



REL 3250

Jesus and the Early Christians

Section: U01

In Person

Fall Term 2026

Course Meeting Information

Class meeting times	
Day:	TR
Time:	11:00 AM - 12:15 AM
Location:	DM 144

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

This semester we will examine the life and teachings of Jesus and the growth and development of early Christianity. This study will be conducted mainly

through the writings of the New Testament, but where appropriate we will also examine other sources such as new archaeological discoveries, various writings from the Greco-Roman world, and Christian apocrypha. In addition, we will look at the methods that scholars have developed for studying the New Testament and discuss their uses and limitations.

Textbook and Course Materials

Introducing the New Testament 4th ed., ISBN13: 978-0800697501.

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: John Drane

Publisher: Fortress Press

Publication Date: 2019

Copyright Date: 2019

ISBN 10: 1912552116

ISBN 13: 978-0800697501

Chapters/Pages: All

Panther Book Pack

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Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Know the historical background of the New Testament writings

Understand the issues of authorship, date and place as they affect the interpretation of the texts

Demonstrate awareness of the ways that scholars put together evidence from various sources to arrive at conclusions about the aims of Jesus

Show familiarity with the outline of the early Christian movement after the time of Jesus

Appreciate both the unity and diversity of the early church

Expectations of the Course

AI Policy: Using an AI Natural Language Model (such as ChatGPT) to complete a writing assignment is strictly forbidden in this course. Any evidence of such use will result in being reported to Student Conduct & Academic Integrity for possible disciplinary action.

Attendance: An absolutely essential part of the course! Some material will inevitably be covered in class that is not to be found in the textbook so that each absence will affect your ability to do well on the tests. Make sure to come to class regularly.

Academic Honesty: Each student is expected to do his or her own work. It is absolutely unacceptable to submit someone else's work as your own. This is plagiarism and will result in being reported to Student Conduct & Academic Integrity for possible disciplinary action. Thus, when in the course of writing your paper you quote or paraphrase an idea found in one of your sources you must give credit to the original author (usually by means of a footnote).

Academic Conduct: Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational

mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Freedom and Integrity: Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the integrity of the University. The principles of academic freedom are integral to the conception of the University as a community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of truth and the communication of knowledge in an atmosphere of tolerance and freedom. The University serves the common good through teaching, research, scholarship/creative activities, and service. The fulfillment of these functions rests upon the preservation of the intellectual freedoms of teaching, expression, research, and debate. We affirm that academic freedom is a protected right in addition to a faculty member's constitutionally protected freedom of expression and is fundamental to the faculty member's responsibility to seek and to state truth as he or she sees it.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint of belief.

Syllabus Note on Internet Use in Research: You may cite from the internet in your term papers, but you must be discerning. Anyone can post "information" on the internet, and thus some of what is there is inaccurate, incomplete, and sometimes even blatantly untrue. As in print collections in libraries, only scholarly articles on the internet are acceptable as sources for research papers.

Internet articles should ideally have authors. Some will list individual authors; others will list institutions as sources. The credibility of the information depends on the credibility of the source. Acceptable sources include individual scholars with academic credentials, educational institutions (e.g., Institute of Reformation History, Princeton University), publicly supported national or international institutions (e.g. the World Health Organization or the National Institutes of Health) or other well known institutions with credible reputations (e.g. the World Council of Churches, the Children's Defense Fund). Most educational institutions

have addresses which end with the letters “edu.” You must use your judgment since many reputable institutions may not be well known by most students. Also, sometimes websites may list a university as the place from which the material emanates, but which does not sponsor or in any way support the information on that site. (You could set up a website that lists FIU as its origin, and purports that the Pope died last month and was replaced by a ringer!).

There will be some internet sources the reliability of which will be difficult to assess. Sometimes you must judge by the tone and range of an article. If it reads like a magazine or newspaper article and cites none of the sources it used, it is not scholarly. You should ask whether the article demonstrates balance: Does it attempt to tell all sides of the story? Does it ask critical questions of the material it covers? How well does its treatment accord with other treatments of the same material you have found? If you would really like to cite an internet article but have doubts about its acceptability, look up the institution or the author on the internet or in the library. Has the author or institution published other works? Have those been reviewed or cited by other scholars?

When you cite from the internet, you must list the entire address on the web where you found the information and the date you accessed it. When applicable you must also note any search terms needed within the website to find this particular article when these do not appear within the address.

The following are some bibliographic entries:

Musa, Edward, “The Art of the Maya.”

<http://www.unescape.org/pop/journal/v1onaal.htm>. 4/27/25.

Zarabozo, Jamaal, “Is Family Planning Allowed in Islam?”

<http://www.albany.edu/~ha4934/famplan.html>. 10/21/24.

Assignments & Assessments

Your grade for this course will be based on the following components:

Quizzes 25%

Midterm 25%

Final 25%

Term Paper (6-9 pages) 25%

Quizzes: There will be six quizzes based on the textbook readings through the course of the semester. The quizzes will be multiple choice or short answer. Your lowest score from the semester will be dropped. At the end of the semester, the scores from the five best tests will be added and the grading scale will be as follows:

A 90-100

A- 86-89

B+ 82-85

B 75-81

B- 71-74

C+ 67-70

C 60-66

D 50-59

F below 50

Examinations: Both midterm and final examinations will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching and essay questions. The final examination is not cumulative—it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

Term Paper: Each student will write a term paper on some topic relating to the course that particularly interests him or her. The topic must receive the approval of the instructor before it is handed in. The paper itself should be 6-9 pages in length, excluding bibliography, with lines double-spaced. Margins for the pages should be 1 inch on all sides and the style should conform to either that of MLA or the Chicago Manual of Style. In the body of the paper you may use either footnotes or endnotes.

