

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
The Historical Jesus NTGK9413/THEO9413
Spring 2019

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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.
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.

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

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| Reading Review 1 | 10% |
| Reading Review 2 | 10% |
| Research Paper | 50% |
| Formal Response | 20% |
| Required Texts | 5% |
| Personal Perspective | 5% |
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| | 100% |

Reading Review. The purpose of the reading reviews is to lead the seminar in discussing 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. The reading review should be 3-5 pages single spaced and should be submitted to Blackboard by the beginning of the class period when the material is to be discussed.

Research Paper. Research papers must be submitted one week before the paper will be presented in seminar. They will be submitted electronically via Blackboard no later than 5:00 PM on the day they are due. No hard copies of papers will be required. Requirements for the paper will be discussed during the first seminar meeting.

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.

Required Texts. All students are expected to read all five of the required texts. The Dawes book and the Stewart book should be read before the first seminar meeting. The two books will not be directly discussed but will help form the background against which the other books will be discussed. The other three texts will be discussed during the reading reviews. At the end of the semester, students will report the percentage of the required reading that they completed.

Required Texts

Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, eds. *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný, eds. *Jesus Research: An International Perspective*. The First Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

James H. Charlesworth, ed. *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions*. The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

Gregory W. Dawes, ed. *The Historical Jesus Quest: Landmarks in the Search for the Jesus of History*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2000.

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

James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds. *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009.

Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds. *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*. Leiden ; New York : E.J. Brill, 1994.

- John Dominic Crossan. *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.
- James D. G. Dunn. *Beginning from Jerusalem: Christianity in the Making*, vol. 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- . *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making*, vol. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- 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.
- Craig A. Evans, *Jesus*. Institute for Biblical Research Bibliographies, no. 5. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison, Jr., and John Dominic Crossan, eds. *The Historical Jesus in Context*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Mark Allan Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998.
- Robert B. Stewart, ed. *The Message of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and Ben Witherington III in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.
- . *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
- Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Ben Witherington, III, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*, 2d ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.
- . *The Christology of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- N.T. Wright. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Vol. 2, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- . *The New Testament and the People of God*. Vol. 1, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- . *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Vol. 3, *Christian Origins and the Question 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
Amy-Jill Levine
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

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

| Date | Presentation | Student | Assignment |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1/23 | Reading Reports 1-3 | Doughty Simmons Baker | Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 1-93 Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 95-209 Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 215-92 |
| 1/30 | Reading Reports 4-6 | Grunblatt Benson Nance | Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 293-381 Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 383-480 Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 481-588 |
| 2/6 | Reading Report 7-10 | Borland Chung Hagans Gamble | Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 589-667 Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 669-773 Bock & Webb, <i>Key Events</i> , 775-853 Charlesworth & Pokorný, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 1</i> , 1-35, 56-72, 98-122 |
| 2/13 | Reading Report #2 1-3 | Doughty Simmons Baker | Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 1-99 Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 103-97 Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 201-303 |
| 2/20 | Reading Report #2 4-6 | Grunblatt Benson Nance | Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 305-435 Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 436-530 Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 531-633 |
| 2/27 | Reading Report #2 7-10 | Borland Chung Hagans Gamble | Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 634-720 Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 721-826 Charlesworth, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 2</i> , 827-933 Charlesworth & Pokorný, <i>Jesus Research, Vol. 1</i> , 123-39, 154-69, 182-229 |
| 3/6 | Paper 1 Response 1 | | |
| 3/13 | Paper 2 Response 2 | | |
| 3/20 | Spring Break | | |
| 3/27 | Paper 3 Response 3 | | |
| 4/3 | Paper 4 Response 4 | | |

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| 4/10 | Paper 5 Response 5 | | |
| 4/17 | Paper 6 Response 6 | | |
| 4/24 | Paper 7 Response 7 | | |
| 5/1 | Paper 8 Response 8 | | |
| 5/8 | Paper 9 Response 9 Paper 10 Response 10 | | |
| 5/15 | Personal Perspectives on Historical Jesus due | | |

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.

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- . "The Parables of Jesus: Current Trends and Needs in Research." In *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994.

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