

# Canadian Mennonite University

## Course Syllabus

Jews and Christians in Greco-Roman Society

BTS - 5180-1 and 4180/3 (dual-tracked, graduate and undergraduate)

Fall Semester 2021; Mondays 6:00-8:45pm (Sep 11-Dec 6; plus Wed Dec 8).

**Instructor:** Gordon Zerbe, PhD (Princeton Theological Seminary, New Testament); MA (Western Washington, Anthropology)

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### COVID-19 Contingencies and Remote Access:

This course is planned to be in-person, unless otherwise not possible because of COVID-19.

The course will be open to remote access for those unable to attend in person.

### Key Dates:

*September 17 – Last day to make registration changes for fall courses without financial penalty.*

*November 16 - Last day to voluntarily withdraw from fall courses without academic penalty.*

*October 11 – No class – Thanksgiving Day*

*November 8 – No class – Reading Week*

*December 8 – Make-up class on a Wednesday*

### Course Description

CMU Calendar: This course will study the development of Jewish and Christian self-definition during the formative years of the new community of Christians in the Greco-Roman world. The investigation will focus on Jewish religious and social life in the second temple period, the pre-Pauline Jewish Christian community, Paul and the launching of the Gentile world mission, the development of Christologies in the new communities, and the forces that separated the Christian and Jewish communities, to create what we now know as Judaism and Christianity.

Central to the aim of the course is an unmasking of the self-defining factors in two religious communities during the Greco-Roman period, 200 BCE-200 CE. The two communities are usually identified largely as Jewish and Christian. However, as the course unfolds these two labels are scarcely adequate to account for the differences from one sub-group to another under each label. A significant part of the course will involve reading primary documents coming out of various self-defining groups calling themselves Jewish and/or Christian, while all of the groups in their own way wrestle with prevailing Greco-Roman patterns of thought and life surrounding them.

### Course Objectives:

Upon completion of all the course requirements, students should be able:

1. to converse intelligently about the variegated texture of formative Judaism and early Christianity, 200 BCE-200 CE;
2. to take into account the influence of Greco-Roman philosophies in circulation at the time on shaping the self-definition of the different groups;
3. to appreciate the role of “canon(s)” and “creed(s)” as factors involved in consolidating the groups into normatively understood communities;
4. to analyze New Testament writings and other early Christian documents in relation to the dynamics of the emerging Christian communities, both in their increasingly fractured relationship with emerging Judaism, and in the milieu of the Roman imperial world-rule towards the end of the first century.
5. to ask questions about ways contemporary Jewish and Christian communities define themselves in relation to contemporary culture and world political realities.

## Required Textbooks:

- Goodman, Martin. *Between Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations*. Allen Lane, 2007 [Penguin Books, 2008].
- Donaldson, Terence L. *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Class Attendance, Preparation, and Participation [10%]

It is expected that students will take personal notes on the reading assigned (secondary and primary texts) for a given session, identifying points of interest, questions, reflections, items for clarification, etc., as the basis for class discussion.

### 2. Research Paper, on a topic or text related to the subject matter of the course [40%]

3500-4000 words; Due: December 15

### 3. Study and Oral/Written Reports on (a) a non-canonical Early Jewish and (b) an Early Christian Writing [2x20%]

An oral presentation of 10-12 minutes on Oct 18 and Nov 29. A written report of around 1000-1500 words should accompany the oral presentation, and may include basic information on the writing, and an analysis of its contribution to the themes of “self-definition” (assessing themes such as belief, canon, confession; symbols and rituals; special days; oppositions and boundaries; laws, ethics, behaviour; etc.). Writings will be assigned from the following list (on day 2 or 3).

Early Jewish Writings: 1 Maccabees; 2 Maccabees; 3 Maccabees; 4 Maccabees; Rule of the Community [or another of the Dead Sea Scrolls]; Judith; Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (e.g. Reuben, Simeon, Levi); Wisdom of Solomon; Philo, *Decalogue*; 4 Ezra; 2 Baruch; Josephus, *Antiquities*, Bk. 20, Chs 5-9, or *Against Apion*; Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Yoma*; Mishnah, tractate *'Aboth*; others to be identified.

Early Christian Writings: 1 Clement; Epistle of Barnabas; Marcion, *Antitheses*; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*; Letters of Ignatius; Gospel of Thomas; Gospel of Peter; Gospel of Truth; Gospel of Judas; Acts of Paul and Thekla; Epistle to Diognetus; others to be identified.

### 4. Reflection Paper, due no later than December 21. 1000 words. 10%

Choose one of the chapters in the Donaldson textbook, and provide a reflection/review on the chapter, engaging with crucial issues of interpretation, and of ongoing impact. You might want to choose a particular passage or theme in the particular NT writing under discussion for more focused interrogation and discussion.

