

Founders of Christianity

Professor Laurence H. Kant

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York University
1995-96

AS/HUMA 2830.06A

WC137 on Mondays and Tuesdays from 10:00-11:30

OFFICE HOURS: Tu. 3:00-5:00 in Vanier 219, or by appointment. Telephone Numbers: 736-5158 (humanities); ext. 66987 (office); 650-2326 (York home)

PURPOSE: The course will approach this material from the point of view of the academic study of religion. There are no prerequisites, nor are there any presumptions as to religious background or commitment.

In general, we will examine early Christianity as one of the religions of the Mediterranean world, in some ways continuous, and in some ways discontinuous, with Judaism, Near Eastern religions, and Graeco-Roman religions. In the first portion of the course, we will concentrate on early Christianity as it emerges in the first and early second centuries C.E., using the New Testament as our primary source text. After placing Christianity in the broader context of the ancient world, we will pay particular attention to the letters of Paul (the earliest extant Christian texts), the Synoptic gospels, the quest for the historical Jesus, and the formation of institutions. For the remainder of the year, we will focus on the history of early Christianity from the second through the fourth centuries C.E., studying “heresy” and “orthodoxy,” allegory and Platonic Christianity, Gnosticism, persecution and martyrdom, asceticism and monasticism, doctrinal debates, and conversion (Constantine and Augustine). At the same time, we will investigate the development of Christianity from a minority religious group to a state religion. By the end of the course, students should have a basic knowledge of texts, events, persons, groups, and dates, as well as an understanding of the essential characteristics of early Christianity in different periods and geographical areas. Students should also acquire skills in reading and analyzing early Christian texts.

BASIC READING OUTLINE: In the first portion of the course, students will need to pay close attention to New Testament texts and to bring their bibles and New Testament synopses (when relevant) to class. For background on New Testament literature, students will be consulting D. G. Duling/N. Perrin, The New Testament, as well as the books by W. A. Meeks, P. Fredriksen and D. E. Aune. As an additional source book, we will be using D. R. Cartlidge, Documents for the Study of the Gospels. There will also be handouts, including primary sources, term lists, and chronologies. To provide a narrative outline in the second portion of the course, students will read H. Chadwick, The Early Church (traditional approach) and R. M. Grant, Augustus to Constantine (with more social history). If you cannot keep up with the reading for a particular class, look both books over and choose to read from one or the other. The reading in these books may be supplemented at any time by more detailed reading in W. H. C. Frend, The Rise of Christianity on reserve at Scott Library. A fundamental resource for early Christian writers after the New Testament is the multi-volume work, Patrology (ed. by J. Quasten and A. di Berardino and on Scott Library reserve). In addition, every week there will be examination of primary texts (many of which are included in the books for purchase listed below) and/or archaeological data. Books for purchase (all of which should also be on reserve at Scott Library) are the following:

Aland, Kurt. Synopsis of the Four Gospels.
Aune, David E. (ed.). Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament.
Cartlidge, David R.; David L. Dungan (eds.). Documents for the Study of the Gospels. 2nd ed.
Chadwick, Henry. The Early Church. 2nd ed.
Duling, Dennis C.; Norman Perrin. The New Testament. 3rd ed.
Fredriksen, Paula. From Jesus to Christ.
Grant, Robert M. Augustus to Constantine.
Layton, Bentley. The Gnostic Scriptures.
Meeks, Wayne A. The First Urban Christians.
Meeks, Wayne A. (gen. ed.). The HarperCollins Study Bible.
Staniforth, Maxwell (trans.); Andrew Louth (intro. and ed. by). Early Christian Writings. 2nd ed.
Stevenson, J.; Frend, W. H. C. (rev. by). A New Eusebius. 2nd ed.
Waddell, Helen. The Desert Fathers.
Warner, Rex. (trans.); Vernon J. Bourke (intr.). The Confessions of St. Augustine.

REQUIREMENTS: two in-class exams (the first worth 20% percent and the second worth 20%), two papers (the first worth 20% and the second worth 20%), leadership in two class discussions (10%), class participation (worth 10%). An extra weighting will be given to the best exam or paper grade. The exams (November 14 and March 19) will be primarily ID exams, where students will be expected to provide short descriptions of important persons, events, movements, geographical locations, terms, and dates. There will be a choice of ID's, and, prior to the tests, students will be given a guide explaining how to write an ID. There may also be a very brief essay on a small topic. Papers (due December 11 and April 15) will involve analysis of primary texts, and (with clearance from the instructor) students will be able to choose their topics. Paper length will probably be somewhere within the range of ten to twelve pages, though somewhat shorter papers are certainly possible. If students so desire, they will be able to work in teams, in which case a somewhat more extensive presentation will be expected. It will also be feasible to combine the first and second papers into a larger project. All students are encouraged to give the instructor outlines and rough drafts for perusal well before the due date. Finally, each student (or team of two or three students) will help the instructor to lead a class discussion. In doing this, students will need to meet with me prior to the class, where we will go over strategies and outlines. Improvement during the year will be a major factor in determining grades. Attendance and active participation in class will be considered part of the class grade.

