Jesus and the Gospels

Instructor: Rick Rogers
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Course Times: TR 11:00-12:15
Course Location: 112 Roosevelt Hall
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**DESCRIPTION:** This multi-media course is an introduction to a literary analysis of the Gospel traditions and an historical examination of the Jesus story. Included is an archaeological investigation of Jesus’ first-century CE world. This course presumes no previous knowledge of the subject on the part of students. The first half of the course is an introduction to the field of Gospel studies and a detailed examination of the distinctive emphases of the four canonical Gospels. Students will learn about five major methodologies in Gospel studies (textual, source, redaction, form and tradition criticism) so that they can develop their own scholarly perspectives and skill in reading Gospel literature. The second half of the course is an introduction to Jesus studies, beginning with an evaluation of several non-canonical Gospel texts (including the Gospel of Thomas). In a quest for the historical Jesus, students will explore the following questions: What do we actually know about Jesus of Nazareth, his birth, his childhood, what he taught, and what he did? Why was he executed? What is Christology? While students will watch and discuss clips from several documentaries in class, they will be responsible for viewing the entire PBS Frontline documentary series, *From Jesus to Christ*, in the library and writing a substantial review. Also, the course will include some discussion regarding Mel Gibson’s movie *The Passion of the Christ* and Dan Brown's novel *The DaVinci Code*. This course is nonsectarian in approach, employing a scholarly, critical perspective in common use among scholars teaching in other universities. This is a writing intensive course.

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Jarl Fossum and Phillip Munoa's *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction to Gospel Literature and Jesus Studies*, Ron Cameron's *The Other Gospels* and *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. Available at Mike's Book Store.

**EVALUATION:** Two take-home essay Exams (20% each), a Documentary Review (30%), and a negotiated Research Paper (30%).

**COURSE WEB SITE:** Students should check out the course web site where they will discover an extensive bibliography and some links, which might be entertaining and useful. At the top of this website students will find an Adobe Acrobat file labeled *Grade Post*, where their grades will be posted. To access the website, simply go to Dr. Rogers’ Home Page via the above address and click first on the History 479 blue-link in the schedule.