## Tentative Course Outline and Reading Schedule

Week 1, Sep 13 – Introduction to the Course; Historical Overview; The Question of “Jewish Christianity”

*The Greco-Roman World:*

Week 2, Sep 20 – The Roman Imperial World

Reading: Goodman, pp. 7-160; Zerbe, excerpts [posted on the Student Portal] from *Philippians: “Citizenship: Ancient and Modern,” “Roman Imperial Cult,” “Roman Imperial Propaganda: The Gospel of Augustus,” “Christos as Theopolitical Title,” “The Name Paul”*; Donaldson, Chap. 1.

Week 3, Sep 27 – Romans and Jews

Reading: Goodman, pp. 163-382.

Week 4, Oct 4 – The Destruction of the Judean Nation and its Aftermath

[the emergence of the Gentile-dominated Church, and the rise of anti-Semitism]

Reading: Goodman, pp. 383-585.

*Early Jewish Writings:*

Week 5, Oct 18 – Reading and Discussion of Selected Early Jewish Writings  
Student Presentations

*New Testament Writings:*

Week 6, Oct 25 – Luke-Acts; Donaldson, chap. 3  
Week 7, Nov 1 – Paul; Donaldson, chap. 5  
Week 8, Nov 15 – Matthew, Donaldson, chaps. 2  
Week 9, Nov 22 – John; Donaldson, chap. 4  
Week 10, Nov 29 – Reading and Discussion of Selected Early Christian Writings  
Student Presentations

*Early Christian Writings after the NT:*

Week 11, Dec 6 – Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, Revelation; Donaldson, chap. 6  
Week 12, Dec 8 – Conclusion and Reflection

**CMU Academic Policies**

Students should be aware of CMU Academic Policies, particularly those regarding academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating), class attendance, extensions, and exam rescheduling, which apply to all University courses. These are detailed on CMU's website (<http://www.cmu.ca/students.php?s=registrar&p=policies>) and in the CMU Calendar (also available online: <http://www.cmu.ca/academics.php?s=calendar>).

**Professor Access and Availability:** Emails to the professor are welcome, but they cannot be assumed to have been received until a receipt or response has been issued in reply. Office Hours: I am in my office quite steadily when not teaching or in meetings; unscheduled drop-ins are welcome.

**Grading Scheme:**

All work for this course will receive one of these letter grades.

Grading Scheme:	A+	95-100	Exceptional	C+	67-73	Satisfactory
	A	88-94	Excellent	C	60-66	Adequate
	B+	81-87	Very good	D	50-59	Marginal
	B	74-80	Good	F	0-49	Failure

*Please note that grades submitted by instructors become final only after they are vetted by the Dean's office.*

**Student Support Services**

CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. If you are eligible for these services or have questions about becoming eligible, please contact Sandra Loepky, Coordinator of Disability Services at [sloepky@cmu.ca](mailto:sloepky@cmu.ca) or 204.487.3300 x.340.

**Peer Assisted Learning (P.A.L.)** is a collective of students who offer walk-in tutoring services to CMU students, free of charge. This includes support in areas such as homework, essay writing, test prep, organization, and more! P.A.L. meets several times a week. Schedules will be posted at the beginning of each semester. Claire Hanson (a current student) will be the Coordinator of P.A.L. for 2018-19.

**Primary Texts (Translations)**

Jewish Texts @ <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/>

Christian Texts @ <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/>

### **Recommended Supplementary Resources:**

- Boyarin, Daniel. *Borderlines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- Cohen, Shaye J. D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*. University of California Press, 1999.
- Cohen, Shaye J. D. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. Third edition. Westminster/John Knox Press, 2014.
- Feldman, Louis H. *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*. Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Galambush, Julie. *The Reluctant Parting: How the New Testament's Jewish Writers Created a Christian Book*. HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.
- Sanders, E. P., ed. *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980-82.
- Shanks, Hershel, ed. *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development*. Washington D. C.: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1992.
- Yoder, John Howard. *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*. Edited by Michael G. Cartwright and Peter Ochs. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

