

RELS 22 Course Outline as of Fall 2025**CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: RELS 22 Title: JESUS & INVENT OF CHRIST

Full Title: Jesus and the Invention of Christianity

Last Reviewed: 1/27/2025

Units		Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks	Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	6	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade or P/NP

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly: HUMAN 10.2

Catalog Description:

Students will engage in the historical-critical study of the origins and development of early Christian traditions through a range of documents and archaeological artifacts from the first five centuries against the background of Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural contexts-- with attention to their influence on world cultures.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:**Recommended Preparation:**

Eligibility for ENGL C1000 or equivalent, or appropriate placement based on AB705 mandates

Limits on Enrollment:**Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: Students will engage in the historical-critical study of the origins and development of early Christian traditions through a range of documents and archaeological artifacts from the first five centuries against the background of Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural contexts-- with attention to their influence on world cultures. (Grade or P/NP)

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL C1000 or equivalent, or appropriate placement based on AB705 mandates

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	Area			Effective:	Inactive:
	E	Humanities		Fall 2025	
	L3	Arts and Humanities			
	E	Humanities		Fall 1981	Fall 2025
CSU GE:	Transfer Area			Effective:	Inactive:
	C2	Humanities		Fall 1981	
IGETC:	Transfer Area			Effective:	Inactive:
	3B	Humanities		Fall 1981	
CSU Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:	
UC Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:	

CID:

Certificate/Major Applicable:

Major Applicable Course

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Summarize and evaluate the evidence for the historical Jesus.
2. Explain early Christian diversity and the triumph of "Orthodoxy."
3. Describe connections between Christian scripture, art, and Biblical interpretation with major aspects of historical and contemporary cultures.
4. Explain the relationship of Christianity to Judaism including the roots and history of Anti-Semitism.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Account for the foreign and sometimes difficult structure of biblical narrative.
2. Distinguish between the assumptions and hermeneutic techniques of traditional biblical exegesis and the methodology and conclusions of modern biblical criticism.
3. Delineate critically and aesthetically the distinctive portraits of the life and teachings of Jesus in Gospel accounts - in and outside of the New Testament.
4. Describe and explain the contribution of Paul to the growth of the early Church against the complex cultural background of the Hellenistic Roman world.
5. Discuss the centrality of the contemporary quest of the historical Jesus in the development of modern biblical criticism.
6. Describe the connection between Orthodox and Gnostic Christianity and the process of scriptural canonization.

7. Describe the connections between some Christian texts, art, and Biblical interpretation with major aspects of historical and contemporary global cultures such as: anti-Semitism, support/opposition to slavery, gender roles, LGBTQIA persons and ecology.

Topics and Scope:

- I. Contrasting Traditional and Modern Methods of Interpretation and Study, such as:
 - A. Theological theories of inspiration
 - B. Redaction theory
 - C. Source theory
 - D. Form criticism
 - E. Rhetorical criticism
 - F. Tradition-historical criticism
- II. Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts of the Jewish and Greco-Roman Worlds, Including but not limited to:
 - A. Hellenism and the Septuagint
 - B. Classical philosophy and religion
 - C. Cult of the Emperor
- III. Apocalypticism and Eschatology
- IV. A Diversity of Canonical and Non-Canonical Literature from the Following Genres:
 - A. Gospels
 - B. Letters
 - C. Apocalypses
 - D. Martyrdoms
 - E. Liturgical literatures
- V. Formation of Institutions and Canon
- VI. Ecumenical Councils
- VII. Historical Jesus & Depictions of Jesus
- VIII. The Life, Thought and Influence of Paul
- IX. Women and Gender in Early Christian Traditions
- X. Anti-Judaism/Anti-Semitism in the New Testament and Early Church Fathers
- XI. Influences of Christian Traditions and Scriptures on Support/Opposition to:
 - A. Slavery
 - B. LGBTQIA issues
 - C. Ecology

Assignment:

1. Weekly reading assignments of between 20-50 pages
2. Two to six essays of 500-1000 words
3. One to three exams of objective or essay or combined format
4. Quizzes (2-7)
5. Final exam (objective, essay or a combination)
6. A research paper of 1500-2500 words
7. Additional assignments as determined by instructor may include:
 - a. Oral presentations
 - b. Reports on interviews
 - c. Museum visits
 - d. Field trips

Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

Writing: Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Research paper and essays

Writing
40 - 80%

Problem Solving: Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

None

Problem solving
0 - 0%

Skill Demonstrations: All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

None

Skill Demonstrations
0 - 0%

Exams: All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Quizzes, exams and final exam

Exams
20 - 50%

Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Classroom participation, additional assignments (if assigned)

Other Category
0 - 10%

Representative Textbooks and Materials:

The Complete Gospels. 2nd ed. Miller, Robert J. Polebridge Press. 1994. (classic).

Did Jesus Exist? The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth. Ehrman, Bart. HarperOne. 2012. (classic).

The HarperCollins Visual Guide to the New Testament: What Archaeology Reveals about the First Christians. Reed, Jonathan L. HarperOne. 2007. (classic).

Toward Decentering the New Testament: A Reintroduction. Smith, Mitzi J. and Kim, Yung Suk. Cascade Books. 2018. (classic).

The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts. Green, Joel B and McDonald, Lee Martin. Baker Academic. 2017. (classic).