

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
The Historical Jesus NTGK9413/THEO9413

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Seminary Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Description

The seminar introduces students to theological, biblical, philosophical, and methodological issues related to contemporary Historical Jesus research. Issues addressed include the nature of the task, the role of the historian, tools for the task, as well as past and contemporary personalities in Historical Jesus research. The seminar will emphasize personal reading, research, and writing.

Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with issues related to Jesus research by: (1) reading broadly on the history of Jesus research and (2) writing reports on assigned readings in the field and leading the seminar in discussion of issues related to their reading.
2. Students will demonstrate basic familiarity with the variety of methods used in Jesus research by writing reports on assigned readings over sources and methods in Jesus research and leading the seminar in discussion of issues related to their reading. Students will also submit a book review for each volume of Meier's work at the end of the semester.
3. Students will demonstrate basic familiarity with significant personalities involved in contemporary Jesus research by: (1) writing a research paper summarizing and critiquing a contemporary Jesus scholar or a particular issue in Jesus research; and (2) writing formal responses to the papers of other students.
4. Students will formalize and express their own conclusions on Jesus research by writing personal perspectives on Jesus research.

Core Values Addressed

The course will address the core values of *Doctrinal Integrity*, *Characteristic Excellence*, and *Mission Focus* most directly. Reflection on a core Christian doctrine—Christology—is central to the course. Special attention is given to clear thinking and critical reflection on the nature of

history and the task of the historian—something that is a must for academic *excellence* in this field of study. Students in the course will be called upon to work in several disciplines in order to critique and construct a view of the historical Jesus, again leading to academic excellence. *Spiritual Vitality* is also in view in that the study of Jesus is ultimately undertaken in order to know Jesus Christ more fully. The seminary is emphasizing the core value of *Doctrinal Integrity* this academic year.

Methodology

The seminar will utilize reading assignments, written reading reports, class discussion of the reading, a research paper, a formal response to another student's paper, and personal perspectives. The professor will also provide a critique of each paper individually for each student. Students will be expected to revise their papers accordingly. The primary methodology will be individual research and writing, guided by the professor.

Grading

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale.

Evaluation

Book Review	15%
Research Paper	40%
Paper Responses	20%
Required texts	10%
Personal Perspective	5%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Book Review. The purpose of the book review is to introduce the seminar to the content of the book and to situate the content in the field of Historical Jesus research. Students need to understand the background out of which statements arise. If the background of a particular section in the book is unclear, students may need to consult additional resources, including scholarly reviews of the book, to help understand the author's point.

Research Paper. Research papers must be submitted two weeks before the paper will be presented in seminar. They will be submitted electronically via DropBox and Blackboard no later than 5:00 PM on the day they are due. No hard copies of papers will be required.

For suggested topics, see the list below. Topics must be focused into specific research problems/questions to be acceptable. For examples of excellent articles that focus on a specific issue within a related topic, see William Lane Craig's scholarly articles in historical Jesus research on his website, Reasonable Faith (<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/scholarly-articles/historical-jesus>).

Paper Responses. Every student will turn in a response to each paper presented, as well as a formal response to one paper, which will be assigned by the professors. The informal responses will be placed in the appropriate Drop Box folder and will be used by the student to guide discussion of the paper. This response will include a point of appreciation, a point of disagreement or concern, a content question (What did you mean?), and a discussion question (What about . . .?).

The formal response will be read to the seminar after the paper presentation. The response will not contain a summary of the content of the paper but will be divided into five sections: what worked in the paper; what didn't work in the paper; what is unclear; what else could have been included; and a comprehensive errata section.

Both the shorter responses and the formal response should be professional, polite, and critical. We learn more from people pointing out our weaknesses than we learn from people telling us how nice we are. Both types of responses must be submitted before the beginning of the seminar at which the paper will be discussed.

Final Exam. The final exam will be taken on Blackboard after the final meeting of the semester. The exam will be based on the books, the papers, and seminar discussion. Further information about the content of the exam will be discussed at various points throughout the semester.

Texts

- James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds. *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009.
- James D. G. Dunn and Scott McKnight, eds. *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research*. Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, no. 10. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- Robert B. Stewart. *The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on the Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright*. University of America Press, 2008.

Optional Texts for Review

- Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels As Eyewitness Testimony*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Birth of the Messiah. A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1993.
- _____. *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York and London: Doubleday and Geofrey Chapman, 1994.
- Chilton, Bruce and Craig A. Evans, eds. *Studying the Historical Jesus : Evaluations of the State of Current Research*. Leiden ; New York : E.J. Brill, 1994.
- Crossan, John Dominic. *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991.