### **Selected Bibliography**

- Avery-Peck, Alan J., Daniel J. Harrington, and Jacob Neusner, eds. *When Judaism and Christianity Began: Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini*. (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism) Brill, 2004.
- Borgen, Peder. *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.
- Boyarin, Daniel. "Judaism as a Free Church: Footnotes to John Howard Yoder's The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited." In *The New Yoder*, ed. Peter Dula and Chris K. Huebner. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010. Pp. 1-17.
- Charlesworth, James H., ed. *Jews and Christians: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Crossroad, 1990. [includes a selected bibliography on Jewish-Christian relations]
- Gager, John. *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Hirshman, Marc. *The Stabilization of Rabbinic Culture, 100 C.E. -350 C.E.: Texts on Education and Their Late Antique Context*. Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Koernig, John. *Jews and Christians in Dialogue: New Testament Foundations*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979.
- Meeks, Wayne and Wilken, Robert. *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era*. Society of Biblical Literature, 1978.
- Neusner, Jacob, William Green, and Ernest Frerichs, eds. *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism in the Matrix of Christianity*. Fortress, 1986.
- Nickelsburg, George W. E. *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Fortress, 2005.
- Saldarini, Anthony J. *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism) University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Saldarini, Anthony J. *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach*. Wilmington: Michael Glazier Press, 1988.
- Saldarini, Anthony J. "Christian Anti-Judaism: The First Century Speaks to the Twenty-First Century." The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture, April 14, 1999 Chicago.  
<http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/saldarini.htm>
- Sanders, E. P. *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63B.C.E.-66C.E.* Trinity Press International, 1992.
- Sanders, E. P. *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*. Fortress, 1983.
- Sanders, E. P. *Jesus and Judaism*. Fortress, 1985.
- Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Fortress, 1977.
- Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Who Was a Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism*. Ktav, 1085.

- Schiffman, Lawrence H. *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*. KTAV, 1991.
- Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*. KTAV, 1997.
- Schwartz, Seth. *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society?: Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism*. Princeton University Press, 2009. How well integrated were Jews in the Mediterranean society controlled by ancient Rome? The Torah's laws seem to constitute a rejection of the reciprocity-based social dependency and emphasis on honor that were customary in the ancient Mediterranean world. But were Jews really a people apart, and outside of this broadly shared culture? Schwartz's examinations of the Wisdom of Ben Sira, the writings of Josephus, and the Palestinian Talmud reveal that Jews were more deeply implicated in Roman and Mediterranean bonds of reciprocity and honor than is commonly assumed. Schwartz demonstrates how Ben Sira juxtaposes exhortations to biblical piety with hard-headed and seemingly contradictory advice about coping with the dangers of social relations with non-Jews; how Josephus describes Jews as essentially countercultural; yet how the Talmudic rabbis assume Jews have completely internalized Roman norms at the same time as the rabbis seek to arouse resistance to those norms, even if it is only symbolic.
- Schwartz, Seth. *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E. (Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World)* Princeton University Press, 2004. Schwartz argues that to make sense of the remains of ancient Judaism, one must consider the effects of shifting types of imperial domination and that there is a direct connection between the rise of the synagogue and the religious ideology that justified its construction and the rise of Christianity.
- Smallwood, E. Mary. *The Jews under Roman Rule*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
- Stegemann, E. W. and W. Stegemann. *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999. [German edition, 1995]
- Stern, Menahem. *Greek and Latin Authors on the Jews and Judaism*. 3 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences, 1976-1989.
- Stone, Michael, ed. *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*. Fortress, 1984.
- Tcherikover, Victor. *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*. Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959.
- Richardson, Peter. *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity. Vol 1: Paul and the Gospels*. Wilfrid Laurier Press,
- Wilson, Stephen G. *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity. Vol. 2: Separation and Polemic*. Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1986.
- Jewish Scholars on New Testament Writings or Early Christianity: A Sampling*
- Boyarin, Daniel. *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. University of California Press, 1997.
- Eisenbaum, Pamela. *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle*. HarperOne, 2010.
- Levine, Amy-Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. HarperOne, 2007.
- Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Nanos, Mark D. *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context*. Fortress, 2002.
- Nanos, Mark D. *The Mystery of Romans*. Fortress Press, 1996.
- Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity*. Fortress, 1984.
- Segal, Alan F. *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*. Yale University Press, 1992.
- Sandmel, Samuel. *The Genius of Paul: A Study in History*. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958 [Fortress, 1979]
- Sandmel, Samuel. *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*. Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Sandmel, Samuel. *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament*. 1956, 1974.[reprint Skylight Paths, 2004]
- Sandmel, Samuel. *We Jews and Jesus: Exploring Theological Differences for Mutual Understanding*. Oxford University Press, 1965.[Skylight Paths, 2006]
- Sandmel, Samuel. *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament*. Fortress, 1978.
- Schoeps, Hans Joachim. *Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church*. Fortress, 1969.
- Schoeps, Hans Joachim. *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the light of Jewish Religious History*. Westminster, 1961.

Taubes, Jacob. *The Political Theology of Paul*. Stanford University Press, 2003.

*Jewish-Christian Relations by Jewish Authors: A Sampling*

Frymer-kensky, Tikva, David Novak, and Peter Ochs, eds. *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, 2000.

Novak, David. *Talking with Christians: Musings of a Jewish Theologian*. Eerdmans, 2005.