Religion 276: JESUS AND THE GOSPELS
Wesleyan University (Fall 2016)

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Course Requirements
1. Punctual attendance at every meeting of the class. You will be held responsible for
   everything said and done in class.
2. Careful preparation of the assigned readings prior to class.
3. Informed, active participation in class discussion.
5. Second paper (6-7 pp.) due online on Tues., Nov. 22.
6. Final paper (6-7 pp.) due online on Fri., Dec. 16.

Fair Warnings
1. Laptops and other electronic devices are very distracting and must be used judiciously.
2. You are responsible for knowing and adhering to the University’s Honor Code.

Required Textbooks
   9780060786847.

Required Xeroxes
   of the Sayings Gospel (Fortress/Clark, 2000) 100.
5. John S. Kloppenborg, “Jesus and the Parables of Jesus in Q,” in Synoptic Problems:
   Collected Essays (Mohr Siebeck, 2014) 515-55.

SYLLABUS

1. Sept. 5  **INTRODUCTION: STUDYING JESUS AND THE GOSPELS**
   *Irenaeus of Lyons,Against Heresies 3.11.8-9 (ca. 190 CE):*
   “The Gospels could not possibly be either more or less in number than they are. Since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is spread over all the earth, and the pillar and foundation of the Church is the gospel, and the Spirit of life, it fittingly has four pillars, everywhere breathing out incorruption and revivifying men. From this it is clear that the Word, the artificer of all things, he who sits upon the cherubim and sustains all things, being manifested to men gave us the gospel, fourfold in form but held together by one Spirit. As David said, when asking for his coming, ‘O sitter upon the cherubim, show yourself’ (Psalm 80:1). For the cherubim have four faces, and their faces are images (i.e., of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle) of the activity of the Son of God. . . . As is the activity of the Son of God, such is the form of the living creatures; and as is the form of the living creatures, such is also the character of the Gospel. For the living creatures were quadriform, and the gospel and the activity of the Lord is fourfold. Therefore four general covenants were given to mankind: one was that of Noah’s deluge, by the bow; the second was Abraham’s, by the sign of circumcision; the third was the giving of the Law by Moses; and the fourth is that of the Gospel, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Since this is the case, they are foolish and uninstructed, even audacious, who destroy the pattern of the gospel, and present either more or less than four forms of the gospel—the former, because they claim to have found more than the truth, the latter because they annul the dispensations of God.”

2. Sept. 7 **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN**
   *New Testament: Gospel of John*

3. Sept. 12 **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE**

4. Sept. 14 **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW**
   *New Testament: Gospel of Matthew*
UNIT 2: THE GOSPEL OF MARK AND CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

6. Sept. 21 CHRISTIAN BEGINNINGS

7. Sept. 26 THE MYTH OF CHRIST AND THE PARABLES OF JESUS

8. Sept. 28 THE PRONOUNCEMENT STORIES

9. Oct. 3 THE MIRACLE STORIES

10. Oct. 5 NARRATIVES OF THE PASSION
*Hebrew Bible: Psalm 22; Isaiah 52:13-53:12
*New Testament: Mark 11-16

*Hebrew Bible: Daniel 3; 6

12. Oct. 12 THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

*First Paper (6-7 pp.) due online on Fri., Oct. 14*

UNIT 3: RE-READING THE CANONICAL GOSPELS

13. Oct. 17 THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW
*New Testament: Gospel of Matthew
*Duling, “The Gospel of Matthew,” 296-318


*Oct. 24: FALL BREAK*

15. Oct. 26 THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE
*Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, 129-51
16. Oct. 31  THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN  
*New Testament: Gospel of John  

17. Nov. 2  COMPARING JOHN AND THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

UNIT 4: THE SAYINGS GOSPEL Q

18. Nov. 7  THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM AND THE SAYINGS GOSPEL Q  
*Throckmorton, Gospel Parallels, §§ 1-11, 146-48, 157-61:  
§ 3: Luke 3:10-14  
§ 5: Luke 3:19-20  
§ 11: Matthew 4:18-22 = Mark 1:16-20  
§ 147: Luke 11:5-8  
*Kloppenborg, “The Contents of Q,” 100  
*Kloppenborg, “The Sayings Gospel Q in English,” 123-44, 163

19. Nov. 9  MAKING SENSE OF Q  

20. Nov. 14  THE FORMATION OF Q  
*Kloppenborg, “Literary Convention, Self-Evidence and the Social History of the Q People,” 237-65
21. Nov. 16  JESUS AND THE PORTRAITS OF JESUS IN Q
*Kloppenborg, “Jesus and the Parables of Jesus in Q,” 515-55

*Nov. 21: NO CLASS (American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature annual meetings)*
*Second Paper (6-7 pp.) due online on Tues., Nov. 22*

UNIT 5: THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

22. Nov. 28  INTRODUCING THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS
*Cameron, “Thomas, Gospel of,” 6:535-40

23. Nov. 30  Q AND THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

24. Dec. 5  THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS AND CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

25. Dec. 7  CONCLUSION: THE QUEST OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS
*Reimarus, “Concerning the Intention of Jesus and His Disciples,” 59-76, 98-106, 122-34

*Final Paper (6-7 pp.) due online on Fri., Dec. 16*