

**IPS 416-001: Christian Origins**  
**An Exploration of the New Testament**  
*Fall Semester 2009*

**Instructor:** Robert Ludwig, Ph.D., Lewis Suite #630, 312/915-7467  
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**Dates and Time:** On-Line August 24-December 4 [Wednesday Evening  
"Live" Session 7:00-8:00 PM Central Daylight Time]

**Required Texts:**

- Bart D. Ehrman, *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2009) – ISBN 978-0-19538759-9 [Available through Loyola Bookstore or at Amazon.com]
- Ludwig, Robert, *Instructor's Essays* [Available at the cost of duplication from the IPS office by contacting Susan Ozuk (312/915-7400 or [sozuk@luc.edu](mailto:sozuk@luc.edu))]
- New Testament Texts (Any Contemporary Translation)
- Excerpt from J.D. Crossan, "Jesus and the Kingdom of God," from *God and Empire* (2007)—Will be mailed to students with the *Instructor's Essays*

**Course Description:** The focus of this course is the faith experience that stands at the beginning of the Christian tradition. What happened in Galilee twenty centuries ago? How was it interpreted by the first Christians? What was that world like—in the Jewish homeland, and in the larger Mediterranean world? In order to understand what happened and how it was interpreted, what do we need to know about the Jewish context of Christian beginnings—about what is known as "the Second Temple period" or "Post-Exilic Judaism," about the Roman occupation of the Jewish homeland and its social, economic, and political impact on the Jewish people? What about the translation of the message of Jesus and the communities that believed in him into the larger Greco-Roman world? How was Jesus interpreted in the communities that Paul founded and supported? Finally, what does knowing about Christian origins—understanding the New Testament texts in their original context—mean for our own faith and our work in ministry today?

This course serves as an introduction to and an overview of the New Testament. Students explore the world of Jesus and his interpreters from both an historical and a biblical perspective and learn about the religious and cultural world of Palestinian Judaism during the Roman occupation. The course considers the life and teachings of Jesus in Galilee in the twenties; the beginnings of the Christian movement in the revelatory experience of Christ risen, the experience of the Spirit sent, and the preaching of the gospel focused on his life, death, and resurrection; the missionary movement of the Church into the Greco-Roman world (the life and writings of the apostle Paul); and finally the development of the four canonical gospels, each with their unique portrait of Jesus Christ and the path of discipleship. Throughout the course, students make connections between then and now, Christian origins and our world of faith, practice, and ministry today.

**Instructor's Expectations/Course Requirements/Grading Standards:**

• **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- The most important learning outcome: Spiritual insight into what happened in Galilee in the twenties and into how the New Testament texts “pass on” that spiritual insight. Gaining insight into “the event of Jesus of Nazareth” and the core of earliest Christianity’s faith experience—this is the critical learning for students. A second learning outcome follows: how do these insights impact faith, ministry, and practice today?
- In order to accomplish the above, students will need to develop some strategic and procedural knowledge. They will need *to learn to think about the world of Jesus before Christianity and churches existed*—before doctrine like the Incarnation and the Trinity were developed, and before the assumptions and presuppositions of Christian faith took root. They will discover *the tools of historical studies and textual criticism*—the dynamic of the historical-critical method of biblical study and the process of biblical hermeneutics (understanding texts in their original contexts—and translating their meaning into present contexts).
- Utilizing these methods, students will gain a sense of the evolution of Christian faith from Jesus in Galilee, to Paul and churches that grew up in the Jewish Diaspora, to the particular communities that shaped the present NT gospels. Here they will see an evolution of faith according to changing contexts—a picture of Jesus and the patterns of discipleship that changes depending on the world of the people who embrace belief in Jesus risen and the Spirit present.
- Finally—and most importantly—students will learn to “translate” New Testament faith into their own contexts by thinking about their own experience and the world of the faith communities in which they minister or plan to minister.

