Course Description: From the four gospels to the Apostle Paul’s letters and other writings of the New Testament, then onwards to the Apostolic Fathers and Church Fathers of the Early Church through the Medieval Ages and the European Reformation of the 16th century, through the Enlightenment and then the various quests for the historical Jesus in the 18th – 20th centuries, and finally, up to the present moment, the Christian tradition, in all of its complexity, continuity and diversity, has continually returned to the crucial question first posed by Jesus of Nazareth in the eighth chapter of the Gospel according to Mark: “Who do you say that I am?.” There is no question more important for the Christian faith and tradition than the question of the identity of Jesus. In the first part of this upper-level course, we will engage in a historical survey of the various answers provided across the Christian tradition to this central question of interpretation and reflection: who is Jesus of Nazareth? The latter part of this course will introduce two widely different perspectives from eminent New Testament scholars – Marcus J. Borg and N.T. Wright – who engage in a dialogue over the identity and the meaning of Jesus of Nazareth. The underlying goal and learning object that guides this course is to introduce students to the rich and diverse theological traditions embedded across the history of Christianity along with introducing two distinct approaches from the field of New Testament studies, which altogether, have returned to address this central question of the Christian faith: who is Jesus, and what is the meaning of his identity.

Required Textbooks

Additional Readings: Will be provided throughout the semester in the Files Folder in our Canvas Homepage.
**Learning Objectives:** Upon completing this course, the following objectives will have been met:

1. Students will gain a deeper and broadened critical understanding of the various ways by which the identity and meaning of Jesus of Nazareth have been articulated in the New Testament and the Christian tradition;
2. Students will acquire a broad historical understanding of the key issues, councils and controversies that have shaped Christological reflections on the question of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth;
3. Students will improve upon their analytical reading skills and comprehension of historical and theological texts related to the interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth;
4. Students will gain a more mature understanding and appreciation of the importance of historical and social context for addressing questions related to the teaching, identity, and the meaning of Jesus of Nazareth;
5. Students will be encouraged to practice a reflective approach to developing greater critical self-awareness as the evaluator (and possible practitioner) around the study of Jesus of Nazareth.

**Four Reflections (200 Points / 50 Points Each):** Students will be required to write four 2-3 page reflections throughout the semester in response to prompts provided by the instructor, which will relate to the readings and lectures, while also stretching us to consider interpretations of Jesus in contemporary contexts. From the time the prompt is provided for each reflections, students will be afforded two weeks to complete their reflection. Time and date of the reflections is to be decided, and will be announced in the Announcement on our Canvas Home Page and within our class time.

**Essay One: The Christological Controversy (300 Points):** Students will be required to write a 5–7 page essay on the Christological Controversy of the fifth and sixth centuries. For this essay, students will be required to incorporate at least two secondary (scholarly) sources, which will be provided by the instructor. The essay should be written in Times New Roman with a 12 point font. Guidelines will be provided at least two weeks before the due date of this assignment. Due Date: February 11th, 2022

**Essay Two: The Meaning of Jesus (300 Points):** Students will be required to compose a 5–7 page essay that provides a comprehensive summary of the key arguments advanced by Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright from across parts I – VI within their book: The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions. Rather than taking a position in support of one or the other New Testament scholar, students will be required to demonstrate a clear and objective understanding of each of their scholarly arguments. The essay should be written in Times New Roman with a 12 point font. Guidelines will be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date of his assignment. Due Date: April 22nd

**Final Exam (200 Points):** The Final Exam will consist of essay questions, which will be take home, open note, open book. More details for the Final Exam will be provided later in the semester.
**Late Work Assignments:** Late work will be accepted up to one week after the due date. Late work may be penalized up to 20% prior to evaluating the work. After one week, zero (0) grade will be submitted for all missing work. If you have any issues or concerns regarding assignments, please reach out to me. I will do our best to support each of you throughout the semester, but it is important, that you remain in contact with me if any issues arise. Thank you.

**Electronic Devices:** Please place all of your electronic devices, including laptops, cell phones, away and out of sight once the class has started. If you need to make a phone call or send a text, please feel free to step out of class and return when ready to be present. Points could be deducted from the attendance grade if a student is disruptive or distracting due to the use of electronics in class (I do not anticipate any issues). Thank you in advance.

**Distribution of the Graded Points (Comprehensive Evaluation):**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Reflections</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay One: Christological Controversy</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Two: Two Visions of Jesus</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Course Structure:** This course is largely lecture based, however, there will also be space for questions and discussions throughout each of our sessions together. The course is divided into two parts: [1] focuses on a historical survey of the interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth across the Christian tradition; as we progress throughout the semester, I will be providing additional primary sources that offer us historical material directly connected to Jaroslav Pelikan’s *Jesus through the Centuries*; [2] focuses on a dialogue between two New Testament scholars who hold divergent perspectives regarding the identity and meaning of Jesus of Nazareth; as we progress, I will add select material to be discussed on Fridays each week during our time discussing Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*.

**Recorded Lectures (When On-Line):** Whenever the class is on-line, the lectures will be recorded.

**Masks are Expected to be Worn in the Classroom:** Per OSU policy and in light of the worldwide pandemic, masks are expected to be worn within the classroom. Please consider the fact that some students and professors have underlying medical conditions, and perhaps, we should do unto others as we hope would be done unto us if we were more vulnerable to severe illness due to contracting COVID.
**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** OSU is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and altering academic records) will result in an official academic sanction. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript, and being suspended from the University. To appeal any charge: 101 Whitehurst Phone (405) 744-5627 | [http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu](http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu)

**STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL OR LEARNING DISABILITIES:** If you need special accommodations the University will try to make appropriate arrangements. These arrangements will need to be made ahead of time through the Student Disability Services Office 315 Student Union | telephone: (405) 744–7116 | Website: [https://sds.okstate.edu/](https://sds.okstate.edu/).

