

RELG 345-01 VARIETIES OF ANCIENT PAGANISM FROM ALEXANDER TO JULIAN
SAMFORD UNIVERSITY; CHAPMAN 318; TTH 8:00-9:50 AM
COURSE SYLLABUS, FALL 2008

Professor James R. Strange; Office: Chapman 323; 205-726-4253; jrstrang@samford.edu
Office hours for Prof. Strange: M-TH 2:00–4:00 PM or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: RELG 345 serves as an introduction to the major pagan religions of the Greco-Roman period, from the conquests of Alexander the Great (Palestine in 332 BCE) to the death of Julian the Apostate (363 CE). Some attention is paid to the pagan influences on emerging Judaism and Christianity. Co-listed as CLAS 345.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: We will begin the course by asking how scholars compare ancient Greco-Roman religions, including Christianity. Over the bulk of the semester students will learn the names and characteristics of several religions of the Greco-Roman period and will develop an appreciation for the challenges posed by the idea of “paganism.” Students will learn importance of the categories of ritual, myth, cosmology, notions of pollution and purity, sin and atonement, and others for talking about Greco-Roman religions. Students will read the ancient novel by Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, in its entirety. At the end of the semester students will read one scholar’s attempt to understand aspects of emerging Christianity in light of Greco-Roman religious experience.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students must complete all required coursework in order to pass the course. Complete all assigned readings before coming to class.

1. 15% Reader Response Portfolio. Every day of class you are to bring with you four (4) statements or observations based on the day’s reading. Statements may be as long as a brief paragraph, but please make the entire exercise no longer than one page, single spaced. These are not opportunities for you to agree or disagree with the reading or to express your own opinions. Rather, demonstrate that you understand the reading. Statements that begin something like, “Eckart Otto argues that law plays such-and-such a role in Greco-Roman religions ...” probably will do this adequately; those that begin, “I really think that John J. Collins is right when he says...” probably will not. Use correct English grammar, syntax, and punctuation. A complete portfolio of statements based on every day’s readings is due the last day of class, **Thursday December 4**.

2. 15% Class Presentations. You are to present in class once for 20-30 minutes on a topic dealing with ancient paganism (see Appendix I to his syllabus). The presentation should be substantive, and should include information on what is known about your topic, what is speculation, and how we know what we know (what primary sources are available to us),. Inform the class about the deity/ies, cult (what worship looked like), geographical distribution of the cult, official state v. mystery cult, and other information. Your presentation may use multimedia, such as a slide presentation, web sites, DVD’s, etc. DO NOT SUBSTITUTE SPECTACLE FOR SUBSTANCE. To that end, on the date of your presentation you will distribute to members of the class a short essay (apr. 1000 words = apr. 4 pp. of double-spaced text in Times New Roman 12-point font) on your topic. Papers should be carefully researched and contain a bibliography of sources consulted. You may use Internet sites for images, but your information should come primarily from print media in the library (see Appendix II). The instructor will expect you to draw from your portfolio of student essays in your preparation for the final exam.

3. 35% Term Paper. You are to write a term paper on some matter related to the study of pagan religions in the Greco-Roman world. It will contain endnotes or footnotes and a bibliography of works consulted. You may write it using any style sheet, but be consistent with that style. For example, if you are accustomed to using the *MLA Handbook*, then do so consistently. DO NOT INVENT A FOOTNOTE AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STYLE. ALL PAPER TOPICS ARE TO BE APPROVED BY DR. STRANGE. To that end, you are to hand in to Dr. Strange a complete Prospectus for your paper by **Tuesday September 23** (use the one that is Appendix III to this syllabus). The final draft is due on **Tuesday November 18**, approximately two months after the prospectus is due and a little over two weeks before the end of the semester. In an upper-level college essay there should be no errors of grammar, syntax, or punctuation, and very few typographical errors. Proof read carefully.

4. 30% Final Exam. You will write a final exam of essay type. **Thursday, Dec 11, 8:00 AM**.

5. 5% Preparedness and Participation. You are to come to class, having done the reading(s) for the day, and prepared to answer questions by the instructor and engage in discussion based on the readings.

Prof. James Strange

REQUIRED TEXTS (LTJ, SIJ, and JZS are on 3-hour reserve in the Davis Library):

A: Apuleius. *The Golden Ass*. Trans. E. J. Kenney. New York: Penguin Books, 1999. ISBN: 978-0-140-43590-0

LTJ: Johnson, L. T. *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

ISBN: 978-0-800-63129-1

SIJ: Johnston, S. I., ed. *Ancient Religions*. Cambridge Mass.: Belknap Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-674-02548-6

JZS: Smith, J. Z. *Drudgery Divine*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. ISBN: 978-0-226-76363-7

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND TOPICS:

1. T Aug 26 Introduction to the Course: The Study of Greco-Roman Religions. Go over the syllabus.
Begin reading Apuleius.
2. Aug 28 Comparing ancient religions; read JZS 1-35. **Begin research for term paper proposal.**
Aug 29 Last day to add or drop a course(s) without FINANCIAL penalty
Sep 1 Ramadan begins at sunset
3. T Sep 2 Writing Workshop 1: Researching a Term Paper in Religious Studies; meet in the library. Assign student presentations.
4. Sep 4 Comparing ancient religions 1; read JZS 36-53.
5. T Sep 9 Comparing ancient religions 2; read JZS 54-84.
6. Sep 11 Comparing ancient religions 3; read JZS 85-115.
7. T Sep 16 Comparing ancient religions 4; read JZS 116-143.
8. Sep 18 Defining ancient Mediterranean religion; read SIJ vii-16.
9. T Sep 23 **PROSPECTUS FOR TERM PAPER DUE TODAY.**
Writing Workshop 2: After the Prospectus: Narrowing the Focus. Monotheism and polytheism; read SIJ 17-31.
10. Sep 25 Myth; read SIJ 45-58. Ritual; read SIJ 32-44.
Sep 20 Rosh Hashana begins at sunset
11. Sep 30 T Cosmology; read SIJ 59-70. **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS BEGIN TODAY. SP:**
Oct 1 Ramadan ends at sunset (Eid-al-fitr); Rosh Hashanah ends at sunset
12. Oct 2 Pollution, sin, atonement, and salvation; read SIJ 71-83. SP:
13. T Oct 7 Law and Ethics in Religion; read SIJ 84-97. SP:
Oct 8-9 Yom Kippur (sunset-sunset)
14. Oct 9 Mysteries; read SIJ 98-111. SP:
Oct 10 **Last day to withdraw from a course without ACADEMIC penalty**
Oct 13 Sukkot begins at sunset
15. T Oct 14 Contact between Religions; read SIJ 112-126. SP:
16. Oct 16 Writing and Religion; read SIJ 127-138. SP:
Oct 20-21 No Class: Fall Break; Oct 20 Sukkot ends at sunset; Oct 21-22 Simchat Torah (sunset-sunset)
17. Oct 23 Magic; read SIJ 139-152. SP:
18. T Oct 28 Religions of Egypt; read SIJ 155-164. Religions of Syria and Canaan; read 173-180. SP:
19. Oct 30 Religions of Israel; read SIJ 181-188. Religions of Iran; read SIJ 197-205. SP:
20. T Nov 4 Religions of Greece; read SIJ 210-219. Religions of Etruria and Rome; read SIJ 220-232. SP:
21. Nov 6 SP: Another Religion of the Roman Empire; read SIJ 233-251. BY NOW YOU HAVE FINISHED READING *THE GOLDEN ASS*.
22. T Nov 11 Discussion of *The Golden Ass*. SP:
23. Nov 13 **Last day to completely withdraw from ALL courses in semester without ACADEMIC penalty**
Religious experience; read LTJ Ch 1. SP:
24. T Nov 18 **TERM PAPER DUE TODAY** Religious experience in early Christianity; read LTJ Ch 2.
Nov 20 Class Cancelled: Professional Conferences
25. Nov 25 Religious initiation; read LTJ Ch 3.
Nov 26-28 No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday
26. T Dec 2 Ecstatic speech; read LTJ Ch 4.
27. Dec 4 **READING PORTFOLIO DUE TODAY** Sacred meals; read LTJ Ch 5 and Epilogue.
Dec 5 Classes end for the semester
Dec 11 FINAL EXAM: 8:00 AM

FINE PRINT, PLEASE READ:

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Due to the generosity of the attendance policy of the Religion Department, there are **no excused or unexcused absences in this class**. Five absences for any reason or combination of reasons are worth one unit deduction from an A to a B or from a B to a C. Six or more absences result in an FA for the course. As a courtesy, inform the instructor if you must miss. Tardiness and leaving class early also affects grades. If a student comes in after the instructor has taken roll, it is that student's responsibility to ensure that he or she is marked late rather than absent. Inform the instructor if you will leave early.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: This course complies with the rules for academic integrity and the penalties for violations stated in the 2008-2009 Student Handbook and Academic Planner, pp. 118-119. Cheating and plagiarism are dealt with by assigning the mark of zero (0) for the offending work, without the possibility of making up the work, and the student may fail the course with the mark of FX and be suspended from the university. See also the brochure, "Student Guide to Academic Integrity."

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY: Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting Disability Support Services located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall, or call #726-4078/726-2105. A faculty member will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services. See the 2008-2009 Student Handbook and Academic Planner, pp. 123, 144.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY: Student use of cell phones, messaging devices, and other electronic devices (for example, recording devices, music players, PDA's, computers) is prohibited in class, unless required as a disability accommodation. Students who use such devices will be asked to leave class. Exceptions may be made for the use of PDA's and laptop computers for taking notes; students must secure permission for using these devices from the professor. The use of all such devices is absolutely prohibited during exams and quizzes, unless required as a disability accommodation. See the 2008-2009 Student Handbook and Academic Planner, p. 123.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE POLICY: All students must use inclusive (non-gender specific) language when referring to human beings in a general way. See the statement on p. 2 of the 2008-2009 Samford University Catalog.

