



White Crucifixion by Mark Chagall (1938)

SCTR 48: Jesus the Jew
Fall 2009
T/TH 1:45-3:30
Kenna 218

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Course description:

In the New Testament, Jesus of Nazareth is called “Rabbi”: he argues in Pharisaic terms with Jewish Pharisees, quotes the Jewish scriptures, preaches apocalyptic destruction like that imagined in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and is recognized by some as the Jewish Messiah and by others as a latter-day prophet. He teaches in parables and maxims like those found in the Jewish Midrash and Talmud, and is eventually executed as a Judean rebel by the Roman occupiers of his land. Jesus was a Jew, as were his immediate followers and most of the New Testament writers. This course explores the Jewishness of the earliest Jesus movement and its traditions and considers how a small, first-century sect ultimately became a world religion and power largely ignorant of, and often hostile to, Jews and Judaism.

Learning objectives:

- To understand the variety and complexity of Jewish religion in the time of Jesus
- To explore current scholarship on the historical Jesus
- To appreciate the importance of locating Jesus within a Jewish context
- To discern the identity and role of Jews in the Christian scriptures
- To consider the impact of this study on contemporary dialogue between Jews and Christians

Texts and Course Materials:

The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha

Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*

E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*

Course Readings on ERes.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Active Class Participation (25%). Assigned readings for a given class are to be completed in advance so that all enter class prepared to discuss and to learn from each other's engagement with the reading. Only two unexcused absences are permitted without resulting in a reduction in grade.

Two midterm papers and final paper (25% each):

- An examination of the use of the Old Testament in a passage from the Gospels.
- A report on a visit to a synagogue service, making note of features that would be familiar and unfamiliar to first-century Jews, and comparing features of the liturgy to the student's own liturgical experience.
- A close comparison of a Rabbinic text and a New Testament text.

Academic Integrity:

There are few original insights remaining in the study of scripture. What one does is to enter a conversation, bringing to bear one's own experience and passions on the rich legacy of scholars and sages of the past, and to move the conversation along. Thus, there is nothing wrong with drawing on the work and contributions of others as long as those contributions are appropriately cited by use of quotation marks, footnotes and bibliographies. This course fully follows the Academic Integrity Protocol of the University's Office of Student Life.



Calendar

(Readings from Levine and Sanders are indicated; Biblical readings and additional articles on ERes will be announced in class)

The Background for Studying Jesus the Jew

Week One:

9/22 Introductions; basic Biblical and historical terminology

9/24 Basic Biblical and historical terminology (continued)
Levine, pp. 1-16 (Introduction); Sanders, pp. xiii-9 (Preface and Chapter 1)

The Jewish Religion in the First Century

Week Two: The “Judaisms” of the First Century

9/29 Sanders, Chapters 2 and 3

10/1 Sanders, Chapters 4

Week Three: Jewish Literature (Biblical and Non-)

10/6 Sanders, Chapter 5

10/8 Sanders, Chapter 6

Week Four: The Emergence of Christianity from Judaism

10/13 Levine, Chapter 1

10/15 Levine, Chapter 2

The Life and Ministry of Jesus the Jew

Week Five: The Quests for the Historical Jesus

10/20 Sanders, Chapters 7 and 8; Midterm paper #1 due

10/22 Sanders, Chapters 9

Week Six: Jesus' Birth and Ministry

10/27 Sanders, Chapters 10 and 11

10/29 Sanders, Chapters 12 and 13

Week Seven: Jesus' Death and Resurrection

11/3 Sanders, Chapters 14 and 15

11/6 Sanders, Chapter 16 and Epilogue

Jews and Christians

Week Eight: Jews and Christians: Non-Kissing Cousins

11/10 Levine, Chapter 3; Midterm paper #2 due

11/12 Levine, Chapter 4

Week Nine: Christians and Anti-Semitism

11/17 Levine, Chapter 5

11/19 Levine, Chapter 6

Week of 11/24 and 11/26: No class

Week Ten: Jews and Christians in the Twenty-First Century

12/1 Levine, Chapter 7

12/3 Levine, Epilogue; Final paper due

