

Wednesdays 3:30-5:30

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-2:30, or email for an appointment

In a ruthless effort to suppress sedition, officials of the Roman Empire crucified the Jewish preacher Jesus of Nazareth in 33 CE and destroyed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. These actions helped the Romans solidify their control over the rebellious province of Judea, but also inadvertently sparked massive change in world religion by touching off the development of Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. This seminar will look at the development of Christianity and modern Judaism in their historical context from 30-500 CE, exploring in detail the origins of two of the most significant religions of our society.

Key historical topics to be covered:

- What does it mean to say Jesus was Jewish?
- Was Roman paganism a religion?
- How did the destruction of the Temple change ancient Judaism?
- When did Christianity and Judaism become separate religions?
- What effects did Roman persecution have on the development of Christianity?
- How did the conversion of the Roman emperor change Christianity?

Key methodological issues at stake include:

- How can we study the history of religious change while respecting people's current beliefs?
- How can we reconstruct the religious experience of ancient people?
- How can we recover religious ideas that later Christians and Jews tried to suppress?
- How can we keep our own religious ideas from affecting our study of religious history?

General Learning Goals:

This course will teach critical and engaged **reading** of complex academic texts. Students will learn to read with greater acuity, inquiry and judgment.

Students will learn the **research** skills for resolving a complex historical problem based on analysis of primary and secondary sources. They will learn how an historian would go about determining an answer to research questions.

Students will learn how to **present their ideas** orally in formal presentations and conversation. Students will learn to present their research questions and findings in a persuasive written argument.

**Assessment:**

Discussion in class: 35%  
Summaries & low stakes writing assignments: 20%  
Research Project: 45% total  
    Research question: October 24<sup>th</sup>, 3%  
    Primary source analysis, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 12%  
    Bibliography, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 5%  
    Presentation, December 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>, 5%  
    Final Paper, December 17 noon, 20%

**Assignments:**

**Read** the assigned texts for class with critical engagement. Reading is assessed through class discussion and low stakes writing assignments.

**Summaries & low stakes writing assignments.** These are weekly short responses to the readings intended to increase your comprehension and engagement in the process of reading. No more than 250 words each. They are graded on a check (extant), no check (non or barely-extant) basis. They are not graded for grammar or sentence structure. You are encouraged to write freely and allow your writing to reflect disorganized thoughts.

**Research Project:** All the parts of this project build toward the creation of a 13-15 page research paper. The **Research Question** is a 200-300 word description of the problem you are planning to solve in your research and how you expect to solve it. It will be revised into the introduction of your final paper. The question must be something that can be determined through historical research (i.e. not 'Is Jesus God?'). The **Primary Source Analysis** paper is a 5-6 page analysis of one or more of the primary sources for your research paper. It will be revised into one of the core research sections of your final paper. The **Bibliography** describes your primary sources and the secondary scholarship you will use to help you understand them. It has the form of an annotated list of primary and secondary materials. It will be revised into the bibliography and discussions of historiography in your final paper. The **Presentation** is a 5-8 minute description of your research to your colleagues, including a preview of your final conclusions. The **Final Paper** should be 13-15 pages long, present an original thesis in response to the question, argue for that thesis on the basis of primary sources and secondary scholarship, and use Chicago style footnotes and bibliography.

Books:

Boyarin, Daniel. *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Brown, Peter. *The World of Late Antiquity, AD 150-750*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.

Cohen, Shaye J. D. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. 2nd ed. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Johnston, Sarah Iles. *Ancient Religions*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007.

Vermès, Géza. *Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicaea (AD 30-325)*. London: Allen Lane, 2012.

Additional readings are posted on Learn@UW

Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
5-Sep	Introduction & Context		
12-Sep	Comparison	J.Z.Smith "on Comparison"; Johnson 1-31; Iles Johnston 98-111; Brown 1-49	summary of Smith's topic and goal; questions
19-Sep	Ancient religion	Cohen 1-19; Iles Johnston 1-97, 112-151, 225-239	summary of a chapter; questions
26-Sep	Categorizing Ancient religion	Johnson 32-110; Smith "Here, There, & Anywhere" & "Wobbling Pivot"	summary Johnson; questions
3-Oct	Temple Judaism	Cohen 19-119; Johnson 111-129; Iles Johnston 181-188	reflections
10-Oct	Charismatic Judaism	Vermes xiii-133; Boyarin 1-21	Summary, response
17-Oct	Jewish sectarianism	Cohen 119-165; Brown 49-114	Questions
24-Oct	Vermes II	Vermes 134-242;	summary; paper question
<b>31-Oct</b>	research time		Work on research
7-Nov	Johnson II	Johnson 142-283	source analysis paper
14-Nov	Cohen III	Cohen 167-223; Boyarin 22-41	Bibliography
21-Nov	Boyarin	Boyarin 42-126	
28-Nov	Thanksgiving Break		
5-Dec		Research Presentations	Research Presentations
12-Dec		Research presentations	Research presentations

### Goals of the History Major

The goal of the history major is to offer students the knowledge and skills they need to gain a critical perspective on the past. Students will learn to define important historical questions, analyze relevant evidence with rigor and creativity, and present convincing arguments and conclusions based on original research in a manner that contributes to academic and public discussions. In History, as in other humanistic disciplines, students will practice resourceful inquiry and careful reading. They will advance their writing and public speaking skills to engage historical and contemporary issues.

To insure that students gain exposure to some of the great diversity of topics, methodologies, and philosophical concerns that inform the study of history, the department requires a combination of courses that offers breadth, depth, and variety of exposition. Through those courses, students should develop:

1. Broad acquaintance with several geographic areas of the world and with both the pre-modern and modern eras.
2. Familiarity with the range of sources and modes through which historical information can be found and expressed. Sources may include textual, oral, physical, and visual materials. The data within them may be qualitative or quantitative, and they may be available in printed, digital, or other formats. Modes of expression may include textbooks, monographs, scholarly articles, essays, literary works, or digital presentations.
3. In-depth understanding of a topic of their choice through original or creative research.
4. The ability to identify the skills developed in the history major and to articulate the applicability of those skills to a variety of endeavors and career paths beyond the professional practice of history.

### Skills Developed in the Major

#### *Define Important Historical Questions*

1. Pose a historical question and explain its academic and public implications.
2. Using appropriate research procedures and aids, find the secondary resources in history and other disciplines available to answer a historical question.
3. Evaluate the evidentiary and theoretical bases of pertinent historical conversations in order to highlight opportunities for further investigation.

#### *Collect and Analyze Evidence*

1. Identify the range and limitations of primary sources available to engage the historical problem under investigation.
2. Examine the context in which sources were created, search for chronological and other relationships among them, and assess the sources in light of that knowledge.
3. Employ and, if necessary, modify appropriate theoretical frameworks to examine sources and develop arguments.

#### *Present Original Conclusions*

1. Present original and coherent findings through clearly written, persuasive arguments and narratives.
2. Orally convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.
3. Use appropriate presentation formats and platforms to share information with academic and public audiences.

#### *Contribute to Ongoing Discussions*

1. Extend insights from research to analysis of other historical problems.
2. Demonstrate the relevance of a historical perspective to contemporary issues.
3. Recognize, challenge, and avoid false analogies, overgeneralizations, anachronisms, and other logical fallacies.