

Virginia Tech
REL /JUD/ HUM 3704: JEWS, CHRISTIANS, & THE IDEA OF JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY
 Spring 2013
 Dept. of Religion & Culture

*****DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE*****

CLASS TIME: MW 2:30-3:45pm

ROOM: 109 SURGE

WEBSITE: [HTTP://SCHOLAR.VT.EDU/](http://scholar.vt.edu/)

<p>PROF. MATTHEW GABRIELE EMAIL: mgabriele@vt.edu OFFICE: 342 Lane Hall Office Hours: MW 3:45-4:30pm</p>	<p>PROF. BENJAMIN SAX EMAIL: bsax@vt.edu OFFICE: 1319 West AJ Atrium Office Hours: TBA</p>
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COURSE DESCRIPTION & COURSE GOALS

In recent years the term Judeo-Christian culture has been tossed around....What is it? Has there ever been such a thing? Can these so-called religions embody a singular culture as opposed to some other culture? This course will investigate the historical and intellectual currents that have kept Christians and Jews together and kept them apart. We will move quickly through time, from the 1st c. CE to today. Along the way, we will study some key moments in depth to fill out our picture of how the relationship between these two “whatever-they-ares” has changed. No special knowledge of the material or foreign languages are prerequisites for this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Schäfer, Peter, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton, 2012). ISBN 0691153906
- Spiegel, Shalom, *The Last Trial: On the Legend and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice*, trans. Judah Goldin (Woodstock, VT, 1993). ISBN [187904529X](#)
- Wilken, Robert, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History & Thought* (New Haven, 1992). ISBN [0300060831](#)

COURSE ETIQUETTE

Classroom:

You may eat and drink in class, as long as it isn't a distraction to others. Please be sure to turn off all cell phones, PDAs, iPods, etc. before class begins. Also, you may use your computer to take notes but please mute the volume. What you do with VT's wireless network is up to you. You're all adults. Be aware, however, that if we determine that your actions are becoming a distraction to your fellow students – for any reason – we will ask you to leave the classroom.

Email:

Email is an essential component of this course and one of the primary means by which we'll communicate with you during the semester. Email, however, is not IM, nor is it Facebook. It's a more formal method of communication that you will undoubtedly use in your professional life both throughout your time at VT and in your future workplace. Until the end of the semester, we're not your Dad, we're not your friends, and we're not your boyfriends. Until the end of the semester, we're your bosses. To that end, be sure the message you're composing is appropriate to the person receiving it. If you have any questions,

please ask us or take a look at David Shipley and Will Schwalbe's *Send: The Essential Guide to Email for Office and Home* (<http://www.thinkbeforeyousend.com/>).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- 1 Midterm exam (20%)
- 2 Final exam (25%)
- 3 Plagiarism Quiz (2%)
- 4 Four 1-2 page reaction papers (40%)
- 5 On-line Quizzes (13%)

All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course. Final grades will be based on the following criteria:

A This mark is reserved for truly exceptional students, those who are among the best in the class. All written and oral work is of **superlative** quality—research, reading, writing, and discussion is all at the highest level, not only showing connections but also making them. Synthesis is a hallmark of this level of excellence; the basic materials are not simply recapitulated and rehearsed. Opinions and positions stated in the readings are thoughtfully critiqued and evaluated rather than accepted at face value. Papers display few, if any, typographical errors.

A- This evaluation indicates that you have executed **outstanding** work. It is not perfection, but it is nonetheless remarkable in both breadth and depth. An A- is awarded to work, which not only accurately and clearly presents the material at hand, but also presents more than occasional synthesis and thoughtfulness. Factual materials from lectures and assignments are evidently mastered, and there is original analysis as well. Assignments are executed in a more-than-adequate manner (including organization and proofreading of papers). Active and thoughtful participation in discussion groups are also required for this level of recognition.

