GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

RABBINIC JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY: PARALLEL ORIGINS

BLHS 435-01 Three Credits Spring Semester, 2015

Classes meet Thursdays, January 8 – April 23 5:20 – 7:50 pm
640 Mass Ave Campus Room C 216

Prof. Joseph E. Jensen jej3@georgetown.edu
Office hours: by appointment Wednesdays before class at the Mass Ave / Chinatown Campus. Other times by appointment. Use e-mail to make appointment or to contact me. I will respond to all e-mails within one business day.

Course Description

This course examines the immediate background, origins, and early development of the two phenomena that came to be identified and known as “Rabbinic Judaism” and “Christianity”, focusing on the period between 135 B.C.E and 600 C.E. The emphasis is upon what can be discerned regarding the relevant events from available literary sources, in the context of the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds of Second Temple Judaism and Hellenism and the Roman Empire. Through the methods of historical and literary investigation, attention is given to understanding and interpreting the heritage present in the sources and events themselves, without importing or imposing later ideas, values, and judgments. At the same time, it is presumed that this study can have significant relevance for reforming and shaping current attitudes regarding Christianity and Judaism.

Learning Goals and Outcomes

- Through study of and shared reflection and discussion upon modern studies of late Second Temple Judaism and of Hellenism under Roman rule, students gain a background for understanding the social and cultural environment in which both Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity sprouted, parted ways, took root, and gradually expanded throughout the known world.
- Through reading and discussion of contemporary scholarship on Jewish/Christian origins, students will develop an understanding of the importance of the distinction between “history” and “faith”, and then be able to articulate the relatedness of the two concepts.
- Through attentive readings from selected primary contemporaneous Jewish and Christian sources from late antiquity students will gain a familiarity with the resources available for reconstructing Jewish and Christian origins, and the difficulties that arise from the nature of the sources. Selections will include texts from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, Philo, the Mishnah and Gemara, the Apostolic and Early Christian Fathers, and Eusebius.
Students will develop an appreciation for the methods of historical and literary critical investigation, as well as the cultural, sociological, and anthropological analytical methods used in the study of ancient sources to arrive at more accurate understandings of the parallel evolutions of early Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity.

Through class participation, discussion and written assignments students will explore and reflect upon the developments in understanding about the social and communal dimensions of humanity, especially regarding the place of ethics and justice, as these developments are reflected in the diverse Judaism of the first century C.E., and in the early expressions, formulations, and practices of Rabbinic Jewish faith and of Christian faith that emerged.

In keeping with the goals and themes of the Liberal Studies program, students will be able to address how Jewish / Christian origins and their parallel early histories have contributed to and shaped the understandings of relationships between the human and the divine, the individual and society, and identity and difference.

In addition to these goals, students will further develop their writing, oral communication, and analytical skills. Specifically, students will be expected to:

- Write clear, precise papers that develop rigorous arguments and provide solid evidence for their claims.
- Orally present their ideas in a clear, compelling, and confident manner.
- Develop and hone an understanding of social, historical, and literary methodologies for the analysis and interpretation of ancient sources.

Textbooks [Required. Available at the GU Bookstore]


In addition to readings from the textbook, other material will also be posted on Blackboard as reading assignments for individual classes, indicated below.

Requirements and Grading

WEEKLY RESPONSES

Each week I will post a question about the week’s readings on Blackboard. Each week you must prepare a one paragraph response to this question. The first sentence of your paragraph must articulate a clear thesis that answers the question. The rest of the paragraph should elaborate on
this answer. The paragraphs are intended to be concise distillations of your thoughts on the topic, so they should be no more than 200 words at the very most.

For the first week’s readings and question your written response is due on Turnitin by Midnight, January 11, 2015. This first assignment will be graded, with feedback, prior to the second class on January 15.

For the following weeks, your response to the weekly question must be posted on the Blackboard forum for this class by noon on the Tuesday prior to the class. [Your response for the second class, Thursday, January 15, is due on the Blackboard forum at noon Tuesday, January, 13].

Students are expected to read each other’s response paragraphs before class, so that these responses can provide a starting point for class discussion. You are also encouraged to respond on the Blackboard forum to other students’ postings (contributions on the forum will count toward your participation grade). I will regularly call on students to present their responses in class, so you must be prepared to present your thesis before the other students.

These paragraphs are intended as initial thoughts on the assigned readings, but they are expected to be polished written products, so think carefully about how best to express your ideas and review your work before posting. These weekly responses account for 15 percent of your grade for the course.

PAPERS. There will be three papers for this course.

