

# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *New Testament and Early Christianity B - 24147*

*Last update 13-02-2024*

*HU Credits:* 2

*Degree/Cycle:* 1st degree (Bachelor)

*Responsible Department:* Comparative Religion

*Academic year:* 0

*Semester:* 2nd Semester

*Teaching Languages:* Hebrew

*Campus:* Mt. Scopus

*Course/Module Coordinator:* Serge Ruzer

*Coordinator Email:* [Serge.Ruzer@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:Serge.Ruzer@mail.huji.ac.il)

*Coordinator Office Hours:* by appopintment

*Teaching Staff:*

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Dr. Serge Ruzer

Course/Module description:

*The course will address the core ideas and beliefs of nascent Christianity as expressed in the New Testament Epistles and the Book of Revelation – with a particular stress on those ideas' backdrop in various late Second Temple Jewish groups. Developments and metamorphoses in nascent Christian perceptions and their socio-historical setting will be emphasized.*

Course/Module aims:

*The course will aim at outlining basic ideas and metamorphoses in the beliefs of early Jesus' followers as attested in the NT epistles and in the Book of Revelation*

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

*On successful completion of this course, the students will become aware of the multifaceted nature of the early Jesus movement and will be able to discern the variety of positions and the metamorphoses of belief that characterized the movement in the first century -- as attested in the NT epistles and in the Book of Revelation.*

Attendance requirements(%):

100%

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Frontal teaching that engages the students in discussions of textual evidence and research models.*

Course/Module Content:

*1. Introduction. Epistles and Revelation as part of early Christian literary output and the New Testament corpus. Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles: between his letters and Acts.*

*2. Paul's beliefs at the beginning of his career: apocalypticism 1 and 2 Thessalonians in light of Qumranic ideas.*

*3. Corinthian correspondence. 1 Corinthians and the polemic with the "perfect, free and knowledgeable." Comparison with the Gospel of Thomas. Moving the emphasis from eschatological salvation to Jesus' salvific death. 2 Corinthians. Old and New covenants. Qumranic motifs of a "collective of*

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anointed". On Mystical experience. Messiah as atoning sacrifice.

4. Philippians: witness to early stages of Jesus' deification? Philemon.

5. Galatians and the issue of the "works of the Torah" in comparative perspective. Abraham as the champion of faith; earthly and heavenly Jerusalem. Paul's stance in comparison to that of the Epistle of Barnabas.

6. Romans (A): intended audience and the question of the composition of the community in Rome. Between Jews and Hellenes. The source of sin and Jesus' atoning death. Jesus as second Adam. Romans as a synthesis of previous attempt to define the attitude toward the Torah and its ritual commandments.

7. Romans (B: delay in redemption and changes in Paul's eschatological agenda. Emphasis on the Messiah's atoning death.

8. Hebrews: notion of Jesus' eternal heavenly priesthood in context. The issue of the dating and intended audience.

9. Period after the generation of the first apostles Pseudo-Pauline epistles: Colossians, Ephesians. Against mystical trends. Messiah as God's logos.

10. Epistles attributed to other apostles: James, John, Judah and Peter. Variety of tendencies within Jesus movement.

11. Jesus followers in the hostile world. Book of Revelation and the apocalyptic genre before and after the destruction of the Temple. Core motifs, anti-Roman pathos and the issue of the dating, author and intended audience.

#### Required Reading:

- ל' הורטאדו, כיצד הפך ישוע לאל? באר שבע 2006.  
' ניר, הנצרות הקדומה: שלוש המאות הראשונות, רעננה 2009.  
ד' פלוסר, 'כת מדבר יהודה והנצרות לפני פאולוס', הנ"ל, יהדות ומקורות הנצרות, תל אביב 1979.  
א' רגב, 'האומנם היה מיסיון לגויים בראשית הנצרות?', זמנים 120 (סתיו 2012), עמ' 80-89.  
ס' רוזר, 'אמונה משיחית ביהדות וסוגיית משיחיותו של ישו במסורת הנוצרית הקדומה', זמנים 120 (סתיו 2012), עמ' 40-51.

K. P. Donfried, "Paul and Judaism: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 as a Test Case," *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 242-253.

B. D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York, Oxford, 1997).

P. Fredriksen, "Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2," *Journal of Theological Studies* 42: 532-564.

P. Fredriksen, "Paul, Purity, and the Ekklesia of the Gentiles," in J. Pastor and M.

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Mor, *The Beginnings of Christianity* (Jerusalem, 2005), 205-217.

J. Gager, "Introduction," in idem, *Reinventing Paul* (New York, 2000).

G. E. Okeke, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: The Fate of the Unbelieving Jews," *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981): 127-136.

N. Perrin and D. C. Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (San Diego, 1982/1994).

C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York, 1982).

E. Rivkin, "Pharisaic Revolution," in idem, *The Shaping of Jewish History* (New York, 1971).

S. Ruzer, "The Death Motif in Late Antique Jewish Teshuva Narrative Patterns and in Paul's Thought" and "The Seat of Sin in Early Jewish and Christian Sources in J. Assman and G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Transforming the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 151-165, 367-391.

S. Ruzer, "Paul's Stance on the Torah Revisited: Gentile Addressees and the Jewish Setting," in Thomas G. Casey and Hustin Taylor (eds.), *Paul's Jewish Matrix* (Rome, 2011), pp. 75-98.

S. Ruzer, "From Man as Locus of God's Indwelling to Death as Temple's Destruction," *Revue biblique* 119.3 (2012): 382-402.

S. Ruzer, "James on Faith and Righteousness in the Context of a Broader Jewish Exegetical Discourse," in R. A. Clements and D. R. Schwartz (eds.), *New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism of the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 79-104.

K. Stendahl, *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis, 1995).

G. Stroumsa, "The Body of Truth and its Measures: New Testament Canonization in Context," in *ibid.*, *Hidden Wisdom* (Leiden, 1996).

*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1990).

#### Additional Reading Material:

ז' ואלה, הנצרות הקדומה: היסטוריה וספרות בתקופת כינונה (100–800), האוניברסיטה הפתוחה 2005.

א' לימור, בין יהודים לנוצרים, האוניברסיטה הפתוחה 1993.

א' קופסקי, 'האמונה הנוצרית הקדומה', זמנים 120 (סתיו 2012), עמ' 90–101.

י' קנוהל, בעקבות המשיח, ירושלים ותל אביב 2000.

D. Flusser, "The DSS and Pre-Pauline Christianity," in idem, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem, 1988).

P. Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Christ* (2nd edition; Yale University Press, 2000).

S. Ruzer, "Nascent Christianity between Sectarian and Broader Judaism: Lessons from the Dead Sea Scrolls," in A. Roitman, L. H. Schiffman and S. Tzoref (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 477-493.

K. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (London, 1976).

J. Taylor, "Paul and the Jewish Leaders at Rome: Acts 28:17-31," in T. G. Casey and

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*J. Taylor (eds.), Paul's Jewish Matrix (Rome, 2011), 311-326.*  
*G. Vermes, Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicaea AD 30-325 (London, 2012).*  
*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. F. L. Cross, (Oxford, 1957/1958/1978/1997).*

Grading Scheme:

*Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 80 %*  
*Mid-terms exams 20 %*

Additional information:

*None*