

RELG 210: JESUS OF NAZARETH

MC GILL UNIVERSITY
School of Religious Studies
Fall 2016

I. COURSE DETAILS

<i>Instructor</i>	Frederick S. Tappenden, Ph.D.
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<i>Office</i>	Birks 016
<i>Office Hours</i>	Wednesdays, 11.30 AM – 1.00 PM, or by appointment
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<i>Office</i>	Birks 020
<i>Course Webpage</i>	myCourses
<i>Course Weight</i>	3 Credit Hours
<i>Time</i>	Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10.35–11.25 AM
<i>Location</i>	Birks 205
<i>Prerequisites</i>	None
<i>Language</i>	Lectures will be in English. In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

According to the McGill University course description, RELG 210: Jesus of Nazareth is described as follows:

A critical study of selected ancient and modern accounts of the aims and person of Jesus. Attention will be given also to the question of the historical sources and to the relationship between faith and history.

At the completion of the Fall 2016 offering of RELG 210, students will:

1. Students will have a firm grasp of the modern academic study of the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, including introduction to a breadth of primary sources, a variety of critical methods, interpretive strategies, and scholarly perspectives.
2. Students will have read closely a selection of ancient portrayals of Jesus, particularly those within the canonical Gospels, but also a selection of extra-canonical Gospels and other ancient sources.
3. Students will be familiar with the critical study of historical figures such as Jesus, with particular emphasis given to dynamics of memory and historiography, orality/aurality and

performance, various critical methods (source-, form-, and redaction-criticism), and the interrelation of faith and history in various Jesus quests.

4. Students will be familiar with a selection of modern portrayals of Jesus, assessing their relative characteristics, themes, methods, and presumptions.
5. Students will have a grasp of the first- and second-century CE social and historical contexts in which Jesus both existed and was remembered, and further be able to relate those contexts to the formation of Jesus images and traditions within the early Christian movement.
6. Students should be able to identify and trace the development of the various forms of early Christian thought and community as they surround the figure of Jesus.
7. Students will be able to read ancient texts from a variety of perspectives, considering questions of social location, personal and collective commitments, and the uses of New Testament texts in ancient and modern communities.
8. Students will have developed critical thinking through readings, written assignments, and class discussion materials.

III. REQUIRED, RECOMMENDED, AND RESERVE TEXTS

The following textbooks are **required** for this course. They can be purchased at Le James, the McGill University Bookstore (3544 Avenue du Parc). This book is also on reserve at the McLennan branch of the McGill University Library.

1. Bond, Helen K. 2012. *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Bloomsbury. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BT303.2 B66 2012.
2. A selection of readings from the Recommended and Reserve lists below. These books are all on reserve at the McGill Library, though note: demand is high and books are available for short-term loan only. For a full schedule of readings, see the course schedule below.
3. One modern Bible translation that includes the entire Christian canon; here are some *recommended* editions (note: you need only one)
 - a. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Edited by Michael D. Coogan. Fully Revised 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
 - b. *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books with Concordance*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge et al. Fully Revised and Updated. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006.

A Brief Note on Translations and Accessibility:

Choosing a translation can be difficult due to the plethora of options. The recommended translation for RELG 210 is the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Dynamic translations (e.g. New Living Translation), idiomatic or periphrastic translations (e.g. The Message), and classical translations (e.g. King James Version) are not acceptable for class use.

Many Bible translations can be accessed online. You can access the NRSV at the following web address: biblia.com/books/nrsv (along with a few other translations that you can study in parallel). Other helpful sites are www.ntgateway.com,

www.earlychristianwritings.com, and www.sbl-site.org/educational/sitesofinterest.aspx; each of these can direct you to all kinds of online resources. Such online resources should always be used critically. *Though online access is convenient, it is not a substitute for the physical manuscript—students are expected to possess a print Bible and bring it to each class period.*

The following book is **recommended**. It is available at Le James, and an older edition (1994) is on reserve through the McGill University Library at McLennan.