The first two papers are to be 5-6 pages each. I will provide topics for each. You must submit a brief proposal outlining the general direction of your argument. Each paper accounts for 15 percent of your grade.

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<tr>
<th>First paper proposal due</th>
<th>January 29</th>
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<td>Paper due</td>
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<th>Second paper proposal due</th>
<th>February 26</th>
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<td>Paper due</td>
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The third and final paper is to be a research paper of twelve to fourteen pages, I will provide topics for the paper, although you are welcome to propose your own topic. You are required to submit a brief proposal outlining the general direction of your argument, along with a preliminary bibliography. The paper accounts for 40 percent of your grade.

| Topic, proposal, and preliminary bibliography for final paper due March 26 | May 8 |

Papers will be accepted late (but by no more than a week) only for exceptional reasons and with prior permission of the professor. Late papers may bring a lower grade at the discretion of the faculty.
Papers and essays submitted for this course must consistently use the Modern Language Association [MLA] system of bibliographic references to indicate the sources for all quotations, and to indicate the sources for all concepts and ideas that were acquired in researching and preparing the essay or paper. If you have questions about MLA style and formatting, make an appointment with the Librarian in the Mass Ave Resource Center on C2. For additional help consult the OWL at Perdue University site:

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

The assigned papers require that the student spend time in an academic Library examining biblical dictionaries and commentaries. Students will find basic reference texts in Georgetown’s Lauinger Library, but much more in the Woodstock Theological Library on the Ground Floor of the Lauinger Library. The Woodstock Library’s hours are not the same as for the Lauinger library, and is not open on Weekends. Students should check ahead about library hours and access especially during holidays when planning to do their research. Some students may find it more convenient to use the Mullen Library at Catholic University of America, where, as Georgetown students, they do have access and check out privileges. Again, check ahead for hours and plan ahead. (Catholic U is adjacent to the Brookland Station on the Red Line).

Papers are to be submitted to Turnitin [see below under Georgetown Honor System]. Papers will be graded on Turnitin within two weeks of receipt.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION. The final 15 percent of your grade will be determined by your presence and participation in class discussion and in discussions on Blackboard. Your participation should reflect your having completed the assigned readings. The success of this class is in part dependent on your preparation and on your willingness to contribute to the discussion.

Attendance is essential. This is a 3 credit course that meets once a week. Missing a single class is the equivalent of missing a week of classes in a more traditional class. On the occasion of a second absence the student’s name will be forwarded to Dean Kiernan. Classes will begin and end on time. Students are expected to be present for the entire class. Arriving late is disruptive to the instructor and the class. Repeated late arrival will be counted as an absence.

Instructional Continuity. In the event that the University or the Massachusetts Avenue Campus is closed at a scheduled class time, the professor will conduct the class using Webinar technology. The Webinar class will be recorded for those students who are not able to log onto the session at the time it is offered.

GRADING. This is a content intensive course. Students should expect to spend on average 300 minutes [5 hours] each week in reading, preparing assignments, and writing essays and papers for this course. Keeping up with the readings and written assignments is essential. There are no tests and no final exam for this course. Evaluation of student performance is based on attendance, preparation reflected in active class participation, the weekly responses, and timely
submission of the three assigned papers.

The final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

- 93-100% = A
- 90 - 92% = A-
- 87 - 89% = B+
- 83 - 86% = B
- 80 - 82% = B-
- 77 - 79% = C+
- 73 - 76% = C
- 70 - 72% = C-
- 67 - 69% = D+
- 60 - 66% = D
- Below 60% = F

INCOMPLETES. **Incomplete grades must be requested of the Associate Dean BEFOR the last regular class (April 23, 2015).** Should you have an exceptional situation that you believe requires that you request an incomplete, you must discuss the matter with Dean Kiernan and with me, prepare the request form for my signature, and deliver the form to Dean Kiernan prior to the deadline. An incomplete may bring a lower grade at my discretion.

WITHDRAWING. A student may withdraw from the course at any time up until March 16, 2015, (the date published in the University Calendar); however, the student is responsible for filling out the appropriate forms, obtaining the necessary signatures, and properly submitting the paperwork in time to meet the published deadline to avoid receiving a grade of “F”.

Veterans and active duty military personnel are welcome. Those with special circumstances requiring accommodation (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) should discuss these in advance if possible with the professor. Every effort will be made to work with such students consistent with the integrity of the academic process.

