

Syllabus “Pagans, Christians, Jews 60-622 CE”

Binghamton University, Fall 2009

Class Number: CLAS 280B-01 / HIST 281J – 01 / JUST 287P – 01 / MDVL 270Y – 01

Credits: 4

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Office hours: W 4.00-5.00 pm, Th 10.00-11.00am

Class hours: MW 2:20 pm - 3:45 pm

Location: University Union 206

PROLEGOMENA

BY ENROLLING IN THIS COURSE, students agree to abide by the expectations set forth in this syllabus and in other course-related documents. *In other words*, you can regard documents like this syllabus, but also the assignment schedule and any other document posted by the instructor to blackboard— as a *contract* laying out the responsibilities of, respectively, instructor and students. Note too that the aforementioned documents, though they will remain substantially the same throughout the semester, may, and probably will, have to be modified or updated at various points. The instructor reserves, therefore, the right to alter, *as needed* and in *reasonable ways*, details of the assignment schedule etc.

Discussing religions and their histories – especially if you identify with one of them – can easily turn into an emotional matter. There is nothing wrong with that. However, it should not lead to disrespectful attitudes in discussions nor impede the development of an objective stance towards the issue at stake. A personal conviction of the verity of one religion over another has no place in academic discussions.

GOALS

1. To explore. . .
 - Conceptualizations of, and attitudes to, religions in the Roman Empire(s) from the first to the early seventh century.
 - How those conceptualizations and attitudes found expression in the literature, art, etc.
 - How modern understandings — and misunderstandings — of the ancient evidence inform current debates
2. To think, speak, and write creatively, yet critically, about the primary evidence (ancient texts, art, etc.) and modern attempts to understand it.
3. To refine speaking, writing, and presenting skills in terms of style, format, organization, and effectiveness.

REQUIRED TEXTS (PRINT-TEXTS, FROM THE BU BOOKSTORE):

- Apuleius. *The Golden Ass, or, Metamorphoses*. Trans. E. J. Kenney. Penguin Classics. London and New York: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Martin, Luther H., *Hellenistic Religions. An Introduction*, Oxford 1987.
- Augustine, *Confessions* – Penguin edition, translation R. S. Pine-Coffin, or Oxford's World Classics, translation Henry Chadwick.
- Brown, Peter, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago 1981.
- Brown, Peter, *Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass. 1998 (originally published as "L'antiquité tardive" in *Histoire de la vie privée, vol. 1, De l'Empire romain à l'an mil*, Editions du Seuil, 1985.

Additional readings (required) are to be accessed via blackboard.

Finally, I've made available via Bartle Library Course Reserves (main circulation desk) all required print texts, for the most part in the editions recommended above.

RECOMMENDED

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*
Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*
Bible (esp. Acts of the Apostles)
Eusebius, *The History of the Church*

E-MAIL CONTACT

All students taking this course must agree to check E-mail (your binghamton.edu address via webmail or similar) on a regular basis, as this will be the principal medium for instructor-student communication outside class. Students are responsible for keeping on top of this; I will not be E-mailing to Gmail, Yahoo, or similar addresses.

Tips:

- Check preferably twice a day or more
- Do not let in box fill up
- Instructor E-mail is mvanderm@binghamton.edu
- Please apply epistolary conventions when you write me an e-mail. I will return e-mails unread that do not follow this structure:
 - Dear professor / Dear Matthieu / etc. **(No "Hi"!)**
 - *your message*
 - Best wishes / Kind regards / etc.
 - *your name*

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

Attendance is required; learning cannot happen if we are not there participating. Attendance will be taken and will figure into the participation grade. Students missing 7(i.e. 25%) or more classes without valid excuse (see following) will not be allowed to receive a passing grade: you will fail the course or have to withdraw. A pattern of tardiness can and will count as absence(s) at the discretion of the instructor.

EXCUSABLE ABSENCE

IF YOU ARE ILL or otherwise cannot make class for a VALID REASON (religious observance, job interview, important family function, etc.), please contact me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE via e-

mail. Without timely e-mail notification, I will not be able to credit the missed class, nor arrange for makeup quizzes etc., as needed. Please keep on top of this.

QUIZZES etc. If for *valid reasons* you need to miss a test or quiz, or need to submit an assignment late or to reschedule a presentation, please inform me ASAP so that we can do so in a timely fashion.

IT IS THE *STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY* to schedule timely make-ups — by "timely" I mean IMMEDIATE. I do not schedule make-ups to accommodate busy schedules, as that would be deeply unfair to most of the class.

Think of it this way: Absent from class Wednesday, makeup Monday. Tuesday ordinarily is too late.

