**RELG 316: Imagining Jesus from Antiquity to the Present**

**Course Description**
Conceptions and representations of Jesus in antiquity up to the present; including the gospel traditions as well as literature, art, and film.

This course investigates the ways that the figure of Jesus has been used in social formation, cultural production, personal piety, and moral education. After a consideration of the sparse historical evidence about the life of Jesus, students will examine the ways that the earliest Christians adapted folk-traditions about Jesus to fit the various cultural expectations of their day. The course will consider topics such as the literary genre of the “gospel,” the different portrayals of Jesus in ancient gospels, the official sanction of certain portrayals over others (canonization), Christian art and iconography, the interest in relics, discussions about the ethnicity of Jesus, Jesus and popular culture, and Jesus in the news-media. We will focus on contextualizing and historicizing the varied interests in the person of Jesus, and will use different theoretical approaches to explain the persistent interest in such an elusive historical figure.

**Learning Objectives**
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the primary sources available for an historical reconstruction of the life of Jesus and to critically engage various scholarly attempts to interpret these sources;

- Understand the ways that authors, artists, and other cultural producers have imagined and propagated particular conceptions of the figure of Jesus;

- Identify current issues and debates concerning the various portrayals of Jesus and use a variety of theories to explain their social significance.

**Textbooks**


Other assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard.
Grading Scheme

Students taking the course on a pass/fail basis must pass the final exam to receive credit for the course. Letter grades will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-90</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-80</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-70</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>66-60</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-0</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Course Requirements

Attendance (25% of the final grade)

Each class session will include some form of written assessment. This could take the shape of in-class writing on a prompt given by the professor, a quiz, or a short response to the day's discussion or lecture. Student may make up these assignments only with prior permission from the professor.

Participation (25% of the final grade)

The student's contribution to in-class group projects and discussions will be counted toward the participation grade.

Midterm Exam/Project (25% of the final grade)

TBD

Final Exam/Project (25% of the final grade)

TBD

Course Schedule

Jan. 9-13:  The Search for the Historical Jesus
Jan. 16-20: Jesus in the Letters of Paul
Jan. 30-Feb.3: Gospel Traditions Part Two (John and Thomas)
Feb. 6-10:  Gospel Traditions Part Three (Judas, Mary, Philip, Secret Gospel of Mark)
Feb. 13-17: Visual Representations Part One (paintings, frescoes, architecture)
Feb. 20-24: Visual Representations Part Two (icons, relics, and mystic imagery)
Feb. 27-Mar.2: Review and Midterm
Mar. 5-9:  Jesus in the Scholarly Imagination
Mar. 12-16: Jesus and Ethnicity, Sex, and Gender
Mar. 19-23: Jesus as a Paradigm of Virtue (children’s bibles, toys, videos, and cartoons)
Mar. 26-30: Jesus in Theater and Film Part One
Apr. 2-6:  Jesus in Theater and Film Part Two
Apr. 9-13: Jesus in the News Media
Apr. 16-20: Student Presentations