RS 583 Jewish and Christian Origins : Assignments

All assignments must be typed to be accepted.

1. Paper

A. Paper Proposal due 23 Sept (5 points)

This should be a one-page, double-spaced discussion of your topic, indicating that you have done some preliminary reading, thinking, and research into your subject. The proposal should be relevant to the course. Think of the words "dialogue" and "conversation": your paper should somehow address the dialogical nature of the course. For example, if you do something on Jesus, it needs to discuss his relationship to the "Judaism" of his day, e.g. relations with Pharisees put into the historical context of gospel formation; relations with Jewish authorities, again put into the context of gospel formation, etc. Think dialogically and historically!

B. Annotated Bibliography due 14 October (15 points)

This should provide bibliographic information on at least 15 current sources (unless, for example, you are doing an explicitly historiographical article), with two or three sentences that indicate *your* evaluation of the source. In other words, you’ve looked at it and have a sense of how it will help you develop your paper. A sample will be posted online. Minimum requirements: five books published since 1990; five scholarly journal articles published since 1990; five additional sources (articles in books, *recent* commentaries, other relevant materials). Do not cut and paste the abstract from articles and present it as *your* annotation.

If you are doing some sort of primary source analysis (e.g. examining the works of Philo, or the works of Josephus), we can negotiate your bibliography.

Some suggestions: how do you find sources? A good place to start is to check the footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies of existing books and journals. This leads you to a wealth of sources. A good way to find other books is to check the Library of Congress page in a book you find helpful, and look up the subject headings in the library catalog; or, check the subject listings of books you find in the PAC. The library has some useful databases, e.g. New Testament Abstracts, Old Testament Abstracts, Religion Index One Online, Rambi (Jewish Studies), JSTOR (probably not that helpful), Project Muse (ditto). The American Theological Library Association database is the best, but can only be accessed through the San Diego Public Library (or remotely, if you have a San Diego library card). UCSD also carries ATLA. The SDSU Library’s Resource page is very helpful for getting started: http://infoguides.sdsu.edu/sub.php?id=76
C. Final paper due 9 December (30 points)

This is a 15-20 page paper plus endnotes (Chicago style, computer-generated endnote format). 20 pages, or 6,000-8,000 words, is the industry-standard for publishable articles. Although some are longer, you will find that they tend to be the exception rather than the rule. If you can write a cogent, yet detailed, argument within 20 pages, you will excel in a variety of courses, both graduate and undergraduate. This is an analytical paper which examines a particular issue in light of the question of origins. Although it can use biblical materials as evidence, it is not an exegetical paper nor biblical commentary. Think of the texts we are reading as examples of the way primary sources are used to construct an argument. They are important pieces, but are not the focus of the argument being made. We would suggest talking with us throughout the research and writing process to make sure you are on the right track with your analysis. We are happy to look at preliminary pages, outlines, rough drafts, and so on.

One thing experienced writers tell us, is that writing is a process of rewriting. Moreover, it is only as we begin to write that we understand what research we really need to do. Writing raises more questions that need to be answered by further study. This is to say that the earlier you start, the better your paper will be.

Important note on academic honesty—Executive Order 969, issued by the Chancellor of CSU (30 Jan 2006) states: "Academic dishonesty cases that occur in the classroom shall be handled by faculty members. However, after action has been taken by a faculty member, the faculty member shall complete a form that identifies the student who was found responsible, the general nature of the offense, the action taken, and a recommendation as to whether or not additional action should be considered by the campus judicial affairs office." Translation—if evidence of plagiarism is identified, not only are there consequences in the course, but faculty are required to report the incident to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.

2. Historiographical Analysis due 28 Oct (30 points)

Seven articles appear on Blackboard under "Course Documents," that run from 1908 to 1991. They reflect the changing nature of the understanding and explication of early Judaism and Christianity. In this assignment you will read these articles, and write an eight to ten-page paper, double-spaced, which describes and discusses the changes you see. You can discuss presuppositions, biases, language, assumptions, or anything else you observe that is noteworthy or of interest in these articles. Basically you are describing the way history has been told over the course of the 20th century. You are a reporter and an analyst: you report your observations, but you also analyze trends, fads, influences and so on. No footnotes or endnotes are needed, but put page numbers in parentheses (12) if you use quotations.
3. Reading Responses—2 due over the course of the semester (15 points each)

Because this is a graduate level course, the style of teaching and learning is much more participatory, and in seminar style. This means students teach each other and the faculty by presenting the week's readings. There are two components to the Reading Responses. The first is a one-page, single-spaced summary of one of the week's readings. You will provide all class members with a copy of your summary. This is worth 10 points. The second, is a 10-minute (and no more, please!) presentation of the material to your classmates. This means not repeating verbatim what is written in your summary (since we can read it), but rather raising questions about the readings, or noting significant points the readings make. In other words, what do you find *interesting* or *provocative* about the readings?? The oral presentation is worth 5 points. You will do this twice during the semester.

We will set up a schedule for the assignments in the second class session, and sample written summaries will be posted on Blackboard so you can see what to shoot for.