the matter of basic accuracy (in relation to what can be known about Jesus) in the movie's presentation of Jesus. Second, how does the movie deal with the theological dimensions of traditional belief about Jesus? Third, how does the movie seem to understand and/or present the relationship between "fact" and "faith"? Fourth, is the movie's presentation of Jesus' self-understanding consistent with the Gospel's point of view on this matter? These and other questions should be addressed in the paper.
-

Books

1. Each student is to have and read the appropriate materials in the following:

 The New Testament—Greek or English or both—a synopsis of the four Gospels may prove helpful here.

 Martyn, J. Louis. *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. 3rd ed.
 Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.
2. Each student will be responsible for working with one of the following books:

 Sanders, E. P. *Jesus and Judaism*. London: SCM Press, 1985.

 Crossan, John Dominic. *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.

 Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

Allison, Dale C. *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.

Levine, Amy-Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. New York: HarperOne, 2006.

3. There will be occasion to work with materials in the following:

Schneemelcher, W. and R. McL. Wilson. *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. I. *Gospels and Related Writings*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co/Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991.

SCHEDULE

September 11

- **Orientation to the Course**
- **The Problem of the Historical Jesus**
- **To Know and to Believe**

Assignment: • Work in teams for presentations.
 • Read Martyn, *History and Theology*.
 • Read Matthew and Mark.

September 18

- **Extrabiblical Non-Christian Sources Regarding Jesus' Life**
- **Paul on Jesus Christ**
- **The Phenomenon of Retrospective Christology**

Assignment: • Work in teams for presentations.
 • Read Martyn, *History and Theology*.
 • Read Luke and John.
 (N.B., "Q" is thought to comprise materials similar to the following portions of Luke: Luke 3:7-9, 16f; 4:1-13; 6:20-23, 27-49; 7:1-10, 18-35; 9:57-60; 10:2-16, 21-24; 11:2-4, 9-20, 23-26, 29-35, 39-52; 12:2-12, 22-31, 33f, 39-46, 51-53, 57-59; 13:18-21, 23-30, 34-35; 14:16-24, 26-27, 34-35; 15:4-7; 16:13, 16-18; 17:3-4, 6, 23-24, 26-30, 33-37; 18:14; 19:12-27; 22:28-30.)
 • Read *Gos. Thom.* (Schneemelcher/Wilson, 1.110-33, esp. 117-29). On reserve in the library.
 • Read *Gos. Pet.* (Schneemelcher/Wilson, 1.216-27, esp. 223-26). On reserve in the library.

Policy Statements

Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. For more information, see:

<http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

- Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.