Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

RELS 320.1 (#74916)  Tu Th 9:40-11:00 AM
Fall 2012        JRH 204

This course explores the beginnings of Judaism and Christianity in the ancient world. We trace the development of early Jewish and Christian social groups, literary traditions, and religious practices, as the biblical heritage of ancient Israel was adopted and adapted in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean. Our story begins with the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple in 586 B.C.E., and ends with the rise of Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism in the Roman Empire of first centuries C.E. This is a story of continuity and change, unity and diversity, and cultural creation amid cultural conflict. Students will be introduced to the modern study of ancient Jewish and Christian literature, and will learn how a local temple culture in ancient West Asia grew into two closely related, worldwide “religions of the book” that remain with us today.

Required Texts (all available for purchase at the UM Bookstore):
1. A course packet of selected readings
2. Hershel Shanks, ed., Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of their Origins and Early Developments (CRJ)
4. James Vanderkam, An Introduction to Early Judaism (IEJ)
5. An NRSV Bible translation, with Apocrypha (e.g. HarperCollins Study Bible)
5. Additional readings listed in this syllabus are available on e-reserve. These e-reserve readings may be accessed through the Mansfield Library Course Reserves website (http://eres.lib.umt.edu/eres/) using the course password “RLST320”
* = optional reading

Course Requirements:
1. Attendance: Regular attendance is required for this course (see course policies below). Preparation for and participation in class meetings is expected and essential.
2. Readings: Plan to complete all readings before the class on which they are assigned. Bring the assigned readings to class with you.
3. Student Presentations: Each student will give two brief presentations to the class, one on a piece of ancient literature, one on a piece of modern scholarship.
3. Midterm: A take-home midterm essay exam is due in class on Tuesday October 16.
4. Final paper: A paper of ca. 10-12 pages is due in class on Tuesday December 4.
4. Final exam: A final exam will be given on Monday December 10, 10:10 am - 12:10 pm.
Grading:
1. Attendance and class participation: 15%
2. Student presentations: 10%
3. Midterm exam: 20%
4. Final paper: 35%
5. Final exam: 20%

Course Policies:
1) There will be no make-up exams or extensions unless the student has made arrangements at least a week ahead of time. Early departures will be counted as absences. If you skip a class meeting, it is your responsibility to obtain from a classmate any class notes and other assignment and scheduling information discussed during your absence.

2) Students are allowed two cuts, no penalties or questions asked. Each additional cut (including early departures from class) will reduce the attendance and participation grade by 10% (that is, 1.5% of your final grade); missing more than 8 classes will result in failure for the course.

3) This is a course about religion as an academic subject and the development of Judaism and Christianity in historical context. This is not a class that teaches religion or religious doctrine from a religious and/or devotional perspective. In this class, we will be examining early Jewish, Christian, and other Greco-Roman texts and traditions in an academic and secular setting. We will be treating these texts as ancient documents open to questioning, examination, criticism, and interpretation. An interest in exploring new ideas and new methods of examining these documents is essential. This class is not a forum for expressions of personal theology.

4) Plagiarism – the presentation of others’ work as your own – is an offense punishable by course failure and/or expulsion. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and all references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the University guidelines, or make an appointment to see the instructor to discuss this. Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification or any other form of academic dishonesty will fail this course and the incident will be reported to the Dean.
Course Schedule

(Note: This schedule may change as our course develops. Regular attendance will ensure that you remain updated on any possible changes)

Tuesday 8/28

Introductions: Course overview and mechanics

Part I: Foundations: The Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

Thursday 8/30

The Hebrew Bible: Structure, Themes, Traditions

Gen 9:1-17; 15; 17; Exod 24:1-8; 34:1-27 (Covenant)
Exod 1, 12-15 (Egypt/Exodus)
Exod 19-20 (Sinai/Legislation)
Exod 3; Deut 4:1-40; 6: 4-25; 12:2-5, 29-32; 26:5-9 (God/Monolatry)
1 Sam 8; Deut 17:14-20; 2 Sam 7; Ps 132 (Kingship/Jerusalem)
Jer 1, 7; Mic 3:9-12 (Prophecy)
Lev 1; 8-9; 11-13; Num 3:5-10; 28-30 (Priest/Temple/Cult/Holiness/Purity)


Tuesday 9/4

Exile

2 Kgs 17-25; Ps 137; Lam 1; Jer 29:1-14; Ezek 3, 11, 20:1-44, 37:1-14


Part II: From Ancient Israel to Ancient Judaism: Persia and The Early Second Temple Period

Thursday 9/6 [note: class will end a bit early on 9/6 due to campus lecture]

Return and Restoration: The Persian Province of Yehud

Isa 40:1-5; 44:24-28; 45:1-7
Ezra 1-6
The Cyrus Cylinder (TT, 3.1.2)

IEJ, 1-11


Tuesday 9/11

Judaism in the Persian Period: Temples and Texts

Hag 1-2; Mal 2-3; Zech 1, 8
Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah 7-8, 10
The Elephantine Papyri (TT, 3.2.1-4 and e-reserve)

IEJ, 49-52, 147-50, 193-211


Thursday 9/13 [note: class will end a bit early on 9/13 due to campus lecture]

