



## ***Syllabus: SCS 105 Christian Scriptures Overview***

### **Dates**

June 28-July 3, 2026

Monday – Friday, 10 am – 12 pm

Place

Via Zoom – link will be sent out from Jane McCarthy LUT

### **Sponsor**

Unity of Gaithersburg

Gaithersburg, MD

### **Course Instructor**

Jane McCarthy LUT

### **Course Description**

This course explores the Gospels, letters, history (Book of Acts), and the Book of Revelation that comprises what is more commonly known as the “New Testament” of the Judeo-Christian Bible. In this course we will also explore those writings outside of the New Testament such including the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Mary. In this course these writings will be examined as testaments about Jesus by early Christian communities.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- ♦ Describe and explain the four major divisions of the Christian Scriptures – Gospels, Letters, History and Apocryphal literature.
- ♦ Explain the process of canonization as it applies to the Christian Scriptures.
- ♦ Examine the emergence of the Christian church as an organization separate from Judaism.
- ♦ Describe the Apostle Paul’s theology.
- ♦ Describe the noncanonized books Dead Sea Scrolls, Gospel of Mary and Gospel of Thomas.

### **Required Text/Readings**

- Borg, Marcus J. *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*. New York: HarperCollins, 1989

- Bible (New Revised Standard Version)

### Recommended Text/Readings

- Chandler, Kenneth, *The Enlightened Jesus*, World Family Press, 2021
- Chopra, Deepak, *The Third Jesus*, New York: Harmony Books, 2008
- Ehrman, Bart D., *How Jesus Became God*. New York: Harper One, 2014.
- Erhman, Bart D., *Misquoting Jesus*, Harper Collins Publishers, 2005.
- Pagels, Elaine, *The Gnostic Gospels*, Random House, 1979
- Aslan, Reza, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, Random House, 2013
- Willis, B and Meyer, M, *The Gnostic Bible*, Shambala, 2003.

### Course Requirements and Assignments

Students will be expected to:

- Participate actively in each class session’s activities.
- Complete reading assignments.
- Present a Christian Scripture reading with maieutic interpretation in class.
- Submit a reflection paper after the completion of the course of 200-500 words sharing your thoughts and feeling on what you have learned and how it may apply to your life. Discuss how, if at all, your view of the Christian Scriptures has evolved as a result of your study in this course.

### Student Evaluation

- S (Satisfactory) met all requirements.
- I (Incomplete) waiting for final assignment.
- AU (Audit) not seeking credentialing (no assignments required)
- NC (No Credit) did not complete final assignment within three months of end of course and/or did not meet attendance requirements.

Ten credits will be granted when the student has successfully completed the class. Unless special permission is requested and granted, students are expected to attend all five two-hour classes.

### Course Schedule and Assignments

The course is divided into ten units and will be covered in five two-hour sessions. Below are the topics for each unit along with assignments which are listed in the second hour for the next class. Students will complete a maieutic presentation and a reflection paper.

Unit	Topics	Assignments
Class 1 Hour 1	Thoughts about the PBS video and Borg Chap 1-3	Read Borg Chapters 1-3

	<p>Introductions – Your New Testament background - What do the Christian Scriptures mean to you now?          Pretest –          Syllabus and Assignments</p>	<p>For Class1- Watch first hour of PBS documentary <i>From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians</i>:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JN8FM1NCOSk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JN8FM1NCOSk</a></p>
Hour 2	<p>Slides –          Overview of New Testament          Source Theory of Gospels</p>	<p>For class 2-          Read: “The Strange Ending of Mark...” by James Tabor  <a href="https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/new-testament/the-strange-ending-of-the-gospel-of-mark-and-why-it-makes-all-the-difference/?mqsc=E4159183&amp;dk=ZE4120ZF0&amp;utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&amp;utm_medium=BHDA%20Daily%20Newsletter%201-90&amp;utm_campaign=02_21_24_Back_to_School_in_Babylonia">https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/new-testament/the-strange-ending-of-the-gospel-of-mark-and-why-it-makes-all-the-difference/?mqsc=E4159183&amp;dk=ZE4120ZF0&amp;utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&amp;utm_medium=BHDA%20Daily%20Newsletter%201-90&amp;utm_campaign=02_21_24_Back_to_School_in_Babylonia</a>          Watch Bart Ehrman, <i>Jesus and the Historian</i>:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qd7Lanms-gY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qd7Lanms-gY</a>          Read: The Quest for the Historical Jesus</p>
Class 2 Hour 1	<p>Your thoughts about James Tabor Mark ending and Ehrman – Jesus and the Historian</p>	
Hour 2	<p>Slides –          Controversies of Christianity          Group Discussion</p>	<p>For Class 3 –          Read          - Borg, Chapter 8          - <i>Jesus Never Healed Anybody</i> by J Jennings, <u>Science of Mind</u>, Jan 2019          - Source Theory and Q handout          Watch Bart Ehrman on Misquoting Jesus  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQW5lm3hR2M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQW5lm3hR2M</a></p>
Class 3 Hour 1	<p>Your thoughts on Tabor and Jennings</p>	
Hour 2	<p>Slides          The Bible According to Borg</p>	<p>For Class 4 –</p>

	Group Discussion	Read -Borg, Chapter 9 - Paul  Listen to Ehrman Interview: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHFTJIMtOik">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHFTJIMtOik</a>
Class 4 Hour 1	Your thoughts about Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene video and Erhman Christmas 2018  Slides – Borg Chap 9 - Paul –	
Hour 2	Group Discussions	For Class 5  Read Borg: Chapter 10 - Revelation  Read: Dead Sea Scrolls handout  Read: BAS article on Dead Sea Scrolls <a href="https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/dead-sea-scrolls/what-are-the-dead-sea-scrolls/?utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&amp;utm_medium=BHDA+Week+in+Review&amp;utm_campaign=E26259D0">https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/dead-sea-scrolls/what-are-the-dead-sea-scrolls/?utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&amp;utm_medium=BHDA Week in Review&amp;utm_campaign=E26259D0</a>  Read: New Findings on Dead Sea Scrolls <a href="https://apnews.com/article/new-dead-sea-scrolls-israel-19844d3eb208190914182e78d9d79aac">https://apnews.com/article/new-dead-sea-scrolls-israel-19844d3eb208190914182e78d9d79aac</a>  Review Gospel of Thomas and Gospel of Mary
Class 5 Hour 1	Slides – Borg, Chapter 10 – Revelation  Non-canonical texts - Dead Sea Scrolls and Nag Hammadi Library  Gospel of Thomas  Read in class Gospel of Mary	
Hour 2	Group Discussions Go over Pre-test	Reflection paper due date