- _____. *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998
- Dunn, James D. G. *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making*, no. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.
- _____. *Beginning from Jerusalem: Christianity in the Making*, vol. 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Evans, Craig A. *Jesus*. Institute for Biblical Research Bibliographies, no. 5. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Hurtado, Larry W. *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Keener, Craig S. *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Levine, Amy-Jill, Dale C. Allison, Jr., and John Dominic Crossan, eds. *The Historical Jesus in Context*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Meier, John P. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: The Roots of the Problem and the Person*, Vol. 1. New York: Doubleday/Anchor Bible, 1991.
- Powell, Mark Allan. *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998.
- Stewart, Robert B., ed. *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
- _____. *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.
- Theissen, Gerd and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Witherington, Ben III, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*, 2d ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.
- _____. *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.
- _____. *The Christology of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- Wright, N. T. *The New Testament and the People of God. Vol. 1, Christian Origins and the Question of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.
- _____. *Jesus and the Victory of God. Vol. 2, Christian Origins and the Question of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- _____. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

Possible Paper Topics (not an exhaustive list)

N. T. Wright
 John Dominic Crossan
 Albert Schweitzer
 Marcus Borg
 Dale Allison
 Bruce Chilton
 Bart Ehrman
 William Wrede
 James D. G. Dunn

Ben Witherington
 Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza
 Gerd Theissen
 Richard Horsley
 E. P. Sanders
 Paula Fredriksen
 Alan Segal
 Robert Funk
 Geza Vermes

What Did Jesus Do at the Temple?
 Who Did Jesus Think He Was? (Prophet,
 Cynic, Sage, Social Revolutionary,
 Messiah, Son of God)
 Jesus and the Pharisees
 Jesus and the Essenes
 Jesus and Qumran
 The Gospel of Thomas as a Source for the
 Historical Jesus

The Gospel of Peter as a Source for the
 Historical Jesus
 What Was Jesus' Message?
 Jesus and Violence
 Specific passages in the New Testament and
 related literature that deal with issues
 relevant to Historical Jesus research

Seminar Schedule

8/30	Skype 9:00-11:00 Introduction to Course Discussion of required books	11/8	8:00-11:00 Paper 4, Response 4 Paper 5, Response 5
9/13	8:00-10:00, 1:00-4:00 Reading Reports 1-7		1:00-4:00 Paper 6, Response 6 Paper 7, Response 7
9/27	Skype 9:00-11:00 Reading Reports 8-9	11/15	Skype 9:00-11:00 Paper 8, Response 8
10/11	8:00-11:00 Reading Reports 10-12	12/6	8:00-11:00 Paper 9, Response 9 Paper 10, Response 10
	1:00-4:00 Paper 1, Response 1 Paper 2, Response 2		1:00-4:00 Paper 11, Response 11 Paper 12, Response 12
10/25	Skype 9:00-11:00 Paper 3, Response 3		

Presentation Order

1. Walker
2. Turner
3. Osborne
4. Richards, B
5. Richards, Z
6. Suluma
7. Benson
8. Sanders
9. McElmurray
10. Milstead
11. Cox

The Historical Jesus
A Selected Bibliography

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- Allison, Dale C. "A Plea for Thoroughgoing Eschatology." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 (1994): 651-68.
- _____. "Jesus and the Victory of Apocalyptic." In *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N. T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God*, ed. Carey C. Newman, 126-41. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999.
- _____. *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Antwi, D. J. "Did Jesus Consider His Death to Be an Atoning Sacrifice?" *Interpretation* 45 (1991): 17-28.
- Aune, David. "Magic in Early Christianity." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, Part II, *Principat*. Edited by Wolfgang Haase and Hildgard Temporini. Vol. 2.23 *Religion*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, 1507-57. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980.
- Avis, Paul, ed. *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1993.
- Bailey, Kenneth E. *Poet and Peasant/Through Peasant Eyes*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983 [1976, 1980].
- Bammel, E.; Moule, C. F. D., eds. *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Barnett, Paul W. *Jesus and the Logic of History*. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Barton, Stephen A. *The Spirituality of the Gospels*. London: SPCK, 1992.
- Barton, Stephen A. ; Stanton, Graham, eds. *Resurrection: Essays in Honour of Leslie Houlden*. London: SPCK, 1994.
- Bauckham, Richard. "Jesus, Worship of." *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 3:812-19. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Beasley-Murray, G. R. *Jesus and the Future: An Examination of the Criticism of the Eschatological Discourse, Mark 13, with Special Reference to the Little Apocalypse Theory*. London: Macmillan, 1954.

_____. *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986.

Betz, Otto. *What Do We Know About Jesus?* Trans. M. Kohl. London: SCM Press, 1968 [1965].

Betz, Hans Dieter. "Jesus and the Cynics: Survey and Analysis of a Hypothesis." *Journal of Religion* 74 (Oct. 1994): 453-75.

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Blomberg, Craig L. "Form Criticism." *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scott McKnight. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.

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Borg, Marcus J. *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus*. *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity*, Vol. 5. New York/Toronto: Edwin Mellen, 1984.

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- Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York and London: Doubleday and Geofrey Chapman, 1994.
- Buchanan, George W. *Jesus: The King and His Kingdom*. Macon, Ga. : Mercer, 1984.
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