

# Syllabus: SCS 120 Jesus' Teachings

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## Dates

January 18, 25, Feb 1, 8 and 22, 2025  
Saturday 2:00- 4:00 PM EST

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

## Sponsor

Unity of Gaithersburg  
111 Central Ave  
Gaithersburg, MDS

## Course Instructor

Jane McCarthy LUT  
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## Course Description

In this course, students will use the Gospels and other literary sources outside of the Christian Scriptures to learn concepts that Jesus taught and the methods he used to teach his disciples. Students will learn these teachings based on what we believe Jesus taught rather than what others taught about him and his work. The quest for the historical Jesus will be discussed helping to better understand the Gospels propagating the theology rather than the history of Jesus. Writings outside of the Gospels such as the Nag Hammadi texts will be examined to provide a closer look at the teachings of Jesus.

## Course Learning Objectives

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Examine the historical Jesus information and compare with one's own theological viewpoint to recreate an understanding of who Jesus was.
- Refer to Christian Scripture sources to understand the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Describe writings from outside the Christian Scriptures that illustrate Jesus' teachings.
- Formulate a critical understanding of Jesus' life and his teachings.
- Apply the teachings of Jesus to situations in their own lives.

## Required Text/Reading

- *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* by Marcus J. Borg (2001)
- *The Bible* (New Revised Standard Version)
- Other required videos and readings listed in Course Schedule and Assignments

## Recommended Text/Readings

- *Heart-Centered Metaphysics*, Paul Hasselbeck (2010)
- *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels
- *Beyond Belief* by Elaine Pagels (2013)
- *Why Religion* by Elaine Pagels (2018)
- *The Zealot* by Reza Aslan (2013)
- *More about Q and the Gospel of Thomas*, M Mellowes, *Frontline*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/qthomas.html>
- Ogun Holder, "How to Hold our Anger with Wisdom", *Spirituality and Health*, 12/2024

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Students will be expected to:

- Participate actively in each class session's activities.
- Complete reading assignments.
- Participate in Group Discussions at the end of each class
- Complete the pre-test.
- 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 Jesus' Teachings 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 SEE 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. The topics for each unit is given along with assignments below. Students taking the course for SEE credit will complete a pre-test and a reflection paper.

Unit	Topics	Assignment
<b>Class 1</b> Hour 1	Student Introductions  Pretest (do after class)  Go over Syllabus  Review Reflection Paper	T To prepare for first class watch: <i>PBS From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians</i> - you may have already watched this as it was an assignment for Overview of Christian Scriptures. <a href="https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DJN8FM1NCOSk&amp;data=04%7C01%7Cjane.mccarthy%40unf.edu%7Cc41c843bfdc047ebf73008d9b1e3caab%7Cdf29b2fa8929482f9dbb60ff4df224c4%7C1%7C0%7C637736414191015915%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikh1WwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000&amp;sdata=URrj9jIYYVycWTA%2FI85PvKmjmlS7upSPH5MKSpuFH6k%3D&amp;reserved=0">https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DJN8FM1NCOSk&amp;data=04%7C01%7Cjane.mccarthy%40unf.edu%7Cc41c843bfdc047ebf73008d9b1e3caab%7Cdf29b2fa8929482f9dbb60ff4df224c4%7C1%7C0%7C637736414191015915%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikh1WwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000&amp;sdata=URrj9jIYYVycWTA%2FI85PvKmjmlS7upSPH5MKSpuFH6k%3D&amp;reserved=0</a>  Read: The Quest for the Historical Jesus
Hour 2	From Hebrew Scriptures to the New Testament  The Quest for the Historical Jesus  Discussion Groups on your theology and your theology now.	For class 2: Watch: <i>From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians</i> Part Two – The first 53 minutes describes the writing of the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXqFvCaFwY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXqFvCaFwY</a>  Read: Borg, Chapter 8 (review Chapters 1-3)  Handouts: Source Theory of Gospels Jesus' Parables and Aphorisms Gospel of Thomas
<b>Class 2</b>  Hour 3	Source Theory of Gospels  The Gospels  Borg chap 8	
Hour 4	Discussion Groups on Jesus' Teachings	For class 3  Read: <i>Heart-Centered Metaphysics</i> , Chapter 15
<b>Class 3</b>  Hour 5	Discussion Groups on Jesus' Teachings  Unity Jesus, The Christ, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus	

Hour 6	Discussion Groups on the Unity meanings of Jesus Christ terms	<p>For class 4</p> <p>Watch: The Case Against the Resurrection by Bart Ehrman (2009)</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHJE7cetkB4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHJE7cetkB4</a></p> <p>Watch: <i>From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians</i> Part Two. At minute 59 is described the Nag Hammadi discovery</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXqFvfCaFwY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXqFvfCaFwY</a></p> <p>-<i>The Treatise of the Resurrection</i></p> <p><a href="http://gnosis.org/naghamm/resurrection-barnstone.html">http://gnosis.org/naghamm/resurrection-barnstone.html</a></p> <p>Watch: Who was Jesus – The Resurrection by Dr. Mark Goodacre, Duke University (May 14, 2019)</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSMKEwYmZr4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSMKEwYmZr4</a></p>
<b>Class 4</b> Hour 7	The Resurrection Story 1 Corinthians 15:3-9; Gospels  The Treatise of the Resurrection	
Hour 8	Group Discussion on the Resurrection	<p>For class 5</p> <p>Read: The Nag Hamaddi Codices – the Gnostic Gospels according to Pagels</p> <p>Read over: The Coptic Gospel of Thomas</p> <p><a href="https://www.marquette.edu/maqom/Gospel%20of%20Thomas%20Lambdin.pdf">https://www.marquette.edu/maqom/Gospel%20of%20Thomas%20Lambdin.pdf</a></p>
<b>Class 5</b> Hour 9	The Nag Hammadi Library –  The Gnostic Gospel of Thomas	
Hour 10	Group Discussion on the Gospel of Thomas  Based on this course what do you know about Jesus?	<p>Go over Pre-test</p> <p>Reflection paper due date</p> <p>Course Evaluation</p>