

RS 155: Jesus in History and Literature  
Spring, 1999, D Hour  
Prof. Haynes  
403 Clough  
404 x-3583 (home: 272-9266)

## **Introduction**

This course is a study of Jesus of Nazareth and what can be learned about him from history literature, and culture. After an investigation of the so-called third quest for the historical Jesus and its results, the course will turn to a survey of images of Jesus that have been prominent in the history of human culture. Finally, the course will consider the various uses to which Jesus has been put in modern literature since the eighteenth century. We will focus on retellings of the life of the historical Jesus, as well as literary Christ-figures of various kinds.

## **Requirements**

### *Tasks:*

Students enrolled in this course shall:

1. *attend and participate* in class sessions, having actively read the assigned material
2. write two short *papers*, due on the dates noted in the syllabus
3. compete five *quizzes*
4. complete two *examinations*

### *Required Texts:*

\*Readings Book (available in the bookstore)

*New Oxford Annotated Bible*

Mark Allan Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History*

Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*

Jarislav, Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries*

Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson's Bible*

Leo Tolstoy, *The Gospel in Brief*

D. H. Lawrence, *The Man Who Died*

Jose Saramago, *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*

Joseph Girzone, *Joshua*

John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*

## **Explanations**

*Attendance, Preparation and Participation*--These are crucial aspects of a student's involvement in a course such as this one. *Attendance* means being present in class on time and remaining until class is concluded; *Preparation* means coming to class having

actively read the assignment and noted questions, puzzles or learnings to be shared on request. *Participation* means contributing regularly to discussions in a critical, searching and honest way, always remaining respectful of the viewpoints of others--especially your classmates.

*N.B.:* *Students may miss class three times during the semester for any reason. Students who miss class four or more times will have their A&P grades lowered accordingly.*

*Papers:* Students will write two short papers (4-5pages), with due dates noted on the schedule of topics and readings. These papers should demonstrate integration of and thoughtful responses to course material. They will be graded on content, style and mechanics and should conform to Kate L. Turabian, *Student's Guide for Writing College Papers* or some other standard writing manual. Paper assignments will be announced in class.

*Exams* There will be a mid-term and a final examination. Both exams will be take-home and will consist of objective and essay questions. The final examination will be due at the end of the exam period specified by the College for D hour courses. The mid-term exam will due on the date noted in the syllabus.

*Quizzes.* There will be five pop quizzes administered at the beginning of class over the course of the semester. The best four of these will be averaged to comprise a student's quiz grade. Performance on quizzes will also inform the instructor's impression of students' preparation for class.

*Other Activities:* Periodically, students will be asked to participate in small group discussions or complete in-class writings assignments. These activities will help inform the instructor's impression of students' preparation for class.

*Late Work:* Without an explicit extension from the professor, papers, exams, quizzes, etc. will not be accepted after the due date.

*Percentages for Tabulating Grades:*

Attendance, Preparation and Participation 20%  
Examinations 40% (20% each)  
Papers 30% (15% each)  
Quizzes 10%

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

W 1/13 Introduction

### *Part I: Jesus in History: The New Quest*

F 1/15 The Historical Jesus Powell, 1-30

### **M 1/18 MLK Day—No Class**

W 1/20 The Historical Jesus Powell, 31-64

F 1/22 The Historical Jesus Powell, 65-99  
Film: "From Jesus to Christ"

M 1/25 The Historical Jesus Powell, 113-147

W 1/27 The Historical Jesus Powell, 149-184

F 1/29 The Historical Jesus Borg, 1-39

M 2/1 The Historical Jesus Borg, 46-88  
Film: "The Jesus Summit"

W 2/3 The Historical Jesus Borg, 96-137

### *Part II: Jesus Through the Centuries*

F 2/5 The Western Jesus Pelikan, 1-45

M 2/8 The Western Jesus Pelikan, 46-82

W 2/10 The Western Jesus Pelikan, 83-121

F 2/12 The Western Jesus Pelikan, 122-156

M 2/15 The Western Jesus Pelikan, 157-181; 194-205

### *Part III: Jesus in Modern Literature*

W 2/17 Thomas Jefferson *Jefferson's Bible*, 1-62; Pelikan, 182-193

F 2/19 Thomas Jefferson *Jefferson's Bible*, 63-120  
**Paper One Due**

M 2/22 Thomas Jefferson *Jefferson's Bible*, 120-167

W 2/24	Leo Tolstoy	<i>The Gospel in Brief</i> , 7-70; Pelikan, 206-219
F 2/26	Leo Tolstoy	<i>The Gospel in Brief</i> , 71-143
M 3/1	Leo Tolstoy	<i>The Gospel in Brief</i> , 144-215
W 3/3	Fyodor Dostoevsky <b>Mid-Term Exam Due</b>	*"The Grand Inquisitor," 1-22
F 3/5	D. H. Lawrence (Special Session)	<i>The Man Who Died</i> , 3-38

### Spring Break

M 3/15	D. H. Lawrence	<i>The Man Who Died</i> , 41-85
W 3/17	Reynolds Price	* <i>Three Gospels</i> , 13-34
F 3/19	Reynolds Price	* <i>Three Gospels</i> , 231-287
M 3/22	Jose Saramago	<i>Gospel According to Jesus Christ</i> , , 1-77
W 3/24	Jose Saramago	<i>Gospel According to Jesus Christ</i> , 78-153
F 3/26	Jose Saramago	<i>Gospel According to Jesus Christ</i> , 154-222
M 3/29	Jose Saramago	<i>Gospel According to Jesus Christ</i> , 223-304
W 3/31	Jose Saramago <b>Paper Two Due</b>	<i>Gospel According to Jesus Christ</i> , 305-377

### Easter Break

#### *Part IV: Literary Christ Figures*

M 4/5	Countee Cullen	*"The Black Christ" 207-236
W 4/7	Louise Erdrich	* <i>Baptism of Desire</i> , 3-16
F 4/9	Borges and Unamuno	*"The Gospel According to Mark," 15-22; **"Saint Manuel Bueno, Martyr," 77-100
M 4/12	Joseph Girzone	<i>Joshua</i> , 1-79
W 4/14	Joseph Girzone	<i>Joshua</i> , 81-164

F 4/16	Joseph Girzone	<i>Joshua, 165-271</i>
M 4/19	John Irving	<i>Prayer for Owen Meany, 1-93</i>
W 4/21	John Irving	<i>Prayer for Owen Meany, 94-200</i>
F 4/23	John Irving	<i>Prayer for Owen Meany, 201-306</i>
M 4/26	John Irving	<i>Prayer for Owen Meany, 306-416</i>
W 4/28	John Irving	<i>Prayer for Owen Meany, 417-509</i>
F 4/30	John Irving	<i>Prayer for Owen Meany, 510-617</i>