

Canadian Bible College
Jesus, James and Paul:
Studies in the Origins and Development of Early Christianity (BST
309)
Fall 2002
Instructor: Dr Paul Spilsbury

Course Description

This course is a study of the birth and growth of the Christian movement in the first century A.D. The course is particularly concerned with tracing the emergence of the Church from its Jewish roots and its development into a predominantly Gentile community of believers. Historical, cultural, sociological and theological dimensions of this development will be covered. The format of the course will include lecture, “workshop” and “seminar” features. Workshops will involve working closely with ancient texts during class time, while seminars are times when students are required to present the results of their own reading and research to the whole class.

Course Objectives

This course aims to give students:

1. An understanding of the complex factors influencing and shaping the beginnings of the Christian movement in its historical and cultural context
2. An appreciation of the different types of evidence that have a bearing on our knowledge of the early Church.
3. The opportunity to explore the implications of Christian origins for how we understand the shape of Christian faith today.

Required Texts

Arthur G. Patzia, *The Emergence of the Church. Context, Growth, Leadership and Worship.*
InterVarsity, 2001.

Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple. Jewish Influences on Early Christianity.*
InterVarsity Press, 2002.

Course Requirements

1. To read both required texts listed above. Comprehension of these texts will be evaluated in the final exam (see below).

2. To complete a research project on one of the following subjects. Students will choose their subjects in conjunction with the instructor.

Comparative Portraits of Jesus: Vermes, Sanders, Wright	5th November 5th November
Comparative Portraits of Jesus: Crossan, Borg, Funk	12th November 12th November
James, Jude and the Family of Jesus	3rd December
Peter and the Mission to the Jews	3rd December
Paul and his Opponents: Competing Missions within Early Christianity	
John and the Johannine Community	

This assignment has two components:

A. A **class presentation** on the date specified.

Groups of students (the number will be determined by class size) will be assigned one of the topics listed above. It is the responsibility of the students in each group not only to do research on their topic, but also to arrange to meet together as often as needed in order to plan a class presentation of their subject.

Each presentation should last 90 minutes. The presentations should include (as appropriate) visual aids, class handouts, etc. Photo-copying for this purpose may be given to the instructor no later than noon on the day before the presentation.

Evaluation of this presentation will be based on evidence of careful preparation, broad understanding of the issues being discussed, and the ability to lead the class in discussion. Group members will also evaluate each other's level of contribution to the preparation of the presentation.

B. A formal **research paper**.

This paper must be 2500 words long and should follow the guidelines set out in the *University of Regina Style Sheet*. Evaluation will be based on comprehensiveness, breadth of reading, formal correctness (citations, bibliography, etc.) and grammatical and stylistic correctness. This is not a group project. Your research paper should reflect your own work.

Due Date: At the beginning of class one week after the date of your class presentation.

3. To write a comprehensive **final exam** (2 hours) based on both required texts, all lectures and class presentations.

This exam will take the form of essays on key aspects of the course material.

Date: Exam Week

Grading

- 1. Class Presentation: 30 %
- 2. Research Paper: 35 %
- 3. Final exam: 35 %

General Information

Students who are not ready to give class presentations on the date allocated will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. Late written work will be penalized by 5% for every day late. Extensions will not normally be granted. Grammar and spelling will be taken into account in the grading of all written assignments. The research paper must be proof-read by a second reader whose name should be included on the title page. The title page should also include the title of the paper, the course name and the student's name and mail-box number.