**CALENDAR | OVERVIEW OF LECTURES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENT**
The assigned readings should be completed prior to class on the assigned dates provided below. Since there are different editions of both of our textbooks, I have provided the chapters rather than the page numbers for the assigned readings in the calendar below. If you have any questions, please let me know.

**WEEK 1 | INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**
1/10   Introduction to Course | Review of the Course Syllabus
1/12   J. Pelikan, Introduction: The Good, the True, and the Beautiful, in *Jesus through the Centuries*
1/14   J. Pelikan, Chapter 1: The Rabbi, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

**WEEK 2 | FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES: INTERPRETATIONS ON THE MEANING OF JESUS**
1/17   University Holiday | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
1/19   J. Pelikan, Chapter 2: The Turning Point of History, in *Jesus through the Centuries*
1/21   J. Pelikan, Chapter 3: The Light of the Gentiles, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

**WEEK 3 | 2ND – 5TH CENTURIES: FROM EMPEROR CONSTANTINE TO AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO**
1/24   J. Pelikan, Chapter 4: The King of Kings, in *Jesus through the Centuries*
1/26   J. Pelikan, Chapter 5: The Cosmic Christ, in *Jesus through the Centuries*
1/28  J. Pelikan, Chapter 6: The Son of Man, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

**WEEK 4**  **8TH – 9TH CENTURIES (BYZANTINE) AND 11TH – 12TH CENTURIES (MONASTICISM)**

1/31  J. Pelikan, Chapter 7: The True Image, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/2  J. Pelikan, Chapter 8: Christ Crucified, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/4  J. Pelikan, Chapter 9: The Monk Who Rules the World, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

**WEEK 5**  **13TH – 16TH CENTURIES: FROM FRANCIS OF ASSISI TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM**

2/7  J. Pelikan, Chapter 10: The Bridegroom of , in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/9  J. Pelikan, Chapter 11: The Divine and Human Model, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/11  J. Pelikan, Chapter 12: The Universal Man, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

**DUE: ESSAY ONE: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY**

**WEEK 6**  **16TH – 18TH CENTURIES: EUROPEAN REFORMATION TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

2/14  J. Pelikan, Chapter 13: The Mirror of the Eternal, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/16  J. Pelikan, Chapter 14: The Prince of Peace, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/18  J. Pelikan, Chapter 15: The Teacher of Common Sense, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

**WEEK 7**  **19TH – 21ST CENTURIES: FROM ROMANTICISM TO GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY**

2/21  J. Pelikan, Chapter 16: The Poet of the Spirit, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/23  J. Pelikan, Chapter 17: The Liberator, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

2/25  J. Pelikan, Chapter 18: , The Man Who Belongs to the World, in *Jesus through the Centuries*

**WEEK 8**  **PART I: HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT JESUS?**

2/28  M. Borg, Chapter 1: Seeing Jesus: Sources, Lenses, and Method, *The Meaning of Jesus*

3/2  N.T. Wright, Chapter 2: Knowing Jesus: Faith and History, *The Meaning of Jesus*

3/4  TBD

**WEEK 9**  **PART II: WHAT DID JESUS DO AND TEACH?**

3/7  N.T. Wright, Chapter 3: The Mission and Message of Jesus, *The Meaning of Jesus*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chapter/Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>Marcus Borg, Chapter 4</td>
<td>Jesus Before and After Easter: Jewish Mystic and Christian Messiah, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<td>3/11</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 10</strong> <strong>March 14th – 18th</strong></td>
<td><strong>No Classes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 11</strong> <strong>Part III: The Death of Jesus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3/21</td>
<td>Marcus Borg, Chapter 5</td>
<td>Why Was Jesus Killed?, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<td>3/23</td>
<td>N.T. Wright, Chapter 6</td>
<td>The Crux of Faith, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<td>3/25</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong> <strong>Part IV: “God Raised from the Dead”</strong></td>
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<td>3/28</td>
<td>N.T. Wright, Chapter 7</td>
<td>The Transforming Reality of the Bodily Resurrection, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<td>3/30</td>
<td>Marcus Borg, Chapter 8</td>
<td>The Truth of Easter, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13</strong> <strong>Part V: Was Jesus God?</strong></td>
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<td>4/4</td>
<td>Marcus Borg, Chapter 9</td>
<td>Jesus and God, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<td>4/6</td>
<td>N.T. Wright, Chapter 10</td>
<td>The Divinity of Jesus, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 14</strong> <strong>Part VI: The Birth of Jesus</strong></td>
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<td>4/11</td>
<td>N.T. Wright, Chapter 11</td>
<td>Born of a Virgin?, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<td>4/13</td>
<td>Marcus Borg, Chapter 12</td>
<td>The Meaning of the Birth Stories, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 15</strong> <strong>Part VII: “He Will Come Again in Glory”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>Marcus Borg, Chapter 13</td>
<td>The Second Coming Then and Now, <em>The Meaning of Jesus</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4/20  N.T. Wright, Chapter 14: The Future of Jesus, *The Meaning of Jesus*

4/22  TBD

**DUE: ESSAY TWO: THE MEANING OF JESUS**

**WEEK 16: [PRE-FINALS WEEK] JESUS AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**


4/29  TBD

**WEEK 17: FINALS WEEK**

**TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM, DUE DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**Tentative Nature of Syllabus:** If necessary, this syllabus is subject to revision. Students will be held responsible for modifications distributed in class time, and/or communicated by an email correspondence, and/or provided on Canvas. Usually, all three of these mediums will be employed to communicate any changes.