

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

THEO5213 Extracanonical Literature

Time: Tuesday 9:30am – 12:15pm

Venue: CCT T41

Instructor: David Ganlin XIE 謝甘霖

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1. Course Description:

This course introduces and discusses various types of early Christian Apocrypha in terms of their contents and specific contexts. It aims at deepening and advancing students' understanding of the diversity of early Christianity. We will go through several predominant but “different” texts (e.g., apocryphal gospels and acts, other epistles, and apocalypses) and will focus on some important issues regarding their distinctive representations and the milieus in which they were written and read.

2. Learning Outcomes:

Having participated in the course, students are expected to

- 1) gain a general understanding of the classification of early Christian Apocrypha.
- 2) appreciate the variety of early Christian thoughts presented outside the canon.
- 3) develop the skills of analyzing ancient texts by comparing them with the New Testament, investigating the social and cultural contexts, and looking into their compositional art.
- 4) enrich the imagination of early Christianity (-ies) from the perspective of other texts.

3. Learning Activities:

The course would be conducted in a seminar-like form.

- 1) **Lectures:** to facilitate a productive environment of discussion, the instructor would provide several lectures or mini-lectures on the general backgrounds of related topics. Students should not rely too much on the lectures, for the main source of learning is massively reading, asking critical questions, and engaging in the discussion.
- 2) **Presentations:** students are to be invited to give presentations on different apocryphal texts. It requires the students to study the selected texts (e.g., background, contents, comparison with the New Testament, special concerns).
- 3) **Discussion:** a vital part of this course is discussion. Students are required to read the pre-class materials and the to-be-presented primary text. In addition, each student needs to prepare at

least two questions for public discussion. Active interactions and open-mindedness are highly encouraged.

4. Course Syllabus:

Topics	Contents
1. The divide of canon and non-canon	What are apocrypha? Canonization
2. Non-canonical Jesus	Early Apocryphal Gospels Gnostic Gospels Other literature about Jesus
3. Apocryphal about other characters	Women, Joseph, John the Baptist, Pontius Pilates
4. Narratives about apostles	Early Apocryphal Acts Later related works about apostles
5. Non-canonical Apocalypses and prophetic works	The origin of Apocalypse Various Apocalyptic types Various prophetic work types

6. Assessments:

1) Active Participation: 20%

- a. Attendance (5%)
- b. Pre-class Reading (5%)
 - Students need to check out the reading log every week to make sure they are ready for the in-class discussion.
- c. Discussion (10%)
 - For a better discussion, students are expected to actively respond, ask questions, and share their opinions.

2) Reading Reflection: 15%

Students will choose ONE of the weekly readings to do a more thorough and comprehensive reflection. Make it into a reflection paper.

- Words limit: no more than 1500 in English or 2000 in Chinese
- Deadline: 6 Dec 2022

3) Presentation: 30 %

Each student (in groups or individuals) will select a primary text in the related category to deliver an introductory presentation to the class, which would also lead to the following discussion session. The specific arrangements will be confirmed in the second week.

4) **Research Paper: 35%**

Students should select ANOTHER primary text (apart from the one for their presentations but that of others) from any apocryphal categories to write a research paper. The paper needs to focus on one specific issue, which is handled by closely reading, carefully analyzing the literary features and its interaction with the social and cultural contexts, and dialoguing with other similar texts or motifs.

- Words limit: No more than 4000 in English and 5000 in Chinese.
- Deadline: 23 Dec 2022

***Note:** Please plan the writing as early as possible. Late submission **will be dealt with deduction** except that medical documents are provided.

7. **Required Readings:**

- 1) **Textbook:** Gregory, Andrew F., C. M. Tuckett, Tobias Nicklas, and Joseph Verheyden, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Apocrypha*. Oxford handbooks in religion and theology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- 2) Those marked with [*] in the course schedule must be read.