1. Miller, Robert J., ed. 2010. *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version*. 4th ed., rev. and enlg. Polebridge Press. The 1994 edition of this text is on reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BS2553 S24 1994b. Note: there are some differences between editions.

The following movie and books are on **reserve** through the McGill Library system (McLennan branch). They are all **required**, and their use is outlined in the course schedule below. Some can also be accessed online through the the McGill University Library (see links, and on myCourses).

1. *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (Motion Picture, 1979).
 - a. Online at YouTube: <https://youtu.be/yGiu6e7oqzE>
 - b. McLennan Library, Reserve Room: Audio-Video section, item #6726.
 - c. Online Rental: iTunes (HD, \$4.99 // SD, \$3.99), itunes.apple.com/ca/movie/id928256836
2. Scholarly Portraits of Jesus (Required for Book Review Assignment; see Schedule Below)
 - a. Borg, Marcus J. *Jesus: A New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BT202 B644 1991. [Note: In addition to the copy on reserve at McLennan, this book is also available at the Presbyterian College Library.]
 - b. Crossan, John Dominic. 1995. *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. New York: HarperOne. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BT301.2 C77 1995. [Note: In addition to the copy on reserve at McLennan, this book is also available at the Presbyterian College Library.]
 - c. Crossan, John Dominic, and Jonathan L. Reed. *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Text*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BS621 C76 2001.
 - d. Funk, Robert. *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BT303.2 F85 1996. [Note: In addition to the copy on reserve at McLennan, this book is also available at the Presbyterian College Library.]
 - e. Horsley, Richard A. 1993. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BS2417 P6 H67 1987. [Note: In addition to the copy on reserve at McLennan, this book is also available at the Presbyterian College Library.]

- f. Levine, Amy-Jill. *A Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BM535 L393 2006.
 - g. Sanders, E. P. 1993. *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. London: Penguin. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BT301.2 S164 1995. [Note: The McGill Library holds a few copies of this book, only one of which is on reserve at McLennan; the book is also available at the Presbyterian College Library.]
 - h. Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. 2000. *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*. London: Continuum. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BT303.2 S33 2000.
 - i. Wright, N. T. 1996. *The Original Jesus: The Life and Vision of a Revolutionary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BT301.9 W746 1996.
3. Kloppenborg, John S. 2008. *Q, The Earliest Gospel: An Introduction to the Original Stories and Sayings of Jesus*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BS2555.52 K56 2008.
 4. Ehrman, Bart D. *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make it Into the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. On reserve at the McLennan Library, Reserve Room: BS2832 E37 2003; available online at mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/252579895.
 5. Kirby, Peter, ed. 2001–2016. *Early Christian Writings*. Available online, open-access: www.earlychristianwritings.com.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be graded on the following requirements:

1. **Ancient Portraits of Jesus: Reading Logs (8 x 5% = 40%):** Ancient Christians thought about and remembered Jesus in very diverse ways. The canonical Gospels, which themselves are quite distinct one from another, are not the only early portraits that come do to us. For this series of assignments, our attention will be directed to the most ancient images of Jesus within the writings of the early Christian movement. Scheduled throughout the term are a total of twelve (12) reading logs, of which students are to submit eight (8) for grading (note: if a student wishes to submit more than eight, I will record only the eight highest grades). Each reading log is to be 300–600 words in length (i.e., 1–2 pages) and typewritten according to the guidelines in the syllabus, section V (below). Further information will be handed out in class. Reading logs are due according to the course schedule in syllabus, Section VII (below); each log is to be submitted to the instructor or TA at the beginning of class on the day it is due, or submitted online via the myCourses site.
2. **Modern Portraits of Jesus: Book Review and Optional Pecha Kucha (25%):** As a figure of historical inquiry, Jesus of Nazareth has piqued the modern imagination, sparking a wide array of scholarly attention and treatments. This is particularly true of the late-20th century, a time in which scholars from around the world (though primarily in the Anglo-American

tradition) produced several modern portraits of the historical figure of Jesus. In this assignment, you will critically assess one such portrait, analysing not only its substance and character, but also assessing its assumptions and methods. Further information will be handed out in class. Book reviews are to be 1,500 words in length (i.e., 5 pages) and typewritten according to the guidelines in the syllabus, Section V (below). Book reviews are due the week of October 24–28 (for specific dates, see the course schedule in Section VII, below). Each review is to be submitted to the instructor or TA at the beginning of class on the day it is due, or submitted online via the myCourses site.