<b>Thinking about Competencies</b>	
<p><b>Strategic Knowledge</b> The thinking strategies and processes students will need to develop in this course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The strategy of “forgetting” present presuppositions and assumptions about Jesus:</u> How to think like a first-century Jew in the occupied Jewish homeland.</li> <li>• <u>The strategy of reconstruction:</u> How to “reconstruct” the life and teachings of Jesus in that context—and reflect on the ways he might have been perceived by others in that world.</li> <li>• <u>The strategy of translation:</u> How to connect the meanings and values manifested in Jesus to the present day contexts of faith and ministry.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Procedural Knowledge</b> Procedures, techniques, and methods taught in this course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical-critical interpretation, textual criticism, and the science of hermeneutics (Don’t panic—these will be explained!)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Factual Knowledge</b>  Knowledge of facts, details, concepts, and terminology that students will become familiar with in this course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consensus factual understandings of current biblical scholars: the history of Jewish faith, especially after the Exile (538 BC), the probable dates and authorship of NT writings, the patterns of NT theologies</li> </ul>
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- **EVIDENCE:** Students will demonstrate these competencies through their active participation on-line (especially in the Wednesday evening “live” interactive on-line sessions), through their written on-line essay postings and responses, and in their three larger essay papers.
- **Regular Class Participation:** It is very important that students be involved in the course every week—with the exception of October 5-10 (Fall Break) and November 22-28 (Thanksgiving Week). Students should be on-line most Wednesday evenings for the “live” interaction with the instructor. We all have schedule conflicts from time to time and we get sick. When this happens, be sure to be in contact with the instructor to let him know: 312/915-7467 (24-hour voice-mail). “Attending” class and participating actively in the discussions contribute 20% to your final grade. Lack of regular participation will seriously affect your final grade. **(22 points)**
- **Weekly Essay Postings:** Students must post short essays most weeks, and they must respond thoughtfully to at least one other student’s essay each week. In these papers, students discuss what they have learned in the readings for that week *according to the categories outlined above in the box entitled “Thinking about Competencies.”* Students report out what they have learned in terms of “strategic knowledge,” “procedural knowledge,” and “factual knowledge.” Students identify these learnings and discuss them in terms of the challenge they pose to previous understandings. These weekly postings (2-3 pages in length, double-spaced) are meant to reveal insight into Christian origins. In any particular week a student might focus on only one of the knowledge categories, but students can comment on two or even all three if they choose to do so. These weekly postings are meant to be thoughtful and meaty—comments on what you are learning from the readings and how that is sitting with you in terms of previous understandings. Together (your essay and your essay response to another student’s paper) contribute three points each week to your final grade. **(33 points)**

**Short Essay Postings:**

1. Essay Posting #1 (Post by August 27, Respond by August 29): Intro and Environment
2. Essay Posting #2 (Post by September 3, Respond by September 5): Background and Cultural Contexts
3. Essay Posting #3 (Post by September 10, Respond by September 12): Jesus in Galilee
4. Essay Posting #4 (Post by September 17, Respond by September 19)

**Major Paper on Section One Due September 26<sup>th</sup>**

5. Essay #5 (Post by September 25, Respond by September 27):  
Death/Resurrection
6. Essay #6 (Post by October 1, Respond by October 3): Intro to Paul
7. Essay #7 (Post by October 15, Respond by October 17): Pauline Theology  
**Major Paper on Section Two Due October 24<sup>th</sup>**
8. Essay #6 (Post by October 29, Respond by October 31): Gospel of Mark
9. Essay #7 (Post by November 5, Respond by November 7): Gospel of  
Matthew
10. Essay #8 (Post by November 12, Respond by November 14): Gospel of  
Luke
11. Essay #9 (Post by November 19, Respond by November 21): Gospel of John  
**Major Paper on One of the Gospels Due December 4<sup>th</sup>**

- **Three Major Papers:** At the conclusion of each section of the course, students will try to integrate the learning from that section of the course by writing an extended essay (5-7 pages in length) in which they focus on “Applications for Ministry Today.” In other words, what are the implications of what you have been learning for the life of faith and practice in the present context? These essays are due **September 26<sup>th</sup>** (on Jesus), **October 24<sup>th</sup>** (on Paul), and **December 4<sup>th</sup>** (on one of the four Gospels). On these weeks, students will not do a short essay posting or respond to other student’s essay. Instead, the discussion board that week will provide students with a chance to interact freely about the focus for their major papers. This is a chance to bounce ideas off one another and get some feedback from each other about where you are going with your thinking in terms of integration and applications to ministry. Each of these papers is worth 15 points in your final grade **(45 points)**.