NON-EXCUSABLE ABSENCE

Includes:

- Oversleeping/alarm-clock malfunction
- Absentmindedness (keep track of class- and assignment-schedules)
- Car problems and the like (reliable transportation is your responsibility)
- Long-weekends/vacation "extenders"
- Unexcused early departure from class-meeting (counts as absence)

Please also note that airline reservations/car-rides/etc. for the purpose of vacation travel or similar DO NOT OVERRIDE YOUR OBLIGATION TO ATTEND CLASS and will not count as excusable absence.

For more on attendance, see [University Bulletin](http://buweb.binghamton.edu/bulletin/program.asp?program_id=1004) at http://buweb.binghamton.edu/bulletin/program.asp?program_id=1004.

CLASSROOM RULES

No eating allowed. Mobile phones must be switched off completely (no texting). Students have to arrive on time and not leave during the class. Required texts (including internet resources and texts downloaded from blackboard) and written assignments have to be brought to class in print unless noticed otherwise. Assignments and important messages will be put on blackboard.

IN-CLASS USE OF LAPTOPS, ETC.

Students wishing to use laptops or similarly devices in class need to know that use thereof will be subject to the following conditions:

- Restriction to *note-taking and nothing else!*
 - I.e., no gaming, web surfing, MySpace-ing, E-mailing, etc. etc. *at all!!*
 - Enrolled students implicitly consent to the instructor's monitoring laptop use during class, i.e., don't be surprised if I look over your shoulder
- No use of such or similar devices (cell phones, PDAs, etc.) during exams / quizzes / tests
 - Please turn such devices off and remove from reach when asked
 - See further Academic Honesty section of this syllabus

The above does not pertain to tape machines or similar to record lecture/discussion, though all devices must be cleared from desk and out of reach during tests / exams / quizzes.

RATIONALE. Inappropriate use of such devices in class is distracting all around and profoundly disrespectful of another student's desire to learn. Those who fail to abide by the above conditions will, therefore, not be allowed to make use of their laptops or similar in class. Repeated violation will result in a student's being removed from the class.

PARTICIPATION (READING, VIEWING, DISCUSSING)

Assigned readings must be done, and on time. Failure on that score will compromise one's grade. Discussion will be partly structured, partly unstructured; partly led by me, partly by you. This participatory part of the grade will count a full 20%. Discussion will mostly center on issues and topics listed on the schedule of assignments and on study guides.

- **INSTRUCTOR'S CALLING ON STUDENTS**
 - Don't be surprised when I call on you in class. I do this a lot; it actually works well — shy students really don't feel reluctant to speak when asked to comment in that way.
- **RESPECT FOR ONE'S OWN AND OTHERS' THOUGHTS**
 - Our communication in class has to be class-related, orderly, and respectful.
 - Discussion cannot happen if we don't acknowledge that not all contributions will represent profound insights. Please do not, therefore, feel reluctant to participate simply because you don't have anything remarkable to say. All discussion is dialogue, a dynamic process requiring *your input*.
 - Likewise, behavior that disrupts or otherwise interferes with another's participation needs to be avoided. I can help by being even-handed in how I guide the proceedings.

QUIZZES

There will be a number of FACT-BASED POP QUIZZES (no exams!) dealing with readings and lecture/discussion the present class and the material presented by me in the previous class: titles of readings, authors' names, relevant terms. The purpose of these will be to encourage you to keep up with the material. No essays, no interpretation.

These quizzes are important, a full letter's-worth of grade (10%). Take good notes, pay attention in class, keep track of basic text facts as appropriate — authors, titles, approximate dates, situations, subject matter, main characters, etc. I do not quiz for obscure details, precise dates, or the like.

PAPER

You will receive a list of important historical figures and short primary sources related to his person. Choose one of them and write an obituary (max 1000 words) in the style of New York Times obituaries and write a short rapport (1/2 page) on which primary sources and secondary literature you have used. You are required to find information on this person at your own initiative and to use the primary sources provided. An obituary usually praises a person while providing correct historical facts. You are encouraged to write a creative paper and to try out things as long as your paper is based on factual information.

Date due: Wednesday December 9 at the end of class. Note that late submission of papers *will not be tolerated* without valid and serious health-related excuse — signed and validated by physician. I.e., unexcused late submission will result in grades of F.

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

A couple (4 – but I may expand the number of reports) of one-page reports or specific reflections, explicitly mentioned in the schedule under 'assignments'. Under the assignment 'write a report' I expect that you write a one-page reflection. Ask yourself the following question: what does a particular ancient text tell you about religious thought and practice in the Late Antique world? (For example, do the Gods / does God intervene in human affairs? How? Are they /is he friendly or hostile? How many different kinds of spiritual beings are there? What do human beings do to interact with their divinities? What kinds of stories do they tell about them? What kinds of hopes

and fears do humans have, and how does their religion respond to these? What societal role does religion play in the text? Is it instrumentalised by the powerful?) Then write a response. Use the contemporary author(s) to help in your reflections, but base your response on the ancient text. If both an ancient source and a contemporary author are assigned, your response **must reflect reading and engagement with both ancient and modern texts**. These responses must be typed (double-spaced) and handed in after class. We will begin class with one or more students reading their reflection page.

