

**CAP 650 – HISTORICAL JESUS IN A POSTMODERN WORLD  
ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS  
SYLLABUS – FALL 2008**

**Instructor: Paul Chamberlain, PhD**  
**Three semester hours**  
**Wednesday 8:30 a.m. – 11:10 p.m.**

### **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Paul Chamberlain has taught at Trinity Western University since 1990 and has worked with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries during part of that time as well. His Ph.D. is from Marquette University (1990) in philosophy with specializations in ethics and philosophy of religion. His primary areas of teaching are Christian Apologetics, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion. He is the author of three books and a number of articles on social and apologetic issues. He currently serves as professor of Apologetics and Ethics at ACTS and is Director of the Institute for Christian Apologetics at ACTS.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The person and work of Jesus of Nazareth constitute much of Christianity's distinctiveness when compared with other world faiths and religions. But who was Jesus, and what, precisely, did his life, death, and resurrection accomplish for the human race? Historically, Christians have believed Jesus was God incarnate, that he rose from the dead after purchasing salvation for all who would believe on him, and that he now sits at the right hand of God the Father making intercession for his people. This course will introduce students to the major challenges to this understanding of Jesus as well as important responses to these challenges. While some attention will be given to historic challenges to the historic Christian understanding of Jesus, our primary focus will be on contemporary challenges. Students will read and interact with both critics and defenders of this historical conception of Jesus and, in the process, hopefully deepen their appreciation for Jesus, himself, and what he has accomplished for the world.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this course is to:

1. sharpen students' knowledge of the historic Christian understanding of Jesus' person and work,
2. enable students to test the truth and coherence of this historic understanding of Jesus,
3. acquaint students with the major current challenges to this historic Christian understanding of Jesus,
4. familiarize students with some significant responses to these challenges,

5. deepen students' appreciation for Jesus and all he has done for the world,
6. encourage the faith of Christian students.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Copan, Paul ed. *Will the real Jesus please stand up: A Debate between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998.

Habermas, Gary and Antony Flew. *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? Ed. Terry L. Miethe*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.

Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 1999.

Nash, Ronald H. *Is Jesus The Only Savior?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

### **RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER READING:**

Beckwith, Francis J., William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, eds. *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*: Downers Grove: Intervarsity press, 2004.

Bush, L. Russ. *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics: A.D. 100-1800*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Academie, 1983.

Clark, David K. *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993.

Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Rev. ed. Wheaton: Crossway, 1994.

Edgar, William. *Reasons of the Heart: Recovering Christian Persuasion*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

Evans, C. Stephen. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002.

Kreeft, Peter. *The Best Things in Life: A Twentieth-Century Socrates Looks at Power, Pleasure, Truth, and the Good Life*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1984.

Kreeft, Peter. *Between Heaven and Hell: A Dialogue Somewhere Beyond Death with John F. Kennedy, C. S. Lewis and Aldous Huxley*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1982.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.

Lewis, C. S. *Miracles*. New York: Macmillan, 1947.

Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan, 1940.

Moreland, J. P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.

Moreland, J.P. and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003.

Pascal, Blaise. *Pensees*. Trans. A. J. Krailsheimer. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1966.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES**

1. Careful reading of all assigned readings.
2. One summary/evaluation 20%
3. Two in-class seminar presentations 20% x 2 = 40%
4. Research essay 40%

#### **Research Essay: 40%**

In this essay you will write a dialogue between two fictional characters, one a critic of the historical Jesus, the other a defender of him. The dialogue will focus on one specific aspect of Jesus' person or work to be chosen by you. The critic will argue against the historic understanding of Jesus in some way while the defender will engage this critic, providing the best responses to the challenges brought forward against the historical Jesus.

In setting out the argument against the historical Jesus, special care must be given to researching critics' positions carefully so as to avoid constructing straw men. The strength of your essay will be determined in large part by how well researched and convincing each case is. It is hoped that this essay will provide the foundation for you to engage in actual dialogue with others about Jesus. Essay should be 4000 – 5000 words).

Due November 19, 2008

#### **In-class Seminar Presentations: 40%**

Due at various times throughout the course as agreed upon early in the semester. Each student will make two presentations, 10 – 15 minutes in length. Your two presentations will be very different from each other as the following instructions will indicate.