8. **Recommended Readings:**

- 1) Primary texts of early Christian Apocrypha
 - i. Charlesworth, James H. (ed.). *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts with English translations*, 6 vols. Tübingen / Louisville: Mohr, 1994-2002.
 - ii. Charlesworth, James H. (ed.). *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983.
 - iii. Ehrman, Bart D. (ed.). *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols. The Loeb Classical Library 24-25. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
 - iv. Elliott, J. K., and M. R. James. *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
 - v. Robinson, James M. (ed.). *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. 4th Ed. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996.
 - vi. Schneemelcher, Wilhelm (ed.). *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols. Trans. R. McL. Wilson. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991-1992.
 - vii. Layton, Bentley. *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions*. Anchor Bible reference library. New York: Doubleday, 1987.
 - viii. 黃根春 編。《基督教典外文獻 - 新約篇》。四冊。香港：基督教文藝出版社，

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2) Recommended secondary materials

- i. Boer, Esther de. *The Gospel of Mary: Beyond a Gnostic and a Biblical Mary Magdalene*. Journal for the study of the New Testament. Supplement series 260. London: T & T Clark International, 2004.
- ii. Foster, Paul. *The Apocryphal Gospels: A Very Short Introduction*. Very short introductions 201. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- iii. Klauck, Hans-Josef. *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction*; Translated by Brian McNeil. London, New York: T & T Clark International, 2003.
- iv. Pagels, Elaine H. *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2003.
- v. Stoops, R. F. (ed.). *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles in Intertextual Perspectives* (Semeia 80). Decatur: Scholars Press, 1997.
- vi. Watson, Francis, and Sarah Parkhouse, eds. *Connecting Gospels: Beyond the Canonical/non-Canonical Divide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

9. Course Schedule:

Date	Content	Pre-class Reading	Presentation
1. 6/9	Syllabus & Intro of Early Christian Apocrypha	Course outline Gregory, chp 1.	
2. 13/9	Non-canonical Gospels (1): a bird view	Gregory, chp 2 & 8	
3. 20/9	Non-canonical Gospels (2): Agrapha, ancient quotations, and infancy Gospels	Watson, chp 1. <i>P. Oxy. 840; P.Egerton 2; A Gospel of the Hebrews</i>	
4. 27/9	Non-canonical Gospels (3): Saying Gospels, Dialogue Gospels, Passion Gospels	Pagels, chp 2 Gregory, chp 13 <i>The Gospel of Thomas</i>	
5. 4/10	Public Holiday		
6. 11/10	Apocryphal Texts about Other Characters (1): Mary and Joseph, John the Baptist and Zechariah	Gregory, Chp 3 <i>Protevangelium of James</i>	<i>Protevangelium of James</i>
7. 18/10	Apocryphal Texts about Other Characters (2): Mary Magdalene, Pontius Pilate	Gregory, chp 15. Boer, chp 2. <i>The Gospel of Mary</i>	<i>The Gospel of Mary</i>
8. 25/10	Apocryphal Acts (1): Early	Gregory, chp 4	<i>The Acts of Paul</i>

	Apocryphal Acts	<i>The Acts of Paul</i>	
9. 1/11	Apocryphal Acts (2): Intermediate works	Gregory, chp 17. <i>The Acts of Philip</i>	<i>The Acts of Philip</i>
10. 8/11	Apocryphal Letters (1): Paul's	Gregory, chp 5. <i>3 Corinthians</i>	<i>3 Corinthians</i>
11. 15/11	Apocryphal Letters (2): Other Apostles'	Gregory, chp 8 <i>Peter's letter to James,</i> <i>Peter's letter to Philip</i>	<i>Peter's letter to James, Peter's letter to Philip</i>
12. 22/11	Apocryphal Apocalypses (1): Revelations of the Historical- Eschatological Future	Gregory, chp 6 <i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>
13. 29/11	Apocryphal Apocalypses (2): Revelations of the Other World, and Questions	Gregory, chp 19 <i>Apocalypse of Paul</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Paul</i>
14. 6/12	Conclusion	Gregory, chp 25 <i>The Gospel of Judas</i>	<i>The Gospel of Judas</i>

10. Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. **Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers.** Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.