NOTE: The Division of Humanities cannot afford to pay for photocopies of source materials and other handouts given to students. So, at the beginning of each term, I will request \$8.00 from each student to pay for photocopies--I can only give photocopies to those who have paid in advance. Of course, I will refund students for any photocopies not made.

September 11 Problems and General Issues in the Study of Ancient Christianity

September 12 The New Testament as an Historical Document
Duling/Perrin, pp. 99-135

September 18-19, October 2 Judaism and the Near East

Duling/Perrin, pp. 35-63, 75-94, 555-62

Grant, Chapter 2

1 Maccabees 1.1-3.9 and all of 2 Maccabees (Bible, Apocrypha);

G. Vermes, Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 81-99 (on Reserve at Scott Library), "Damascus Rule"

Cartlidge/Dungan, "Rabbi Akiba", "Life of Moses," pp. 182-83, 247-84
Wonderworking Handouts (will hand out on 9/19)

September 25-26 **NO CLASSES** (York University classes are cancelled on Rosh ha-Shanah)

October 2-3, 10 The Graeco-Roman World and the Oikoumene

READ: Grant, Chapter 1

Duling/Perrin, pp. 1-33, 45-50, 64-74

Cartlidge/Dungan, "Teachings," "Miracles," "Apollonius of Tyana," "Alexander the False Prophet," (137-65, 203-47, 284ff.)

Meeks, First Urban Christians, Chap. 1

October 9 **NO CLASS** (York University classes are cancelled on Thanksgiving)

October 10, 16-17, 23-24, 30 Paul and the Mission to Non-Jews: The Formation of Early Christian Pauline Communities

READ: Oct. 10: Life of Paul

2 Corinthians 11.16-12.19; Philippians 3.2-6; and Galatians 1.13-2.21; Romans 11.1; Acts 22.3-5, 22.25-29

Duling/Perrin, pp. 177-213

Grant, Chapter 3

October 16 Conversion of Paul: Pharisee, Convert, Missionary

Galatians 1.13-17; 1 Corinthians 9.1, 15.5-8; 2 Corinthians 12.1-10; and Acts 9.1-9; c. 22; c. 26 (also 7.54-8.3)

Aune, Graeco-Roman Literature, Chap. 5

Start reading First Urban Christians, pp. 50ff.

(W. Meeks) for October 23-November 6

October 17 Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity

READ: Galatians; Genesis 5.28-9.28, Acts 15

Meeks, First Urban Christians, pp. 51-73

Duling/Perrin, pp. 235-39

COMPARE: Galatians 1.11-2.15 (in W. Meeks) and Acts 15

October 23-24 Charisma and Organization: Religious Practices of the Corinthian Christians

READ: 1 Corinthians

Duling/Perrin, pp. 223-30

Meeks, First Urban Christians, pp. 74-139

Grant, Chaps. 4-5

October 24-30 On the Road and on the High Seas in the Ancient World

READ: Acts 27

Aune, Graeco-Roman Literature, Chaps. 3-4

Fredriksen, pp. 52-61

October 30-31 Thessalonica and Corinth: Missionary in
Action and the “End of Time” as a Hortatory Tool

READ: 1 Thessalonians; 2 Corinthians; 2 Thessalonians
Duling/Perrin, pp. 221-23, 230-32, 262-65
Meeks, First Urban Christians, pp. 140-63

November 6 Rome: Conversion and the Law

READ: Romans
Duling/Perrin, pp. 239-56
Meeks, First Urban Christians, pp. 164-92

November 7, 13, 27-28, December 4-5, 7, January 8-9 The Synoptic Gospels and the Quest for the Historical Jesus