#### **First presentation:**

In this presentation you will lead the class through an assigned reading for the day. Each seminar will cover one assigned reading and will consist of the following two parts:

- 1) A basic summary of the author's most important ideas,
- 2) Your assessment of and response to them. Interact deeply with the author. For example, highlight points of agreement and disagreement with specific ideas and tell why, draw out assumptions you find the author making and give apologetic responses to them. Then respond to questions from your colleagues and professor.

Your presentation should be approximately half summary and half assessment. You will prepare a 4-6 page written document, in polished form, which you will read from and distribute to the class at the beginning of your presentation.

### **Second presentation:**

In this presentation you will share the results of your research for your essay with the class. Your presentation should consist of the following parts:

- The specific aspect of Jesus person or work your essay will focus on
- Reasons you chose this issue for your essay
- The historic understanding of Jesus on this issue
- A few of the main challenges to this understanding which your essay will cover
- A sampling of the kinds of responses you are developing to these challenges
- Definitions of key terms and concepts
- Main thinkers you will consult on both sides of your issue
- Responses to questions from the class

On the day you present you will have a one-page handout for the class and professor which sets out the main ideas you wish to cover in your essay.

For both presentations you will be graded on both the content and actual delivery of your presentation. Stimulating, interesting presentations will receive higher grades than dull or boring ones. You are welcome to use visual aids, e.g., overhead, blackboard, power point, etc. You are urged to prepare well for both presentations. This is your opportunity to help your colleagues learn.

### **One Summary/Evaluation: 20%**

Students will select one chapter from either Wright or McKnight. For your assignment you will summarize the author's most important ideas. Your rule of thumb as you summarize the chapter is that what is important to the author is important to you. Then evaluate the chapter. Do you agree with the author? Why or why not? Identify any ideas that seem particularly strong or weak to you. How might the chapter be different if you had written it? Your summary should be 4-6 pages in length with approximately 2/3, summary, and 1/3, evaluation.

Due November 5, 2008

**COURSE SCHEDULE: Readings and Student presentations**

Sep 10 Introductory lecture: Foundational questions about the study of Jesus

Sep 17 Who was Jesus? I – *McKnight*, entire text

Sep 24 Who was Jesus? II – *Wright*, entire text

Oct 1 Contrasting Pictures of Jesus, Craig and Crossan in *Copan* 24-39  
Pres 33-39 \_\_\_\_\_

Oct 8 Contrasting Pictures of Jesus II, Craig and Crossan in *Copan* 40-67  
Pres 40-47 \_\_\_\_\_

Oct 15 Essay seminars: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Oct 22 The Jesus of the Jesus Seminar, Miller and Blomberg in *Copan* 89-116  
Pres 89-98 \_\_\_\_\_  
Pres 99-116 \_\_\_\_\_

-----Reading Break-----

Nov 5 Essay seminars: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nov 12 The Jesus of the Jesus Seminar II, Borg in *Copan* 117-128  
Pres 117-128 \_\_\_\_\_

Nov 19 Responding to the Jesus Seminar, Witherington in *Copan* 129-145  
Pres 129-145 \_\_\_\_\_

Nov 26 Jesus & Religious Pluralism I – *Nash* 11-52  
Pres 29-52 \_\_\_\_\_

Dec 3 Jesus & Religious Pluralism II – *Nash* 53-100  
Pres 53-91 \_\_\_\_\_

## *Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS*

### **Web Support – Student Portal** <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

### **Campus Closure**

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

### **Paper Formatting**

Students need to adhere to Turabian format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used.

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page [www.twu.ca/library](http://www.twu.ca/library)) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or [www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/). Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 6th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>. CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

**Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!**

### **Research Ethics**

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/academics/research/ethics/> Those needing additional clarification may contact Dr. Bruce Guenther. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

### **Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU**

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage ([www.acts.twu.ca](http://www.acts.twu.ca)) at the following link: [www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html](http://www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html).

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

[http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism\\_Short.swf](http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism_Short.swf) (8 minute flash tutorial)

### **Equity of Access**

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.