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY: Food is not allowed in class except at break time. Exceptions will be made for students with special dietary needs; students must secure permission for eating in class from the professor. Drinks are permitted. Coffee is encouraged.

GRADING SCALE: A 100-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-63; D- 62-60; F 59 and below.

USE OF BLACKBOARD AND E-MAIL: The Blackboard site for this course contains some required readings, announcements, the syllabus, and other information, including links to helpful web sites. The professor will also communicate important course information via e-mail. It is students' responsibility to check the Blackboard site and their campus e-mail inboxes regularly.

USE OF SOURCES NOT FOUND ON THE SYLLABUS, INCLUDING ON-LINE AND ELECTRONIC

RESOURCES: Only readings listed in the syllabus and lectures are licit sources for information in this course.

When studying for a quiz or exam, you are expected to consult assigned readings and your lecture notes. Answers derived from any source (i.e. Wikipedia, or other electronic or print media) other than assigned readings will receive no credit.

PURCHASE OF COURSE TEXTBOOKS: Textbooks are on sale in the university bookstore and on reserve in the library under the instructor's name. If students wish to purchase books from some other source, they are responsible for completing the assigned readings for class days for which the readings are assigned. Failure to complete assigned daily readings will result in a reduced participation grade.

CHANGE IN COURSE SYLLABUS: The professor may change the syllabus at any time during the semester. The professor will keep exams and papers no longer than one semester after the close of the class.

By remaining enrolled in this course past the last day to add or drop a course(s) without FINANCIAL penalty (Aug 29, 2008) the student has affirmed that she/he has read the syllabus and understands her/his responsibilities.

Appendix I: Topics for In-Class Presentations
Presenter/Date

| <u>Topic</u> | <u>Presenter/Date</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Aphrodite | |
| Apollo/Delphi | |
| Artemis/Diana | |
| Asclepius | |
| Athena | |
| Dionysus | |
| Eleusinian mysteries | |
| Gnosticism | |
| Isis | |
| Magic (Greco-Roman) | |
| Meter/Magna Mater | |
| Mithras | |
| Orpheus | |
| Osiris | |
| Roman emperor worship | |
| Serapis | |
| Vesta | |
| Zeus/Jupiter | |

Appendix II: Resources

Web Resources (for links go to the Blackboard site for this class):

Internet Sacred Text Archive. This link takes you to the Greek and Roman materials:
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/index.htm> (August 7, 2008).

Perseus Digital Library. An Internet archive of classical materials, including images, ancient texts, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and lexicons of Greek and Latin.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/> (August 7, 2008).

Livius. A simply massive compendium of ancient materials put together by a layperson with too much time on his hands. Use the site judiciously and primarily to get you started on a subject. This link takes you to the Greece page. Links to Roman and other materials are at the top of the page. <http://www.livius.org/greece.html> (August 7, 2008).

Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Translated Greek and Latin texts from the first six centuries or so of Christianity. This site is a digital version of a many-volume set that is a standard addition to college libraries (and a complete copy is on Dr. Strange's shelves).
<http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html> (August 7, 2008).

Library Resources (Reference Section):

The Anchor Dictionary of the Bible, Doubleday, 1992.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1979-1988.

The Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, 1990.

The Macmillan Bible Atlas, 1993 (library has 2 earlier editions)

The Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible, 1989

The Sacred Bridge. Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World, 2006.

Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. Macmillan 2005. (The library also owns the first edition of this fine resource.)

Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity: Pagan, Judaic, Christian. Brill, 2007.

Library Reserves for this Course:

Religions of Antiquity. Macmillan, 1989. Selected articles from the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide. Belknap, 2004. Our course textbook is an abbreviation of this more comprehensive work.

Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity. Routledge, 1999. A sourcebook containing excerpts from ancient sources and containing an excellent, although slightly dated bibliography.

In the Stacks:

Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (Rise and Decline of the Roman World). First floor; call no. DG209 .A9x. This is a multivolume, ongoing publication that is an invaluable source for the study of anything having to do with the ancient Roman world. Articles are in English, French, and German.

Appendix III: Prospectus for a Term Paper
(Fill out and hand in to Dr. Strange.)

Name _____

I. State the theme of the paper in a few sentences. What is your aim, that is, what do you want to investigate, and what direction do you think you will take?

II. List here ten (10) journal articles and books that you have found in this subject area. Hint: journals and books are located in the library. (Do not list the Bible, as it is obvious. LIST NO WEB PAGES.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.