



Religious Studies 2294F/G (570)
The Meaning of Jesus
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: M. Yenson
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

An exploration of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, including historical roots, the development of Christian interpretations, and contemporary religious, cultural, and political significance.

Antirequisite(s): [Religious Studies 3168F/G](#) and the former Religious Studies 2242E.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50
Breadth: Category B
Subject Code: RELSTUD

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Religious Studies 2294F (570)
The Meaning of Jesus
Fall 2026

Course Outline

Dr. M. Yenson
Office of the Vice-President and Academic Dean
King's University College
myenson@uwo.ca

Class Times

(Class location available on OWL Brightspace and Draft My Schedule)

Office Hours

Tuesday 4:30–5:30 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description

An exploration of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, including historical roots, the development of Christian interpretations, and contemporary religious, cultural, and political significance.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Describe the roots and early development of New Testament Christology and soteriology (understanding of salvation)
 2. Describe diverse perspectives on the historical Jesus and evaluate the merits and limitations of these perspectives
 3. Articulate clearly and interrelate the core Christian teachings about Jesus Christ, and explain their historical development
 4. Explain and evaluate contemporary approaches to Christology, e.g. feminist, liberationist
 5. Articulate your own approach to the figure of Jesus in conversation with the Christian tradition and with contemporary perspectives
 6. Express ideas in your own voice, in oral presentation and in writing that are clear, persuasive, balanced, and confident
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Pre-Requisites / Anti-Requisites

Anti-requisites: RS 3168F/G (Huron); the former Religious Studies 2242E

Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course requisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that this course is not an anti-requisite to another course.

Course Format

This is an in-person course.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Attendance & Participation – 10%

This course is scheduled for on-campus, in-person instruction. Consistent attendance and active participation are essential to your success in this class. This component will be assessed based on:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Careful preparation of the weekly readings and readiness to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion
- Participation in in-class writing and group activities
- Respectful listening to and engagement with your fellow students
- Responsible use of technology in class

In addition to active participation in class, students can participate by posing questions or raising ideas outside of class (e.g. emailing the instructor, checking in during office hours).

University Policy on Absenteeism: Significant absenteeism and/or failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year may result in debarment from writing the final examination. See appended College policies on accommodations.

2. Reading Responses – 10%

From Week 2 forward, questions to guide reading will be posted. Responses are due at the beginning of class each week. These responses will also form the basis of class discussion and group activities.

- An overall grade will be given for submissions based on completeness, level of engagement with the reading, clarity, and conciseness.
- Flexibility is built into this course component: the final grade for reading responses will be based on 9 out of 11 possible submissions. Further academic consideration will not be granted except as approved with documentation.
- Because these reading responses are meant as preparation for class, late submissions will not be accepted.

3. Midterm – 20%

In class, October 27. This assignment has been designated as requiring documentation for

any academic consideration. One make-up opportunity will be granted in cases of approved academic consideration, after which the final examination will be reweighted.

4. **Book Review – 25%**

Details and guidelines will be shared in class and on OWL Brightspace.

- Length: 1500 words (approx. 6 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced).
- Due Wednesday Dec 9, 11:59 p.m. No late penalty will be applied within the first 48 hours after the deadline. After 48 hours, the late penalty is -5% per day. Further academic consideration will not be granted except as approved with documentation.

5. **Final Examination– 35%**

The final examination is in-person and will be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during the December examination period. Students should not make travel plans prior to release of the examination schedule.

Based on the learning outcomes of this course and its designation as an essay course, completion of the Book Review and Final Examination are considered essential components: students cannot pass the course without completing these components.

As consistent attendance is essential to your success in this course, any student who has missed 4 classes, except for approved academic considerations, will be recommended for disbarment from writing the final examination.

Fostering a Community of Learning

All class participants share the responsibility of fostering a classroom environment conducive to everyone's learning. This responsibility includes respectful listening and engagement with each other, and reasoned and civil discussion of different perspectives and challenging questions related to course content. Disruptive, hostile, or disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated. Students are at all times subject to the King's Code of Student Conduct.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to your education and professional development, and to a community of learning committed to honesty, fairness, and mutual respect. Therefore, students are expected to submit work that is their own and in their own words. Whenever you take an idea or passage from another author or source, you must acknowledge your source by using quotation marks where appropriate and by citing your references appropriately.

Course instructors are required to refer suspected cases of plagiarism or other academic offences immediately to the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies. (See appendix for further information and links.)

Note on generative artificial intelligence (AI): AI tools such as ChatGPT can be very useful for educational and research purposes, but also have limitations and risks (e.g. misinformation, bias).

Your instructors will approach AI in different ways, based on the content and learning outcomes of each course. Some instructors may permit AI use broadly, while others may prohibit any use of AI.

In this course, AI use will not be prohibited, but **you are ultimately accountable for the work you submit**. If you use AI in any assignment submission, you must state:

- (a) What AI tool you used
- (b) How you used the tool (e.g. brainstorming, creating an outline, editing)
- (c) Where an AI tool is the source of specific content, as you would any other source for content that is not yours. (I recommend strongly against using AI as a sole, unverified source for information.)

Further assessment-specific guidance on AI use will be provided.

Unattributed AI use will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Generative AI and other aids are not permitted in the midterm and final examination.

Academic Considerations

Academic consideration is given when a student is unable to carry out academic work due to temporary but substantial extenuating circumstances, including medical or compassionate circumstances. In most cases, academic consideration requests require documentation submitted through the extranet Student Absence Portal.

Please note above where flexibility has already been built into course structure to provide for academic consideration situations.

Please see the appendix on general policies for information on academic consideration.

Getting in Touch

E-mail is the best way to contact me. When sending me an e-mail, please use your UWO e-mail address, and include the course code, *RS2294F*, in the subject line.

Required Texts

The following text is required:

1. Helen K. Bond, *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2012).
 - Print: Available e.g. through Amazon (not available through the Western Bookstore)
 - Electronic:
 - Available to read online or download at ProQuest Ebook Central:
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=894534>
2. Robin Ryan, *Jesus & Salvation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015).
 - Electronic:
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=4546337>

Both texts will also be available in hard copy on Course Reserve at the Cardinal Carter Library.

Other required readings will be made available on OWL Brightspace.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Sept 15):	Course Introduction
Week 2 (Sept 22):	The Search for the Historical Jesus
Week 3 (Sept 29):	Historical Context, Origins
Week 4 (Oct 6):	Message and Ministry
Oct 10–18:	<i>Thanksgiving/Fall Reading Week</i>
Week 5 (Oct 20):	Death and Resurrection
Week 6 (Oct 27):	<i>Midterm Test</i>
Week 8 (Nov 3):	New Testament Christologies
Week 9 (Nov 10):	Perspectives on Jesus in Early Christianity
Week 10 (Nov 17):	Perspectives on Jesus in the Middle Ages, Reformation
Week 11 (Nov 24):	Contemporary Perspectives on Jesus
Week 12 (Dec 1):	Jesus in a Multi-Religious World
Week 13 (Dec 8):	Jesus and Ethics, Politics, Culture; Summary and Conclusion

(A more detailed weekly class and reading schedule will be provided on OWL Brightspace. The list of topics is subject to change.)

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports_-_TurnItIn.html.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.