3. **Final Examination (35%):** Information pertaining to the final examination will be handed out in class. The date of the final examination is determined by the University and will be announced during the term. A supplemental examination will be available for this course.

Grade Breakdown:

Reading Logs (x8)	40%
Book Review	25%
Final Examination	35%
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Total	100%

- ❖ **Extra Credit Option (5%):** Students in RELG 210 have the opportunity to do a little extra work for bonus marks. For those who choose to do so, work will be graded and a maximum of 5% will be added to the final grade. There are two possible ways to receive these extra marks; students may choose one but not both:

(1) *Extra Reading Log:* Students can complete one additional reading log.

(2) *Optional Pecha Kucha:* In addition to the written book review, students can present their book review to the class in the form of a Pecha Kucha. Pecha Kucha is a presentation style that is defined by its unique structure: 20 slides for 20 seconds/slide, thus capping the duration of the presentation at 400 seconds (= 6 minutes and 40 seconds). Because there is enough class time only for one (1) presentation per book (thus, a total of nine (9) presentations), space is limited! Allocation is on a first-come first-serve basis and will coincide with the book review sign-up process. In the even of overwhelming interest (i.e., > 9 students), alternative arrangements will be made.

V. ASSIGNMENT FORMAT, SUBMISSION, AND GRADING

Written Work, Format and Style: All written work is to be double-spaced, paginated, and typewritten in 12 pt. Times New Roman font; margins set at 1-inch (sides) and 1½ (top and bottom). All sources should be cited as in-line citations. An excellent guide to the preparation of essays, including citation styles, may be found at www.mcgill.ca/religiousstudies/ba/requirements-regulations/papers. This guide also reviews standards of academic integrity; if you have questions on how to avoid plagiarism please see the instructor.

Assignment Submission and Due Dates: All assignments are due in accordance with the Course Outline below. For convenience, I summarise the information here:

Reading Logs: due *in class* on their respective due dates

Book Reviews: due *in class* the week of 24 October 2016

Any extensions of these deadlines must be arranged beforehand (barring unforeseen circumstances).

All assignments can be submitted either as a hardcopy to the instructor during class periods, during office hours to Birks 016, or as a softcopy via the myCourses website. When submitting a hardcopy, please be sure the time, date, and signature of the receiver are noted on the submission. When submitting electronically, be sure that you receive confirmation of your submission via the myCourses system (myCourses will automatically note the date and time of submission). For a helpful overview of electronic submission via myCourses, see the video at the following web address: www.d2l.com/resources/videos/dropbox-tool-learning-environment-basics-for-learners. Please note that, barring unforeseen circumstances, appeals to technical difficulties experienced while trying to submit an assignment electronically is not a valid excuse for handing something in late.

Late Policy: Assignments are considered late if they are submitted after the prescribed times outlined in the *Assignment Submission and Due Dates* section above. Late assignments will be penalised one grade point per day (e.g., from B to B- for one late day; from B to C+ for two late days, etc.) up to a maximum of 3 grade points in accordance with the McGill University Grading Scale (e.g., from B to C; or B- to D). Exceptions will only be made for unusual circumstances such as illness or by prior arrangement (or at the discretion of the instructor).

Grading Scale: In keeping with McGill University's grading system, RELG 210 will be graded on the following scale.

Grade	GPA	%	Interpretation
A	4.0	85-100	Very Good
A-	3.7	80-84	
B+	3.3	75-79	Good
B	3.0	70-74	
B-	2.7	65-69	
C+	2.3	60-64	Satisfactory
C	2.0	55-59	
D	1.0	50-54	Conditional Pass
F	0	1-49	Fail

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest).