Disabilities Notice: Under federal law, students who have physical or cognitive disabilities that might impair their classroom performance can request accommodations that will better enable them to meet the course requirements. However, such accommodations are not automatic. The student must request them and provide the necessary medical documentation, and the student must complete this process every semester. Accommodations are only effective for assignments AFTER the accommodation is approved by the university. Thus, if you believe that you may qualify for an accommodation for this spring semester, it is your responsibility to communicate with the Academic Resource Center (http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/) as soon as possible. Please contact the Center directly if you have questions or concerns about this process. All such accommodations must be arranged through the Center, not directly with the professor.

Georgetown Honor System: All students are expected to follow Georgetown=s honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53516.html and in particular have read the following documents: **Honor Council Pamphlet**, **What Is Plagiarism?**, **Sanctioning Guidelines**, and **Expedited Sanctioning Process**. Please also note the honor code guidelines with respect to the use of library materials.
**Turnitin:**
Students agree that by taking this course all required journals and papers will be subject to submission for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be added as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

> In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor system: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Your professor is required to report any suspicion of a violation of the honor system to the Georgetown University’s Honor Council for investigation. In the event of a confirmed case of academic misconduct on the part of a student, the student may receive an “F” for the assignment, in addition to any action taken by the Honor Council.

**Schedule for Class Sessions and Reading Assignments**

*(Note: This Schedule may be subject to modification)*

**Thursday, January, 8**
Course Introduction
Late Second Temple Judaism as background for the Study of Jewish / Christian Origins.

Student Preparation for this class:
Write a two-page self introduction to be turned in. Provide something about your background, goals and ambitions, where you are in your program, courses you have taken or are taking, expectations for this course. If you wish, share something about other religion related courses you have taken, and your experiences with them. Also, if you wish, it is sometimes helpful for your professor to know something about your past and/or present religious affiliation(s).

From *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism*
Become familiar with “Abbreviations”, p. ix
Become familiar with map “The Roman World”, pp. x-xi
Become familiar with “Timelines”, p. xii-xiii
Read: Geza Vermes, “Introduction: Parallel History Preview”, p. xix-xxiv

Read: “The Closing of the Old Testament” from Lawrence Boadt, Reading the Old Testament, pp 517-529 [Blackboard]
Read: John J. Collins, “Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship” pp. 1-23 in
Sunday, January 11
Students’ first weekly response due on Turnitin at midnight.

Thursday, January 15
Palestine in the 1st Century C.E.

Student Preparation for this class:


Thursday, January 22
Historical Jesus

Student Preparation for this class:
Read: Ab nthony Tambasco, “The Quest for the Historical Jesus” [Blackboard]


Thursday, January 29
Proposal for First Paper Due
Early Christianity and Early Judaism

Student Preparation for this class:


Thursday, February 5
Sources For the Study of Early Rabbinic Judaism

Student Preparation for this class:

Read: E. Mary Smallwood, “Philo and Josephus as Historians of the Same


Thursday, February 12
Christians within Late Second Temple Judaism

Student Preparation for this class:


Thursday, February 19
First Paper due
Parting the ways – Independent Christianity

Student Preparation for this class:


Thursday, February 26
Second paper proposal due
Parting of the ways – Judaism between the Revolts

Student Preparation for this class:


Thursday, March 5
Christianity from Paul to Constantine

Student Preparation for this class:

Read: Eusibius, *History of the Church* 3.5.3 [Blackboard]

Thursday, March 12: Spring Break, no class.

Thursday, March 19  Second paper due
Rabbinic Judaism between Bar-Kokhba’s Revolt and Judah ha-Nasi (Judah the Prince)

Student Preparation for this class: From *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* read:
[Blackboard]

Thursday, March 26  Final Paper topic, proposal, and preliminary bibliography due
Rabbinic Judaism in Palestine and Babylon: 220 – 614 C.E.

Student Preparation for this class: From *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* read:
[blackboard]
[Blackboard]

Thursday, April 2: No Class Easter Break

Thursday, April 9
Imperial Christianity

Student Preparation for this class: From *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* read:
[Blackboard].

Thursday, April 16
Christians and Jews: Parallel Origins
Student Preparation for this class: From *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* read: James H. Charlesworth, “Christians and Jews in the First Six Centuries,” pp. 331 – 358.

Thursday, April 23 – Conclusion and Wrap Up Session

Student Preparation for this class: Students will prepare for a final student led and guided class discussion reflecting insights regarding the course as a whole. Review the stated course objectives and outcomes, and consider how the course did and did not fulfill those ends. In addition give consideration to the course’s pertinence to the major themes of the core curriculum, (1) The Human and the Divine; (2) The Individual and Society; (3) Identity and Difference, and the sub-themes, (1) Women and Men and gender roles; (2) Authority: how it is construed, exercised, and challenged; (3) Ethics, with an emphasis on justice..

Friday, May 8 Final Paper due.