COURSE DESCRIPTION

Studies the major themes in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded in the Gospels and examines the events of his life in the light of modern biblical and historical scholarship. Lecture 3 hours per week.

GENERAL COURSE PURPOSE

To introduce students to the questions concerning the historical and the historic Jesus. To help students understand and appreciate the applications of historical critical methods and critical philosophical-theological methods in determining what the historical Jesus did and taught in his lifetime.

ENTRY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

None

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course students will be able to

- Give an argument for and construct a list of the events of the life of the historical Jesus which are highly probable and historically and critically verifiable.
- Trace the main lines of the teachings of the historical Jesus and show how it is similar to and how it differs from the traditional teachings of the Judaism of his time and the teachings of the earliest Christian communities.
- Interpret historically, critically, and philosophically the central teachings of the historical Jesus in the Parables as recounted in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas.
- Reconstruct and critically interpret the central petitions of the prayer of Jesus as they were probably given by the historical Jesus to his disciples.

MAJOR ELEMENTS OF CONTENT

The following topics will be considered.

- The distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of Faith.
- The place of Jesus among his contemporaries.
- The relation between the historical Jesus and the interpretation of his life and teachings by his earliest followers.
- The parable as the central form of the teaching of the historical Jesus.

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