Grading

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	60-69
F	less than 59

Schedule of Topics

1. [August 25] Introduction. Issues in the Study of the New Testament.

Read: *INT*: pp. 242-277; 306-327, 605-628 (or pp. 208-222, 437-453 in 3rd ed.)

Read: *INT*, pp. 208-222, 437-453 or *IB*, pp. 370-375 [nothing corresponding to 208-216]

“Can we Trust the Gospels?”], 628-644.

2 [August 27] Background Study: Biblical History

Read: *INT*, pp. 56-93 (or pp. 27-45 in 3rd ed.).

3 [September 1] Background Study: The Roman Empire.

Read: *INT*, pp. 20-53 (or pp. 10-27 in 3rd ed.)

4 [September 3] What is a Gospel? How do the Gospels Relate to Each Other?

Read: *INT*, pp. 242-277 (or pp. 161-186, 194-199 in 3rd ed.)

Read: *INT*, pp. 161-186, 194-199 or *IB*, pp. 409-427, 435-440 [nothing corresponding to p.175-176, 182-186].

NT: The Gospel of Matthew.

Quiz 1: September 3-6

5 [September 8] Oral Traditions to Written Forms.

Read: *INT*, pp. 187-191 or *IB*, pp. 428-432.

NT: The Gospel of Mark.

6 [September 10] Putting Pen to Paper and Writing Things Down.

Read: *INT*, pp. 191-194 or *IB*, pp. 432-435.

NT: The Gospel of Luke.

Quiz 2: September 10-14

7 [September 15] The Gospel of John.

Read:

Read: *INT*, pp. 199-207 or *IB*, pp. 440-448.

NT: The Gospel of John.

8 [September 17] Dates and Authors.

9 [September 22] Putting Together the Life of Jesus: Some Recent Proposals.

Read: *INT*, pp. 46-65 or *IB*, pp. 318-375 [nothing corresponding to 48-49, 55-57, 64-65].

10 [September 24] The Teaching of Jesus.

Read: *INT*, pp. 66-75, 86-101, 109-123 or *IB*, pp. 330-339, 350-363 [nothing corresponding to p. 100; p. 362= p.123].

Quiz 3: September 24-27

11 [September 29] The Miracles of Jesus

Read: *INT*, pp. 101-108 or *IB*, pp. 363-369.

12 [October 1] Jesus as Son of Man and Son of God.

Read: *INT*, pp. 76-85 or *IB*, pp. 340-349.

13 [October 6] Accounts of the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Read: *INT*, pp. 124-160 or *IB*, pp. 376-407 [nothing corresponding to pp. 138-139].

14 [October 8] **Midterm Examination.**

15 [October 13] The Acts of the Apostles.

Read: *INT*, pp. 224-251 or *IB*, pp. 449-4 [nothing corresponding to pp. 235, 243-244, 251].

16 [October 15] The Life of Paul.

Read: *INT*, pp. 252-277 or *IB*, pp. 471-494 [nothing corresponding to p. 275].

Quiz 4: October 15-18

17 [October 20] The Life of Paul—cont'd.

Read: *INT*, pp. 278-287 or *IB*, pp. 495-504.

18 [October 22] The Letters to the Thessalonians.

Read: *INT*, pp. 296-302 or *IB*, pp. 513-520.

NT: 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

Quiz 5: October 22-26

19 [October 27] The Letters to the Corinthians.

Read: *INT*, pp. 303-319 or *IB*, pp. 521-537.

NT: 1 Corinthians.

20 [October 29] The Letters to the Corinthians—cont'd.

NT: 2 Corinthians.

21 [November 3] The Letter to the Galatians.

Read: *INT*, pp. 287-294 or *IB*, pp. 504-511.

NT: Galatians.

22 [November 5] The Letter to the Romans.

Read: *INT*, pp. 319-333 or *IB*, pp. 537-549, 551.

NT: Romans.

Quiz 6: November 5-8

23 [November 10] Paul's Doctrine of Justification.

Read: *INT*, pp. 349-374 or *IB*, pp. 550, 562-564 [nothing corresponding to pp. 349-370].

24 [November 12] Philippians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Colossians.

Read: *INT*, pp. 334-343 or *IB*, pp. 552-561.

NT: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon.

25 [November 17] The Pastoral Epistles.

Read: *INT*, pp. 344-348 or *IB*, pp. 565-569.

NT: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus.

26 [November 19] Hebrews and James.

Read: *INT*, pp. 375-391 or *IB*, pp. 571-585 [nothing corresponding to pp. 390-391].

NT: Hebrews and James.

27 [November 24] The Petrine Epistles, Jude, and the Johannine Epistles.

Read: *INT*, pp. 392-403, 416-423 or *IB*, pp. 586-597, 609-614 [nothing corresponding to

pp. 422-423].

NT: 1 & 2 Peter, Jude, 1-3 John.

November 26—No class, Thanksgiving!

28 [December 1] Revelation.

Read: *INT*, pp. 404-416 or *IB*, pp. 598-609.

NT: Revelation.

Paper due December 1.

29. [December 3] Conclusion

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas, which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)** is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the OCR team through report.fiu.edu.