In all sections below, also examine parallel sections in the Gospel of John

November 7-13 The Problem of Sources and Q

Using K. Aland’s Synopsis, study section on John the Baptist (1. Mk. 1.1-11, Matt. 3.1-17, Lk. 3.1-22; 2. Matt. 11.2-19, Lk. 7.18-35; 3. Matt. 14.1-12; Mk. 6.14-29; Lk. 9.7-9); One’s Enemies (Mt. 5.43-48, Lk. 6.27-36); The Sick Healed at Evening (Mk. 1.32-34, Matt. 8.16-17, Lk. 4.40-41); Healing of the Paralytic (Mk. 2.1-12, Matt. 9.1-8, Lk. 5.17-26); Divisions in Households (Mt. 10.34-36; Lk. 12.51-53); Jesus’s True Relatives (Mk. 3.31-35, Matt. 12.46-50, Lk. 8.19-21); Parable of the Sower (Mk. 4.1-9, Mt. 13.1-9, Lk. 8.4-8); What Defiles a Person (Mk. 7.1-23, Mt. 15.1-20, Lk. 11.37-41, Lk. 6.39); The Rich Young Man (Mk. 10.17-31, Matt. 19.16-30, Lk. 18.18-30); Parable of the Marriage Feast (Matt. 22.1-14; Lk. 14.15-24; Gospel of Thomas 64 in Cartlidge/Dungan, pp. 31-32); The Great Commandment (Mk. 12.28-34, Matt. 22.34-40, Lk. 10.25-28); Jesus Before the Sanhedrin and Peter’s Denial (Mk. 14.53-72, Matt. 26.57-75, Lk. 22.54-71); The Sentence of Death (Mk. 15.6-15, Matt. 27.15-26, Lk. 23.17-25)

READ: Duling/Perrin, pp. 141-72
Aune, Graeco-Roman Literature, Chapter 1

November 14 **EXAMINATION**

November 27 Quest for the Historical Jesus, With Special
Focus on the Sermon on the Mount

READ: Aland, Synopsis, Matt. 5.1-7.29
(with parallels in Luke 6.17-49)
Duling/Perrin, 507-47
Fredriksen, Chapter 6

November 20-21 **NO CLASSES** (make sure to work on your papers)

November 28 Miracles

1. The Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law, The Sick Healed at Evening:
Mk. 1.29-34, Matt. 8.14-17, Lk. 4.38-41
2. Calming the Storm, The Gerasene Demoniac, The Healing of the Paralytic, Jairus’ Daughter, Woman with a Hemorrhage, Two Blind Men Healed, The Healing of a Mute Demoniac (Mk. 4.35-5.34; Matt. 8.23-9.8, 9.18-9.34; Lk. 8.22-8.56)
3. Feeding the Five Thousand, Jesus Walking on Water, Healings at Gennesaret, Healing of Sick Persons, Feeding the Four Thousand, Miraculous Catch of Fish
(Mk. 6.30-56, 7.31-8.10; Matt. 14.13-36, 15.29-39; Lk. 5.1-11, 9.10-17)

December 4-5 The Passion Narrative

READ: Mk. 14-15; Matt. 26-27; Luke 22-23
Cartlidge/Dungan, "Sacraments", "Apocalyptic Predictions,
Martyrdom, "Ascensions" pp. 165-202

December 7 Burial Traditions and Resurrection Appearances

READ: Mk. 15.42-16.20; Matt. 27.57-28.20; Luke 23.50-24.53; 1 Cor 15

December 7 Birth Narrative

READ: Matt. 1-2, Luke 1-2
Cartlidge/Dungan, "Birth and Youth" (pp. 129-36)

January 8-9 Mark: The Revelation of Secrets as
The End of Time Approaches

READ: Fredriksen, pp. 27-52 and Chapter 9
READ ALL Gospel of Mark (pay special attention to the
Synoptic Apocalypse 13.1-37)
Duling/Perrin, pp. 295-325

SKIM Gospel of Matthew: Christianity, A Movement within
Judaism

OPTIONAL Duling/Perrin, pp. 329-60

SKIM Gospel of Luke: Biography and Theios Aner

OPTIONAL Duling/Perrin, pp. 365-92

January 15 Book of Acts

READ: Read the Book of Acts, with particular focus on chaps. 1-8
Duling/Perrin, pp. 392-400

January 15-16 Gospel of John

READ: Gospel of John
Duling/Perrin, pp. 403-42

January 16, 22-23 The Postponement of the End of Time and the Development
of Christian Institutions and Rituals

READ: Chadwick, Chapter 2
1-2 Timothy (Bible)
Epistles of Ignatius (in Staniforth, pp. 55-114)
Didache (in Staniforth, pp. 187-99)
New Eusebius, nos. 6-7, 30, 93-96, 102
(pp. 7-9, 51-52, 111-17, 122)

January 23, 29 Early Christian Apocalyptic: Revelation and Montanism

READ: Revelation
Duling/Perrin, pp. 447-68
Grant, Chapter 9
New Eusebius, nos. 84-90 (Chapter 8)

January 29-30, February 5 Christian Theological Literature, Graeco-Roman
Philosophy, and Allegory

