

## JUDAISM AND THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

Lecturer/co-ordinator: Dr Sacha Stern

Credit value: 1 unit

Degrees: BA Jewish History, BA History and Jewish Studies (years 2-4); MA Hebrew and Jewish Studies

Course code: HEBR7759, HEBRG069

Academic year: 2009/10

### Course description

In the past decades, increasing recognition has been given to the Jewish origins of Christianity and the Jewish context in which Christianity was formed. The scope and implications of this topic are wide. This course will restrict itself to the following, specific objectives:

Firstly, to assess the nature of Judaism and Jewish life in the period when Christianity arose. This will involve the study of various Jewish groups that were active in this period, such as Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, as well as the study of post-Biblical Jewish literature including the Dead Sea scrolls. Students will gain an appreciation of the complexity of Judaism and its importance in ancient society.

Secondly, to assess the nature of early Christianity in relation to Judaism, and to discuss whether, when, and how, Christianity ‘parted ways’ from Judaism. Particular attention will be given to Jesus, Paul, and their successors’ attitudes to the Jewish people, Jewish law, and Judaism.

Thirdly, to consider Jewish-Christian relations, Christian attitudes to Judaism, and Jewish attitudes to Christianity, in the first few centuries of the Common Era.

### Requirements and assessment

Admission to this course is open to students of all backgrounds and disciplines. All texts will be studied in translation.

The course will comprise two hours of lectures per week, over a total of 22 weeks. Lectures will take place in Rockefeller 336 (first 6 lectures) on Wednesdays at 11 – 1:00, starting from 7 October 2009.

*MA students will also attend a seminar, one hour fortnightly.*

BA Students are required to submit two 3000-word essays, the first on the last day of term 1 and the second on the last day of term 2. Term 1 essay will be on ancient Judaism, and term 2 essay on the origins of Christianity (see below). Essays count towards 50% of the total mark for the course. The remaining 50% will be assessed by a three-hour exam in term 3.

*MA assessment requirements are the same, except that essays are 4000-word long and count for 40% of the total mark for the course. In addition, MA students must make an oral presentation at the MA seminar that counts for 10% of the total mark.*

*JYA students taking the entire course will be assessed as BA students. JYA students taking only one term will be assessed with one 5000-word essay only.*

### Essay questions

Students are encouraged to write essays on more specific topics, but only in consultation with the lecturer and with his/her approval.

#### Term 1.

1. Discuss the socio-political peculiarities of 1<sup>st</sup>-century Judaea.
2. Discuss the evidence relating to *either* ONE of Josephus' 'three philosophies' *or* Jewish apocalypticism *or* 1<sup>st</sup>-century prophets *or* the 'fourth philosophy'.
3. Discuss what the Dead Sea Scrolls teach us about *either* ancient Judaism *or* early Christianity.

#### Term 2.

1. Assess the attitude of *either* Jesus *or* Paul towards Judaism.
2. Explain the rise and development of early Christianity.
3. Assess the importance of Jewish Christianity, Jewish Christians, and Christian Judaizers in Antiquity.
4. Discuss when and how Judaism and Christianity parted ways.
5. Analyze polemics between Jews and Christians in Antiquity.

Please note that essays must conform to the Departmental Style Sheet.

### **Programme of lectures**

#### Term 1.

1. Historical background: from the Hasmoneans to 70CE.
2. (a) Josephus' 'three philosophies' and 'common Judaism'. (b) The Sadducees.
3. The Pharisees (*haverim*, rabbis, scribes).
4. The Essenes.
5. Jewish apocalyptic literature.
6. Dead Sea Scrolls (1): general survey.
7. Dead Sea Scrolls (2): sectarian texts.
8. Dead Sea Scrolls and Christianity.
9. (a) The 'fourth philosophy'. (b) 1<sup>st</sup> century prophets.
10. Jesus as a historical figure.

Term 2.

11. Jesus and Judaism.
12. The beginnings of Christianity.
13. Paul and Diaspora Judaism.
14. Pagan God-fearers and Christian Judaizers (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries)
15. Jewish Christians (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries). Gnosticism.
16. The 'parting of ways': Sunday and Easter.
17. Anti-Jewish Christian polemic.
18. The blessing against the *minim*.
19. Christianity and Christians in early rabbinic literature.
20. Anti-Christian polemic in early rabbinic literature.

21-2. Revision.

*The MA Seminar (additional to the lectures) will be based on student presentations on a selection of essential modern scholarly works.*

### **Reading List**

Students must supplement the lectures with their own reading. This is a compulsory requirement, in addition to reading undertaken specifically for preparation of essays.

The list below is for general reading purposes. Other, more specialized readings will be necessary for preparation of essays.

Students are not expected to read the entire list below, but to make a selection based on their own interests. However, books marked with a \* are essential and students should make themselves familiar with these.

Further advice can be obtained from the lecturer.

#### General background.

\* E.Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.- A.D. 135)*, revised and edited by G.Vermes and F.Millar (and M.Black (vols.I-II), M.Goodman (vols.III.1-2)), 4 vols., Edinburgh: T.& T.Clark, 1973-87.

\* M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: the clash of ancient civilizations*. London: Allen Lane, 2007.

S.J.D.Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Philadelphia, 1987.

P.Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in Antiquity*, 1995.

L.H.Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions. A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and*

*Rabbinic Judaism*, Hoboken NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1998.

H. Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Penguin, 1993.

H. Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: from Galilee to Gregory the Great*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

\* A. D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity. A sourcebook*, London: Routledge, 2000.

#### Ancient Judaism and Jewish literature.

\* J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.), New York: Doubleday, 1984.

F. Garcia Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, Leiden: Brill, 1994

\* G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, London: Penguin, 1997 (or better even, the revised edition of 2004).

\* L.H.Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Philadelphia and Jerusalem: JPS, 1994.

M. E. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects, and Visions*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.

\* E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63BCE-66CE*, London: SCM Press, 1992.

\* G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. M. Bockmuehl, 2nd edn. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996.

#### Jesus and Paul

\* G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: a Historian's Reading of the Gospels*, 2nd edn., London: SCM Press, 1983.

G. Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, London: SCM Press, 1993.

G. Vermes, *Jesus in his Jewish Context*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

\* E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, London: Penguin, 1995.

P. Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ*, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988.

E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, London: SCM Press, 1983.

\* D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994.

### Early Christianity and Christian literature

S.Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*, New York, 1978.

\* G. Theissen, *The New Testament*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003

\* P. F. Esler (ed.), *The Early Christian World*, 2 vols., London: Routledge, 2000.

\* M. M. Mitchell and F. M. Young (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 1: *Origins to Constantine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

J. M. Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003.

\* J. M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

### Early Jewish-Christian relations.

J. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, London: Soncino, 1934.

\* M. Simon, *Verus Israel. A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (AD135-425)*, London: Littman Library, 1986.

J. Lieu, *Image and Reality. The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century*. Edinburgh: T. & T.Clark, 1997.

W. Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.

E. P. Sanders, A.I.Baumgarten, & A.Mendelson (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. II: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press and London: SCM Press, 1981.

\* D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: Hybrids, Heretics, and the Partition of Judeo-Christianity*, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2003/4.

A. H. Becker (ed.), *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2003.

M. Hirshman, *A Rivalry of Genius*, New York: SUNY Press, 1996.

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