B+ **Well done!** While a B+ may not be the grade of which dreams are made, it is nonetheless a sign of good work. Most, though not all, of the material has been mastered, and the presentation of work is clear, systematic, and accurate. Synthesis (the drawing of connections and presentation of unique insights) may occur in some places, though not consistently. It is clear to me that the readings and in-class materials were both taken into consideration. There may be some imbalance in the material—over-emphasis on a specific time-period or figure in an exam, over-reliance on only one or two secondary sources in a research paper, or sloppy proofreading of written assignments—or the work may lack a depth or specificity. This grade may also result from the combination of sound written work but lack of participation in class.

B Good job! At this level, the strength is generally mastery of the factual data. You have demonstrated a clear grasp of the materials and shown real accomplishment over the course of the semester. *All written assignments are adequate at this level.* Materials that are presented are typically correct, if prone to generalization; organization is clear if not sophisticated. There are no serious errors to speak of, but rather a sensation of “that was good—just give me more!” Papers that are, on the whole, good but that are perhaps in need of “one more draft” will often result in a grade of B, as will

exams that are correct in what they present but that lack originality of thought, organization, or high-level analysis and synthesis. Lack of participation in class will also contribute to a grade of B.

B- Work at this level is a **mixture** of strengths and weaknesses. The portfolio of work may be very uneven—some truly strong works counterbalanced by weaker materials, or a mixture of sound and flawed work within a single work—but overall the student displays a grasp of the fundamentals of the course. Factual data is generally correct, but an occasional serious error in basic knowledge may be present in written work. Lack of participation is also typical of this grade level.

C+ Essentially “**average**” work typifies this grade. At the C+ level, the student will demonstrate a grasp of the overall material in the class, but there will be consistent weaknesses as well. Occasional factual errors, poor organization, and gaps in material will be present in most written work at this level. Research papers typically demonstrate a mixture of weaknesses and strengths, as do exams. Participation may be erratic or minimal.

C The student who receives a grade of C demonstrates an **uneven** grasp of the fundamentals of the course. Facility with certain basic points of the course will be evident, but confusion may also be present. Over-reliance on a single source of information, uncritically accepted, will be a common source of problems at this level. Also, papers that are written without adequate citations are automatically lowered to this level. Papers with serious flaws in organization, conceptualization, or proofreading will also be common in students at the C level. Participation is minimal.

C- A grade of C- indicates a **flawed** grasp of the material. Basic concepts are cited but clearly not understood. Factual misunderstandings are common. The basic content of the course is familiar, but there is an absence of supporting detail. Papers lack any analysis of texts, and display weak organization and writing skills. Exams are rote and thin recapitulations of material from in-class discussions and/or readings. Participation is minimal.

D **Seriously flawed** work will receive a grade of D. Basic concepts are misunderstood or absent. Writing is of a poor quality. Exams are superficial and inadequate. Students receiving this grade may have a high rate of absence from class lectures and lack of participation in class discussions.

F Lack of interest, engagement, and seriousness is evident at this level. Written assignments, class participation, and involvement are treated casually, if at all. Work is of an **inferior** quality across the board. Students receiving this grade may have a high rate of absence from class lectures and lack of participation in class discussions (see below).

PREPARATION

Students are required to keep up with all assigned readings so that they can participate in classroom discussions and write coherent reaction papers. Students who read the assignments consistently and have excellent class attendance will gain a solid foundation for understanding the course material, and should have no problem writing successful papers and exams.

ATTENDANCE & CLASS PARTICIPATION

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at each class. Students are permitted 5 unexcused absences. Any more than 5 unexcused absences will lower the student's final grade; *more than six unexcused absences will result in an "F" for the course.*

Students are expected to participate if they want to receive full points. You should plan on talking – asking questions, responding to prompts, etc. – in this class. Feel free to disagree with anything either your classmates or professors say, but be respectful in your tone.

MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS

The midterm and final examination will cover the first and second half of the course, respectively. Students will be expected not only to demonstrate a mastery of the lecture contents and reading materials, but also their ability to think clearly and critically about issues raised during class discussions.

FOUR 1-2 PAGE REACTION PAPERS

Students are required to turn in via Scholar four 1-2 page, double-spaced typed response papers. **You will turn in 1 reaction paper each for units 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the course.** For each reaction paper, students may relate what we're discussing in that unit to (a) a current newspaper article, (b) the film we're showing for that unit, or (c) something we talked about in class. They are required to maintain a high standard of writing, revealing clarity of thought and critical engagement with the material. No papers will be accepted after the last day of class. *Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.*

ON-LINE QUIZZES:

These will be brief, short-answer quizzes given at various points during the semester to gauge your progress in mastering the material of the course. They will be taken on Scholar.

PLAGIARISM QUIZ:

A handout will be provided with details. You will only receive credit for this assignment if you turn it in on time. If you miss the due date for some reason, you **MUST** still turn it in. Although this is only worth 2% of your final grade, successful completion of this assignment is **ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL** to passing this class.

MOVIE SERIES:

During the semester, we will show a series of movies. These are optional but food will be provided and you will receive **extra credit** if you attend. A full schedule will be provided in class.

WRITTEN WORK:

All written work must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and include one inch margins, unless otherwise instructed. All papers must include a title and contain appropriate citations (MLA or Chicago/Turabian). You will be given a "Tools for Writing" worksheet to guide you on your assignments and you will be required follow the guidelines therein. *Only hardcopies will be accepted.*

THE VIRGINIA TECH HONOR PLEDGE

All students in this course will be held to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity and are required to adhere to the Virginia Tech honor pledge, which is as follows: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment." For more information please visit: <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION

- JAN. 23:** **THINKING ABOUT RELIGION & CULTURE**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Texas State Board of Education, Revised Guidelines (March 2010).
- JAN. 28:** **EXEGESIS & EISEGESIS**
 Required readings: Genesis 1:1 (Bring a Bible to class)
 Schäfer, *Jewish Jesus*, pp. 21-54 (chapter 1).
- JAN. 30:** **EXEGESIS & EISEGESIS CONTINUED...**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 253-80.
Bereshit Rabba 1:1

UNIT 2: CONFUSIONS OF THE FIRST CENTURIES

- **FEB. 4:** **ROME & THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE 1ST C. BCE**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, pp. 29-62.
PLAGIARISM QUIZ DUE
- FEB. 6:** **THE BEGINNINGS OF THE JESUS MOVEMENT**
 Required readings: Schäfer, *Jewish Jesus*, pp. 214-35 (chapter 8).
 Robert Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, pp. 46-64.
- FEB. 11:** **THE RABBIS**
 Required readings: Schäfer, *Jewish Jesus*, pp. 103-49 (chapter 4).
- FEB. 13:** **ALEXANDRIA: PHILO, ORIGEN, & MONASTICISM**
 Required readings: Robert Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, pp. 65-81.
 ONLINE
 David Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian & Jew," pp. 1-18.
<http://www.torreys.org/philo-art/philoalexindex.html>
- FEB. 18:** **ABRAHAM OR ISAAC: GENESIS 22**
 Required readings: ONLINE
 Gen 22: 1-19
<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=149223781>
 Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, pp. 3-16; 77-138.
- **FEB. 20:** **NO CLASS**
- **THURS. FEB. 21** ****SPECIAL LECTURE****
AUGUSTINE & THE JEWS
PROF. SAMUEL COLLINS (HISTORY, GEORGE MASON)

FEB. 25: **JERUSALEM: BAR KOCHBA & CONSTANTINE**
 Required readings: Robert Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, pp. 82-100.