Judaism in the Persian Period: Community and Canonization

TT, 3.7.1-4


Part III: The Greek Age: Hellenism and Judaism

Tuesday 9/18

Alexander and Hellenistic Judea; The Maccabees and Hasmonean Historiography

1 Maccabees 1-2; 4:36-61; 13-14; 2 Maccabees 1-10:8, 15
(Cf. Josephus, Antiquities, XIII [selections] [TT, 6.1])

IEJ, 11-32

L. Levine, “The Age of Hellenism: Alexander the Great and the Rise and Fall of the Hasmonean Kingdoms,” in Ancient Israel, ed. H. Shanks, 231-64 (e-reserve)
Thursday 9/20

**Hellenism and Jewish Identity**


Tuesday 9/25, Thursday 9/27, Tuesday 10/2

**Literature of the Second Temple Period: “Apocrypha,” “Pseudepigrapha”**

*Student presentations on selected texts*: Develop your Second Temple literature presentations with a view to preparing your midterm essay.


*IEJ*, 53-146

*TT*, 5.6.1-6; 7.1.1-13; 7.2.1-5

**Part IV. Roman Imperialism and Jewish Sectarianism**

Thursday 10/4

**The Rise of Rome: Jews and Judaism in the Roman Empire**

*IEJ*, 32-49

Letter of Claudius to Alexandrians (*course pack*)


L. H. Feldman, “Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism in the First Century” in *CRJ*

Tuesday 10/9

**Jewish Sectarianism: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes**

*TT*, 6.2.1-12, 6.3.1-4 (Josephus, *War* 1.110-14; II.119-66; *Antiquities* XVIII:11-25; *Life* 1-16; Mark 2-3; Mishnah: *Yadaim* 4:6-8; *Hagigah* 2:7; *Makkot* 1:6; Pliny, *Natural History* V:xv)

*IEJ*, 175-93
Thursday 10/11, Tuesday 10/16 *Take-home midterm exam due in class Tuesday 10/16*

**Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls**

* TT, 7.3.1-7 (Damascus Document, Rule, 4QMMT (Halakhic Letter), Habakkuk Pesher, Temple Scroll, War Scroll)

* IEJ, 150-73


*L. Schiffman, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism” *(e-reserve)*

*L. Schiffman, “The Origin and Early History of the Qumran Sect” *(e-reserve)*

Thursday 10/18

**The Wars with Rome I**

* TT, 9.1-6


Tuesday 10/23

**The Wars with Rome II**

*Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period – The Cave of Letters* *(e-reserve)*


L. Levine, “Judaism from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the End of the Second Jewish Revolt: 70-135 C.E.,” in *CRJ*

Thursday 10/25

**Judaism and Gender in Greco-Roman Judea**


*M. Goodman, “Babatha’s Story” *(e-reserve)*

Part V. The Emergence of Christianity

Tuesday 10/30
**Narratives of Christian Origins**
E. P. Sanders, “The Life of Jesus,” in *CRJ*
*Acts*
*“Holy Men and Women”* (*e-reserve*)

Thursday 11/1
**Library Research Orientation with Sue Samson, Humanities Librarian**
Class will meet in the Student Learning Center (MLIB 283), 9:40-11:00am

*Assignment to prepare for this day:* 1) Write one paragraph describing your chosen topic for your final research paper; 2) List at least two secondary sources on your topic that are not included in this course syllabus.

Tuesday 11/6 (Election day)

Thursday 11/8
**Paul, Judaism, and the earliest Christian Communities**
Galatians
Romans 3, 9-11
H. C. Kee, “After the Crucifixion--Christianity through Paul,” in *CRJ*

Tuesday 11/13
**The Jesus Movement and Jewish Sectarianism**
Matthew

Thursday 11/15
**Christianity in the Greco-Roman World: Social Relations**
Ignatius, *Letter to the Roman* (*e-reserve*); 1 Timothy; Titus
*R. Wilken, The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (selections) (*e-reserve*)
*Harold W. Attridge, “Christianity from the Destruction of Jerusalem to Constantine's Adoption of the New Religion: 70-312 C.E.,” in *CRJ*
Tuesday 11/20, Thursday 11/22 no class (academic conference, Thanksgiving)

Part VI. The Rise of the Rabbis

Tuesday 11/27

Who Were the Rabbis?


S. Cohen, “Judaism to the Mishnah: 135-220 C.E.,” in CRJ

*S. Cohen, “The Place of the Rabbi in Jewish Society of the Second Century” (e-reserve)

Please also print out and bring to class the following short e-reserve documents:
- Rabbinic Geography; Tannaitic and Amoraic Periods
- Mishnah: Avot (the chain of tradition)
- Babylonian Talmud Gittin 55b-57a (Y. ben Zakkai's escape from Jerusalem)
- Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 30b-31a (the patience of Hillel)

Part VII: Judaism, Christianity, and Greco-Roman Culture: Interactions and Identities

Thursday 11/29

Institutions of the Rabbinic Movement: Synagogues and Sages

Handout: Ancient Synagogues (e-reserve: please print out and bring to class)


Tuesday 12/4 Final Essay due in class today

Rabbinic Literature: Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash

Mishnah and Talmud (selections: TT, 10.1-10.6)

I. M. Gafni, “The World of the Talmud: From the Mishnah to the Arab Conquest,” in CRJ
Thursday 12/6

“The Parting of the Ways”


*J. H. Charlesworth, “Christians and Jews in the First Six Centuries,” in CRJ

Final Exam: Monday December 10, 10:10 am - 12:10 pm.