**How To Write Essays:** Students are expected to write thoughtful, focused, and well-organized essays. Your writing should be error-free: no misspellings or major grammatical errors.

- You should have a clear focus: what is the main thing you want to say in this essay? You should organize your essay around that focus—without rambling off in tangents. (one-third of the essay grade)
- Your essay should be well-informed by the readings and the class lectures and discussions—and you should refer to these in the essays.
- You should also show your own thinking. Finding your own voice is important, so you need to present not just the authors’ views or the instructor’s, but your own: What do *you* think?
- Each essay should have its own title, imaginatively and succinctly stating the essay’s focus.
- Use Arial 11 point type face. When referring to the required texts, simply do so parenthetically (author, page numbers)—no lengthy quotes from the texts. If you are utilizing additional resources, be sure to clearly cite the sources in endnotes. No bibliography is needed.

**Grading Grid:** Above 93 points – A  
92/91 – A-  
90/89 – B+  
88-86 – B  
85/84 – B –  
83/82 – C +  
81/80 – C  
Below 80 – F

**Plagiarism, Cheating, Academic Dishonesty:** Students are hereby advised of the strong sanctions against plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism could result in an automatic "F" in the course and possible expulsion from IPS. If you have any questions about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials, you should consult the instructor. Proper citation procedures are provided in all standard writing manuals. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact the instructor.

**Reading Schedule:**

***First Segment of the Course: Jesus in Context***

**Week of August 24<sup>th</sup>** – Opening Class: Course Introduction, Ehrman's chapters 1-2

**Week of August 31<sup>st</sup>** – Historical-Cultural Background, Ehrman's chapters 3-4

**Week of September 7<sup>th</sup>** – Excerpt from J.D. Crossan ("Jesus and the Kingdom of God")

**Week of September 14<sup>th</sup>** – Ehrman, chapter 9; and Ludwig Essay #2 ("Jesus and the Reign of God: "Jesus in Galilee: Proclaiming the Reign of God")

**Week of September 21<sup>st</sup>** – No new reading—review and integrate, applications for faith and ministry today: **First Major Paper Due September 27<sup>th</sup>**

***Second Segment: Interpreting Jesus Through Resurrection Faith***

**Week of September 28<sup>th</sup>** – Ludwig Essays #3 ("The Parabler Proclaimed") and #4 ("Antioch and the Pauline Mission")

**Week of October 5<sup>th</sup>** – No Additional Readings (Fall Break Week)

**Week of October 12<sup>th</sup>** – Ehrman, chapters 12-15

**Week of October 19<sup>th</sup>** – Paul's Letter to the Romans and Ludwig Essay #5 and Ehrman Chapter 16 ("Pauline Theology") – Integration, applications for ministry – **Second Major Paper Due October 24<sup>th</sup>**

***Third Segment: The Gospel Texts***

**Week of October 26<sup>th</sup>** – Gospel of Mark (Ehrman chapter 5 and first part of Ludwig Essay #6)

**Week of November 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Gospel of Matthew (Ehrman chapter 6, continue with Ludwig Essay #6)

**Week of November 9<sup>th</sup>** – Gospel of Luke (Ehrman chapter 7, continue with Ludwig Essay #6)

**Week of November 16<sup>th</sup>** – Gospel of John (Ehrman chapter 8, finish up Ludwig Essay #6)

**Week of November 23<sup>rd</sup>** – No New Reading (Thanksgiving Week)

**Week of November 30<sup>th</sup>** – **Major Paper on one of the Gospels due December 4<sup>th</sup>**