

REL 390: JESUS

Wingate University / Spring 2019



Time: Tues./Thurs. 2-3:15pm
Room: Batte Center 222
Office Hours: MWF 8-9am; MW 1-4pm
(T/Th hours available by appointment)

Instructor: Dr. Christy Cobb
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Description: Jesus of Nazareth was a Jewish prophet who lived in the early part of the first century of the Common Era. While we know very little about his life, much has been written about his teaching, death, and legacy. Nearly forty years after his death, people began writing about Jesus and today people continue to write about him and even make movies and memes about him. All around the world and in several different religions, Jesus is honored, worshiped, and followed. This course will examine the figure of Jesus from a variety of angles, beginning with the canonical gospels and ending with a novel and film analysis. Students will be encouraged to read and think about their own image of Jesus, questioning where it originates as well as what possible sources influenced their depiction of Jesus.

Course Objectives:

- to critically read and reflect upon primary and secondary texts about Jesus
- to accurately identify the differences between various portrayals of Jesus both from within Christianity and in other religious and global contexts
- to reflect on the ways text, art, and film has influenced the creation and development of the figure of Jesus
- for the student to consider the origin of their own image of Jesus and to creatively reimagine new images of Jesus

Required Textbooks:

- Bible, any version acceptable, preferred: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*, NRSV, 4th edition.
- Bond, Helen. *Jesus: A Very Brief History*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2017.
- Tóibín, Colm. *The Testament of Mary*. New York: Scribner, 2012.

Grading / Course Assignments:

Attendance and Participation (20%): In order to succeed in this course, students must attend class and participate regularly. Participation includes reading the assigned material before class and actively participating in group or class discussions. Students can miss one week (two classes) without it negatively affecting their grade. If there are extenuating circumstances that lead to a student missing a number of classes, this must be discussed with the professor as soon as possible. There is no need to bring notes from your doctor, etc. for absences unless requested by the professor.

Exams (30%): Two exams will be given in this class throughout the semester. The first will be canonical gospel exam, where students will be given passages from the four canonical gospels and Pauline letters and will be asked to identify which text includes the given passage. The second exam will be on other texts discussed including Christian apocryphal gospels, the Qur'an, and the Talmud and will also include identification as well as a brief section on topics pertaining to Jesus. These exams will be worth 15% each.

Writing Assignments/Reflections OR Research Paper (30%): For this assignment, students may choose to complete one of two options for the writing component of this course. The first option is to complete 5 written reflections (2 pages each) throughout the semester. These will be based on the weekly readings and prompts will be provided for the reflections. The second option is for students to write a 10-12 page research paper on a topic of their choice that is related to the course content. Students who choose to write a research paper should meet with the professor to outline their argument and choose sources in the first part of the semester.

Creative Assignment (20%): Profile for Jesus: For this final assignment, you will create an in-depth profile for one representation of Jesus that you have read throughout this semester. To begin, chose **one** text or set of texts that you will use for the primary text for your profile. For example, you may creatively present "Mark's Jesus" or "Thomas' Jesus" or "Islamic Jesus." But do not use more than one textual representation (i.e. "The New Testament Jesus"). You may choose the format and way that you present this material, and creativity is encouraged. Students may create a poster, write a song to be performed, write a poem, create a collage, make a social media profile, or any other imaginative project. It should be clear that you have read your chosen text closely and critically, as well pertinent secondary material. Students will be graded on the following: close and critical reading of chosen text; creativity; attention to detail; and presentation (profiles will be presented during final exam session).

Grading Scale:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62

Statement of Academic Integrity:

Membership in the Wingate University is a privilege conferred by reason of demonstrated merit and sustained by a continuing commitment to high standards of performance and conduct. The University expects that all members of the community will voluntarily conduct themselves in a

manner reflecting respect for all other members of the community. It is the responsibility of all Wingate University students to abide by the Honor Code. Failure to do so will result in consequences outlined in the Wingate University Student Handbook.

The Wingate University Honor Code states that:

- Wingate University students do not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, nor do they tolerate in their company the presence of one who does.
- Wingate university students conduct themselves at all times in a manner that is conducive to the maintenance of a strong, positive environment for study and learning.
- Wingate University students obey the rules and regulations of the University as outlined in the *Student Handbook*.

Disability Statement:

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you are encouraged to let the professor know at the beginning of the semester. In order to receive accommodations you must also register for disability support services by contacting Kristin Wharton at 704-233-8366 or through email at kwharton@wingate.edu. All communication will remain confidential.

Course Schedule:

January 17 Introduction to the Course; Jesus in Art

Historical / Religious Context and Paul's Jesus

January 22 Bond, *Jesus*, Part I, chapters 1-2

January 24 Bond, *Jesus*, Part I, chapters 3-5; Philippians 2 and 1 Corinthians 15

Mark's Jesus

January 29 The Gospel of Mark, chapters 1-8

January 31 The Gospel of Mark, chapters 9-16 (reflection #1 due)

Matthew's Jesus

February 5 The Gospel of Matthew, chapters 1-14

February 7 The Gospel of Matthew, chapters 15-28

Luke's Jesus

February 12 The Gospel of Luke, chapters 1-12

February 14 The Gospel of Luke, chapters 13-24

John's Jesus

February 19 The Gospel of John, chapters 1-10

February 21 The Gospel of John, chapters 11-21 (Reflection #2 due)

Historical Jesus

February 26 **Exam #1 – Paul and the NT Gospels**
February 28 Historical Jesus / Jesus Seminar

Apocryphal Jesus

March 5 Gospel of Thomas (link on Canvas)
March 7 Choice: Gospel of Judas, the Gospel of Peter, or the Gospel of Mary
 (reflection #3 due)

(Spring Break; No Class)

Jesus in the Talmud

March 19 Schäfer, Peter, *Jesus in the Talmud*, chapter 2-3, pages 15-33 (canvas)
March 21 Schäfer, Peter, *Jesus in the Talmud*, chapter 9, pages 95-130 (canvas)

Muslim Jesus

March 26 Khalidi, Tarif. *The Muslim Jesus*, pg. 1-21.
March 28 A selection of sayings from Khalidi's book (canvas)

Black Jesus

April 2 **Exam #2**
April 4 Black Jesus; Thurman, Howard, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (canvas)

Latin American Jesus

April 9 Latin American Images of Jesus; Dr. Amy Chilton, guest speaker
(NO Class April 11, One day One Dog)

Mary's Jesus (Novelistic Jesus)

April 16 *The Testament of Mary*, pgs. 1-43
April 18 *The Testament of Mary*, pgs. 44-81 (Written Reflection #4 due)

Jesus in Film

April 23 Watch *The Young Messiah*, first half
April 25 Watch *The Young Messiah*, second half (Written Reflection #5 due)

Final Exam Period: Presentations of the Creative Profiles of Jesus