VI. RELATED COURSE INFORMATION

Electronic Devices in the Classroom: Mobile computing and communications devices are permitted in class insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Students are permitted to record lectures only with the instructor's permission.

Disabilities: If you have a disability and feel the instructor should be alerted, please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at (514) 398-6009 before you do this. We will make every effort to accommodate your needs and to help ensure successful learning. Such matters will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

Course Evaluations: End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

General Policy: My intent and desire is to assist and guide you in the learning of the material of this course, as well as to stimulate your own thinking. Should you have any questions and/or concerns with the course content, readings, assignments, etc., *please do not hesitate* to contact me by email or in person during office hours. I am also happy to listen to suggestions about how we use class time, the texts, and the assignments. If you need help at any point in the course, please ask. During office hours I hold an open-door policy and look forward to hearing any questions and/or concerns that you may have.

Your responsibility is to come to class prepared, especially in terms of familiarity with primary sources for discussion, and to be willing to explore ideas. I ask that you be willing to take risks, venture new ideas, ask questions, critique your preconceptions, and respect the perspectives, questions, and statements of your colleagues.

VII. COURSE OUTLINE

** Note: All due dates will remain fixed, but lecture topics may expand or contract as necessary.

Sept. 2 **Course Introduction: “Who do people say I am?”**

Topics: General introduction: the critical study of Jesus of Nazareth; (Re)configuring the Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History; Overview of syllabus

Part I: The Quest for Sources, and Sources in Quests

Sept. 7, 9 **Sources and Historical Contexts**

Topics: What sources do we have, from where do they come, and from when?; Canonical and extra-canonical: what’s the difference, and does it—or should it!—matter?; Introduction to the socio-political realities of first-century Roman Palestine.

Watch: By September 9, students need to have watched *Monty Python’s Life of Brian*

Read: Sanders, “An Outline of Jesus’ Life”; Davies, “The Gospel of Brian.”

Due Sept. 9: Reading Log for *Brian*

Sept. 12, 14, 16 **The History of the Historical Jesus I: The Old Quest (1778–1906)**

Topics: Reimarus to Schweitzer; Enlightenment rationalism and the scientific study of history; Identifying problems when reading the Gospel’s synoptically; Strauss’s critical assessment of Jesus; Romanticism and the liberal lives of Jesus; Context and background of Mark

Read: Gospel of Mark; Bond, *Historical Jesus*, 1–56

Due Sept. 16: Reading Log for Mark

Sept. 19, 21, 23 **The History of the Historical Jesus II: The No Quest (1906–1953)**

Topics: Schweitzer to Käsemann; Schweitzer’s critique; Bultmann’s *History of the Synoptic Tradition*; Historical scepticism and a minimalist, eschatological Jesus; Introduction to the synoptic problem, and Q

Read: The Sayings Gospel Q

Due Sept. 23: Reading Log for Q

Sept. 26, 28, 30, Oct. 3, 5, 7 **The History of the Historical Jesus III: The New and Third Quests (1953–2005)**

Topics: Käsemann to Kirk/Thatcher; The question of method; Criteria: authenticating the words and deeds of Jesus; Assessing what makes a good argument in historical Jesus scholarship; The (non-)Jewishness of Jesus; Context and background of Matthew and Luke

