

NT 6309: Ancient Judaism and the New Testament

Educational Goals

1. The student will identify and offer informed discussion of major issues in the interpretation of representative books of the New Testament (Gospels and Acts, Pauline letters, General Letters, Apocalypse).
2. The student will articulate the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith with reference to major emphases of the Orthodox, Catholic, Reformation, Evangelical, and Restoration theological traditions.
3. The student will conduct research on topics in biblical and theological studies with the use of bibliographic indices and databases (ATLA Religion Index, NT/OT Abstracts, etc.).

Course Objectives:

1. The student will acquire a familiarity with the history of the Jewish people in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods.
2. The student will become conversant with Jewish literature written during these periods and, through this literature, with aspects of Jewish religion and theology in the milieu of early Christianity.
3. The student will explore exegetical issues in NT texts that are illuminated by comparison with ancient Jewish theology.

Required Reading

1. Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (2d ed.)
2. G. W. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (2d ed.)
3. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation*
4. Jon Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*
5. Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the NT*
6. Articles and book chapters on reserve in the Library (2d floor)

Means of Assessment (a.k.a. Assignments)

1. A critical review (6 pp.) of a major text on ancient Judaism, selected from a list to be made available early in the course; the student may also propose works cited in the bibliography or notes of the assigned texts. The review should summarize the thesis or principal contribution(s) of the work under review and highlight the ancient source(s) on which it focuses, as well as noting its implications for New Testament exegesis. Reviews will be presented orally to the class during the months of September or October and are due in written form **at the beginning of class on November 5**. Students unfamiliar with the procedure for a critical book review are encouraged to consult Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book*. Good models for your review can be found in the *Review of Biblical Literature* (online at www.bookreviews.org) and in the review section at the back of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, and *Interpretation*, among other publications.

2. An exegetical essay (12 pp.) treating a NT text that can be clarified through the study of ancient Judaism. The student will present an oral précis of the paper during the month of November or December. A good discussion of exegetical method Michael D. Gorman's *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*; works that will aid in the preparation of an exegesis are discussed in Gorman and more thoroughly in Frederick W. Danker, *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*. **(due Wednesday, December 8 by 5 PM)**

Meeting and Reading Schedule

- Sept. 10 — History of Ancient Judaism: From the First Destruction to the Second
Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 1–50
Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 1–8
- Sept. 17 — The Jerusalem Temple and “Common Judaism”
Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 51–118
- Sept. 24 — Sects and Groups in Ancient Judaism
Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 119–166
Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 147–184
- Oct. 1 — Scripture, Exegesis, and Revelation
Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 167–204
Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 9–28
- Oct. 8 — Surveying the Literature of Ancient Judaism
Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*
- Oct. 15 — Torah and Ethics
Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 29–60
- Oct. 22 — Salvation/Redemption
Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 61–88
- Oct. 29 — Messiahs and Deliverers
Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 89–117
- Nov. 5 — Eschatology
Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 119–146
Book Review Due at Beginning of Class
- Nov. 12 — Resurrection
Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*
- Nov. 19 — NO CLASS MEETING
- Nov. 26 — Incarnation and Ancient Judaism

Bauckham, *God Crucified*

Dec. 33 — Conclusion

Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 205–223

Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins*, 185–200

Wednesday, Dec. 8 — Exegetical Essay Due by 5 PM