READ: Grant, Chapter 15; Chadwick, Chapter 6
New Eusebius, nos. 156-67, 181-83, 191
(pp. 179-89, 205-07, and 211-12)

READ: Epistle of Barnabas (in Staniforth, pp. 155-84)
Ptolemy's Letter to Flora (in B. Layton, Gnostic
Scriptures, pp. 306-15)

Origen and Alexandrian Christianity
New Eusebius, nos. 168-91 (Chap. 16)
Origen, On First Principles (edited by
G. W. Butterworth, pp. 1-14, 40-94)

February 5-6, 12-13, 19 Gnosticism
February 5-6

READ: Layton, Gnostic Scriptures xiv-xxvii, 5-21
Gospel of Truth (Layton, pp. 250-64)

February 12

READ: Grant, Chapter 8
Apocryphon of John (Layton, pp. 23-51)

February 13

READ: Layton, Gnostic Scriptures, 359-65)
Gospel of Thomas (Layton, pp. 376-99)
Hymn of the Pearl (Layton, pp. 371-75)

February 19

READ: Gospel According to Phillip, pp. 325-353

February 19 Graeco-Roman Views of Christianity and Apologetic Literature

READ: Grant, Chaps. 6-7
New Eusebius, nos. 16-17, 33-41, 106-19, 189-90
(pp. 18-21, pp. 58-67, 128-37, pp 210-11)
Handout, "Apologetic"

February 20, March 4 Martyrdom in Christianity: Local and State Persecutions

READ: Chadwick, Chapter 7; Grant, Chapter 17
New Eusebius, nos. 1-5, 16-25, 188, 192-202,
221-24, 237-47 (pp. 1-6, 18-46, 210,
213-23, 247-51, 269-81)
The Martyrdom of Perpetua: either Kraemer, no. 53 or Musurillo,
pp. 107-31 (both on Scott Library reserve)

OPTIONAL: More details can be found on any period of persecution
in W. H. C. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution (on reserve)

Feb. 26-27 **NO CLASSES** (York University classes are cancelled during Reading Week)

March 5, 11 Christian Popular Literature: Magic, Miracle, and Prophecy

READ: Cartlidge/Dungan pp. 76-120)
Grant, Chapter 11

March 11-12 Christian Asceticism and Women

READ: Acts of Thomas 1-2, 6, 9-13 (on Scott reserve in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, vol. 2)
Acts of Paul and Thecla in entirety (on Scott reserve in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, vol. 2)
New Eusebius, nos. 29, 31-32, 83 (pp. 50-51, 52-57, 100-01)
Kraemer, Maenads, nos. 101-06 (on Scott reserve, pp. 224-30)

March 18 Early Christian Art and Archaeology

READ: R. Milburn, Early Christian Art and Architecture: Chapters 3-4 (pp. 19-57) and pp. 58-65 (on Scott Library reserve)
J. Stevenson, The Catacombs and A. Grabar, The Beginnings of Christian Art: look at the pictures throughout the book (both are on Scott Library reserve)
New Eusebius, no. 92 (pp. 110-11)

Christianity in Rome

READ: New Eusebius, nos. 120-29 (pp. 138-53)

March 19 **EXAMINATION**

March 25 Christianity in North Africa: Tertullian

READ: Grant, Chapter 14
New Eusebius, nos. 84-90, 137-55, 203-20 (pp. 102-08, 160-78, 225-46)
Tertullian: either On Purity (on Scott reserve in Tertullian, Treatises on Penance, pp. 53-125) or Monogamy (on Scott reserve in Tertullian, Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage, pp. 67-108)

March 26 The Conversion of Constantine and the Toleration of Christianity

READ: Chadwick, Chapter 8; Grant, Chap. 18
J. W. Eadie (ed.), The Conversion of Constantine, pp. 9-14, 1-8 (on Scott Library reserve)
New Eusebius, nos. 274-79 (pp. 317-20)
OPTIONAL: For those interested in the conversion of Constantine, you might want to read Eadie's entire book.

April 1 The Arian Controversy (Including Council of Nicaea and the Preeminence of Athanasius of Alexandria). The Influence of the State on Church Dogma and Politics

READ: Chadwick, Chapters 8-9
New Eusebius, nos. 280-307 (pp. 321-72)

April 2-8 Monasticism: Early Christianity in Egypt and Syria

READ: Chadwick, Chapter 12
H. Waddell, Desert Fathers, pp. 26-97, 166-201

April 8-9 Augustine and Conversion

READ: Chadwick, Chapter 15
Confessions: Chapters 1-8: Students will group themselves in teams of four and be responsible for discussing two chapters (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8).
For background on Augustine, students should consult P. Brown,

Augustine of Hippo (on Scott Library reserve).