As to the written assignments: for help with writing, there are many stylebooks and internet sites that can give you advice, see e.g. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

EXAMS

There are two exams: a midterm and final exam. For both of them, I will announce three broad essay themes and a list of important names and keywords. I will choose one of the three announced essays and five keywords. You will write a substantial essay and give short (one paragraph) definitions of the keywords.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WORK

participation	15%
paper	20%
exams	40% (20% x 2)
Extra assignments (reports etc.)	15%
quizzes	10%

GRADING

A	Excellent
B	Good
C	Fair
D	Deficient
F	Failed

Style, grammatical correctness and clearness will play an important role for your grade. Not using the assigned material (or exclusively relying on Wikipedia) may lead to an F.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

It is important that ALL students approach their learning *forthrightly* and *honestly*. I will make every effort to clarify how that can be done and will help you along the way. Note, therefore, that, by enrolling in this course, students agree to abide by the provisions of the University's STUDENT ACADEMIC HONESTY CODE, available at

http://buweb.binghamton.edu/bulletin/program.asp?program_id=1004.

WHAT IS ACADEMIC HONESTY? It is the ability to say that your work is substantially yours, and that you have forthrightly pointed out where and how you rely on the words, ideas, research, etc. of others.

As for academic *dishonesty*, that includes:

- Plagiarism (presenting another's work as one's own through unacknowledged quoting/paraphrasing, use of another's ideas, failure to acknowledge sources, using someone else's research notes or similar)
- Cheating
 - copying from. . .
 - another's test paper
 - a "cheat-sheet" brought to class
 - any form of unfair help received
- "Recycling" of papers (submitting one paper to more than one class)
- Unauthorized collaboration (different from working with an assigned team or from forming a legitimate study-group)
- Fabrication (arguing from evidence you've made up)
- Forgery (of signatures, of paper-authorship, etc.)
- Sabotage (undermining efforts of other students)
- Bribery (inducements to affect grade)

Note, too, that *any* and *all* instances of academic dishonesty WILL result in a course-grade of **F** along with appropriate disciplinary action, not excluding expulsion from the University, as deemed appropriate by the authorities charged with handling such cases.

Further, by taking this course, students consent to submit all written assignments to Turnitin.com or other, similar anti-plagiarism databases for textual similarity review. Students also agree not to abet the academic dishonesty of others in connection with this class.

In short, **academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.** For this class, we follow the procedures, definitions, etc. laid out by documents accessible via the Binghamton web.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/SPECIAL NEEDS

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), phone: 607-777-2686 (voice/TTY), e-mail: bjfairba@binghamton.edu. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from SSD to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the website <http://www2.binghamton.edu/ssd/index.html>.

PROGRAM OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Title	Assignment
Week 1	Introduction: sources, M. 08-31: methods, questions	
W. 09-02:	Roman & Hellenistic religions	Martin, <i>Hellenistic Religions</i> , introduction and chapter 1 pp. 3-34
Week 2		
M. 09-07:	LABOR DAY	
W. 09-09:	Lucius as “Graeco-Roman Everyman”	Apuleius, <i>Golden Ass</i> , chs. 1-3;
Week 3		
M. 09-14:	Lucius’s adventures as an ass and the Great Mother	Apuleius, <i>Golden Ass</i> , chs. 4-8, Martin, <i>Hellenistic Religions</i> , pp. 58-62, 83-84 Write a report
W. 09-16:	The Salvation of Lucius by Isis	Apuleius, <i>Golden Ass</i> , chs. 9-11, Martin, <i>Hellenistic Religions</i> , 72-81
Week 4		
M. 09-21:	Traditional Piety and Philosophy	Martin, <i>Hellenistic Religions</i> , 35-40, Marcus Aurelius, <i>Meditations</i> books I-IV, at: http://classics.mit.edu/Antoninus/meditations.html
W. 09-23:	Neo-Platonism	Marinus, <i>Life of Proclus</i> , at: http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/marinus_01_life_of_proclus.htm
Week 5		
M. 09-28:	YOM KIPPUR	
W. 09-30:	Judaism 1 institutions: temple, scriptures, feasts	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i> book 2: http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/apion-2.htm
Week 6		
M.10-05:	Judaism 2 historical developments: destruction of the temple, Bar Kochba, Diaspora	Martin, <i>Hellenistic Religions</i> , 102-111; Philo, <i>On the contemplative life</i> : http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book34.html
W.10-07:	Christianity 1: institutions, first texts; basic institution churches, symbols, functions	Martin, <i>Hellenistic Religions</i> , 118-126, New Testament: Acts of the Apostles chap. 1-14
Week 7		
M. 10-12:	Christianity 2: doctrine	Acts of the Apostles chap. 15-28