Read: Gospel of Matthew; Gospel of Luke

Due Sept. 30: Reading Log for Matthew

Due Oct. 7: Reading Log for Luke

- Oct.
12, 14 **The History of the Historical Jesus IV: The Memory Quest (2005–Present)**
Topics: The advent of Memory: Kirk/Thatcher, Crook, and Le Donne; Assessing the frames and keys for Jesus: of scriptures and cultural images; Reassessing oral/aural and written dynamics in the fashioning of tradition; Where does John fit?; Context and background of John
Read: Gospel of John
Due Oct. 14: Reading Log for John
- Oct.
17, 19, 21 **Again, Sources and Contexts**
Topics: Again, which sources, and why?; What is a Gospel?—the question of genre; The synoptic problem; source-, form-, and redaction-criticism; Further remarks on the peoples, happenings, and atmospheres of first-century Roman Palestine; Context and background of the Gospel of Thomas
Read: Gospel of Thomas
Due Oct. 21: Reading Log for Thomas
- Oct.
24, 26, 28 **Modern Portraits of Jesus**
Topics: Sanders, Borg, and Levine (Oct. 24); Wright, Crossan, and Funk (Oct. 26); Schüssler Fiorenza, Horsley, and Crossan/Reed (Oct. 28)
Read: By Oct. 24 you need to have read both the book that you are reviewing and the course textbook: Helen K. Bond, *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).
Due Oct. 24–28: Book Repots and optional Pecha Kuchas

Part II: Remembering Jesus: Commemorative Frames and Mnemonic Images

- Oct. 31 **The Many “Costumes” of Jesus**
Topics: Polymorphous images of Jesus in the Christian Apocrypha
Guest Lecturer: Mr. Bradley Rice, Ph.D. (cand.)
- Nov. 2, 4 **Jesus as Teacher: Themes in the Teachings and Parables of Jesus**
Topics: Papias and the preference for the living word; Scattered sayings; Parables and the reign of God; Themes in the sayings and parables of Jesus; Images of Jesus, the Teacher
Read: The Parables of the Feast (Matt 22.1–13 // Luke 14.15–24 // Q 14.16–23 // Thomas 64)
Due Nov. 4: Reading Log for “Jesus the Story Teller”

- Nov. 7, 9, 11 **Jesus and his fellow Judeans: Pharisees and Scriptural Frames**
Topics: Jesus the Judean; Diversity within first-century Judaism; Jesus and John the Baptizer; Moses, the Torah, and the Pharisees; The Judean Jesus and early Christian self-definition; Images of Jesus, the Judean
Read: Egerton Gospel, Gospel of the Hebrews, Gospel of the Ebionites, Gospel of the Nazareans, and Josephus, *Ant.* 20.9.1
Due Nov. 11: Reading Log for “Jewish-Christian Gospels”
- Nov. 14, 16, 18 **Jesus as Physician and Miracle Worker: The Original Faith Healer**
Topics: What is a “miracle”?; ancient and modern perspectives on nature and the divine; Moving beyond rationalism and supernaturalism: the sociology, narratology, and ideology (rather than ontology) of ‘miracles’; Jesus among other ancient miracles workers; Images of Jesus, the Doer of Mighty Works
Read: Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Secret Gospel of Mark, and the Signs Gospel
Due Nov. 18: Reading Log for “Jesus the Miracle Worker”
- Nov. 21 **No Class (Reading Day)**
Task: Work on your Reading Log for this week
- Nov. 23, 25 **Jesus the Crucified: Imperial Resistance and Revolt**
Topics: A central question: *Why was Jesus crucified?*; Jesus among the messiahs; Jesus in Jerusalem; Temple actions and critique; Images of Jesus the imperial/social critic
Read: Gospel of Peter; 1 Cor 1.18–2.5, 11.17–34, 15.1–11; Phil. 2.1–11; Rev. 4–5, 17; and Josephus, *Ant.* 18.3.3
Due Nov. 25: Reading Log for “Jesus and the Cross”
- Nov. 28, 30, Dec. 2 **Jesus’s (Re-)Beginning(s): Birth, Resurrection, and Early Christ-Devotion**
Topics: Virgin birth; Resurrection/exaltation; The ongoing importance of Jesus in early Christian worship and praxis (Lord’s supper, baptism, esoteric teachings, communal- and self-identities)
Read: 1 Thess 1.2–10; 2 Cor 3–5; Luke 24.13–35; Col 1.15–20; Gospel of Mary
Due Dec. 2: Reading Log for “Jesus the Living One”
- Dec. 5 **Course Conclusion: “Who do people say I am?”**
Topics: Overview of course content and major themes; Final exam instructions