UNIT 3: THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

FEB. 27: **TALMUD ON TRIAL**
 IN-CLASS MOVIE
THE DISPUTATION: NACHMONIDES DEBATES BEFORE KING JAMES OF ARAGON (1991)

MARCH 4: **TALMUD ON TRIAL CONTINUED**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 “The *Vikuh* of Nahmanides” and “The Christian Account of the Barcelona,” in *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages*, ed. and trans Hyam Maccoby, pp. 102-152

****MARCH 6:** **MIDTERM**

SPRING BREAK

MARCH 18: **KABBALAH**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Ezekiel 1
Parashat Be-Reshit in the *Zohar* trans. Daniel C. Matt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 107-133.

MARCH 20: **JOACHIM OF FIORE**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Brett Whalen, *Dominion of God*, 100-24.

MARCH 25: **MAIMONIDES AND THE GUIDE**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Joel L. Kraemer, “Moses Maimonides: An Intellectual Portrait,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Maimonides*, ed. Kenneth Seeskin, pp.10-57

MARCH 27: **THOMAS AQUINAS**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 David Burrell, “Aquinas and Islamic and Jewish Thinkers,” pp. 60-82.

APRIL 1: **BURNING BOOKS**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Condemnation of 1277
 Peter Olivi, *Commentary on Apocalypse*
http://www.history.vt.edu/Burr/heresy/beguins/olivi/Olivi_Apoc.html

APRIL 3: **BURNING PEOPLE**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Samuel K. Cohn, "The Black Death & the Burning of the Jews," pp. 3-36.

APRIL 8: **EARLY MODERN "TOLERANCE"**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Luther, *On the Jews & Their Lies*, pp. 164-177
 Luther, *Preface to the Book of Daniel*, pp. 122-25.
 Luther, *Lectures on Genesis 12*, pp. 129-136

UNIT 4: ENLIGHTENMENT AND ITS DISCONTENTS

APRIL 10: **SPINOZA, KANT, & THE THEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL PREDICAMENT**
 Required reading: SCHOLAR
 Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Samuel Shirley
 (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), ch. 7 (pp. 88-107).

APRIL 15: **FAITH IN THE FOUNDERS: THE UNITED STATES**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 David L. Holmes, *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers*, pp. 39-51, 79-89.
 William Pencak, "Anti-Semitism, Toleration, & Appreciation: The
 Changing Relations of Jews & Gentiles," pp. 241-62.

APRIL 17: **THE CIVIL WAR AND "CIVIL RELIGION"**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Harry Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation*, pp. 248-58, 265-92, 457-59.

APRIL 22: **HOLOCAUST**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Susannah Heschel, "Draining Jesus of Jewishness," *The Aryan Jesus: Christian
 Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*, pp. 26-66.

APRIL 24: **ANTI-COMMUNISM AND THE BIRTH OF "NEW" JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Mark Silk, "Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition in America," pp. 65-85.

UNIT 5: THE NEW PROMISED LAND

APRIL 29: **MORMONISM: "REAL" AMERICAN JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 J. Spencer Fluhman, "*A Peculiar People*," pp. 21-48.

MAY 1: **ISRAEL**
 Required readings: SCHOLAR
 Ben Halpern, "Zionism," *20th Century Jewish Religious Thought*, pp. 1069-1077
Jew in the Modern World: pp. 275-276, 413, 529-531, 533-537, 541-543,
 544-545, 548-549, 582-584, 593-594, 603-611, 622-633.

MAY 6:

Required readings:

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

SCHOLAR

Tristan Sturm, "The Immanence of an Imminent Apocalypse: Christian Zionists and Israel as the New Redeemer Nation-and-State," pp. 333-41.

Shalom Goldman, *Zeal for Zion*, pp. 289-308.

****MAY 7:**

****SPECIAL EVENT****

MEL GIBSON'S *THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST*

PROF. NEAL KING (SOCIOLOGY, VT)

May 8:

Required readings:

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM IN FLORIDA

SCHOLAR

Annabel Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, pp. 189-232.

**** MONDAY, MAY 13 ****

2:05-4:05PM

FINAL EXAM