& ethics
*Presentation of possible
 terms and essay topics for
 the mid-term exam*

W. 10-14: Christianity 3: gnosticism & orthodoxy
 Martin, *Hellenistic Religions*, chapter 5 (gnosticism)
 Augustine, *Confessions* I-III
 & 1 Enoch chap 1-36, at:
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/boe/index.htm>

Week 8

M.10-19: Christianity 4: apologetics & conversions
 Augustine, *Confessions* IV-VIII

W. 10-21: MID TERM EXAM

Week 9

M. 10-26: Mithraism and the Christ-myth
 Martin, *Hellenistic Religions*, pp. 113-126,
 Marvin Meyer, *Ancient Mysteries*, San Francisco 1987, pp.199-221
 (blackboard),
 The gospel of Philip, chap. 52-99, at
<http://www.goodnewsinc.net/othbooks/philip.html>

W. 10-28: Christianity & the army
The Martyrdom of Marinus, of Maximilian, of Marcellus, of Julius the Veteran, of Dasius (Musurillo pp. 240-265, 272-279, blackboard)
 & 3 articles on atheists in the military:
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/26/us/26atheist.html?_r=1
<http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/07/08/atheist.soldier/index.html>
http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/11/military_religion_nonbelievers_111408w/

Write a one page comparison on the status of ‘religious’ (c.q. atheist) minorities in the Roman army and in the US Army

Week 10

M. 11-02: Divination and Dreaming
 Martin, *Hellenistic Religions*, 40-53, 111-113
 Lucian, *Alexander the Oracle Monger*,
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/luc/wl2/wl218.htm>

W. 11-04: Body & sexuality
 Plutarch of Chaeronea, *Sentiments concerning nature with which philosophers were delighted*, book V, at:
<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plutarch/nature/>
 and *Symposiacs* book 3, ch. 6:
<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plutarch/symposiacs/chapter3.html#section29>
 Brown, *Late antiquity*, chap. 1-2

Week 11

M. 11-09: Women in church and *The Life of Macrina*

	synagogue	<p>http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/macrina.html</p> <p>Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, book III section 1, concerning widows: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf07.ix.iv.i.html</p> <p>Ross S. Kraemer, <i>Maenads, Martyrs</i>, pp.216-223 (blackboard)</p> <p>Write a report</p>
W. 11-11:	Marriage and virginity	<p>Patricia Cox Miller, <i>Women in Early Christianity</i>, pp.253-261 (blackboard);</p> <p>Methodius, <i>Symposium</i>, at: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0623.htm</p> <p>Peter Brown, <i>Late Antiquity</i>, chap. 5</p>
Week 12		
M. 11-16:	The holy man	<p>Sulpicius Severus, <i>Life of Martin of Tours</i>, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf211.ii.ii.html</p> <p>Peter Brown, <i>The Cult of the Saints</i>, chap. 1&2</p>
W. 11-18:	Places of burial & places of worship <i>Handing out of paper/obituary topics</i>	<p>Gregory of Tours, <i>The glory of the Martyrs</i>, ed. R. van Dam, n. 30-42, pp.48-65 (blackboard)</p> <p>Brown, <i>The cult of the Saints</i>, chs. 3&4</p>
Week 13		
M. 11-23:	Persecution & martyrdom	<p><i>The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas</i></p> <p>http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.html</p>
W. 11-25:	The conversion of the empire	<p>Eusebius, <i>Life of Constantine</i>, at: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-constantine.html</p>
Week 14		
M. 11-30:	Conversion & proselytism between Jews and Christians <i>Presentation of possible terms and essay topics for the final exam.</i>	<p>Severus of Minorca, <i>Concerning the Jews</i> (blackboard)</p> <p>Peter Brown, <i>The Cult of the Saints</i>, chap. 5</p>
W. 12-02:	Emperor Julian's reforms, Theodosius II's law code	<p>Julian, <i>Letters</i> 84, 89, 114, 61c,</p> <p>Libanius, <i>Oratio pro templis</i>, at: http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/libanius_pro_templis_02_trans.htm</p> <p>Codex Theodosianus 15&16 (blackboard)</p>
Week 15		
M. 12-07:	history of monasticism	<p>Theodoret of Cyrillus, <i>History of the monks of Syria</i>, chap. 21 (blackboard)</p>

Athanasius, *Life of Anthony*, EXTRACTS TBA
<http://www.fordham.edu/balsall/basis/VITA-ANTONY.html>
Brown, *Late Antiquity*, chs. 3-4

W. 12-09: Calculation of time Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, chap. 6
Augustine, *Confessions* IX-XI
Hand in paper copies of the obituary-paper

Week 16

M. 12-14: FINAL EXAM