COURSE SYLLABUS

RELS 6615
Seminar in the Religions of Late Antiquity
M 6:30-9:15
Dr. John C. Reeves
Macy 204B
Office hours: M 5:00-6:00; TR 12:30-1:30; or by appointment
jcreeves@uncc.edu
http://religiousstudies.uncc.edu/people/jcreeves/

Course description: ‘Current and seminal issues related to the academic study of one or more of the religions practiced in the Roman and/or Sasanian empires during late antiquity.’ This semester’s topic is The Recovery of the Enochic Library, a research project involving a close examination of the massive literature and rich lore attached to the antediluvian biblical character Enoch (Gen 5:21-24) and the import of this material for subsequent Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, hermetic, and Islamic literary and intellectual currents. A fuller description of the project is available here. We will also lavish some attention upon the northern Mesopotamian city of Harran and its peculiar religio-cultural character under Roman, Sasanian, and Muslim rule. Those wishing to read Enochic and related texts in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Syriac, and/or Arabic will be accommodated, but all primary sources used in class meetings will be read and analyzed using English translations of these and other (e.g., Coptic) sources.

Required textbooks:


A plethora of primary sources (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic) in English translation will be assigned and/or distributed by the instructor.
Additional secondary essays and articles will be distributed or assigned by the instructor.

Course requirements:

a. Research project. One (1) formal research project will be presented in oral and written form (at least 15 double-spaced pages, exclusive of notes and list of sources, and no more than 20 double-spaced pages, exclusive of notes and list of sources) that focuses upon a particular topic relevant to the study of Enochic literature or lore. In consultation with the instructor, the student should select a topic of individual interest that permits such an extended exposition, analysis, and/or evaluation. The topic for one’s project should be selected no later than the March 12 class meeting. The project will be surveyed orally (15-20 minutes) at the final class meeting (April 30); a formal written version of the paper is due to me by 12:00 PM one week later (May 7). The research project accounts for 50% of the course grade.

b. Seminar papers & presentations. Excepting our first and final meetings, students will bear some responsibility for leading our discussion during a portion of each class meeting. Preparation for these discussions is based upon, but not necessarily limited to, all the readings assigned for that class meeting from the primary and/or secondary resources found in Charles, Morfill, Odeberg, VanderKam, other assigned texts, and materials uncovered during the course of individual research. Assignments for brief presentation will be made weekly. Seminar papers (due weekly beginning January 23) will (1) concisely summarize and assess the major points of one of our required secondary readings for that week, or (2)
provide a roster and brief discussion of the motifs and themes discernible within the ‘Enochic Library’ passages provided for that week. Maximum length of the seminar paper will be five (5) pages.

c. Individual involvement. Almost perfect attendance (see below) is an essential requirement for this course. Each class meeting builds upon the knowledge gained and queried during the previous meetings. Moreover, in-class discussion, close reading, and detailed analysis by both the instructor and class members comprise the bulk of every class meeting. Preparation for every class usually involves the completion of a series of required readings and written assignment(s), and individual students are often asked to initiate our collective examination and discussion of the weekly topics. Students are expected to contribute in an informed manner to the public analysis and discussion of any assigned topic. The instructor’s collective assessment of one’s attendance, weekly class preparation, seminar papers, and oral presentations will constitute 50% of the final course grade.

d. Zakhor (Remember!): Mastery of the assigned readings, the timely completion of any written assignments, and diligent class attendance are necessary prerequisites for the successful completion of this course. Each student is responsible for all lectures, class discussions, hand-outs, assignments, and announcements, whether or not he/she is present when they occur.

Miscellaneous information:

a. The grading scale used in this course is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91-95+</td>
<td>A = demonstrable mastery of material—outstanding performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>B = satisfactory performance of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>C = inadequate and/or faulty understanding of material</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-70</td>
<td>U = unacceptable graduate-level work</td>
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b. One of the requirements of this course is to complete the work of the course on time. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for late work—an illness or other emergency. ‘Emergency,’ however, does not include your social involvements, travel plans, job schedule, disk and/or printer failures, the state of your love life, your obligations to other courses, or general malaise over the state of the world. The world has been in a mess as long as anyone can remember, and most of the world’s work is done by people whose lives are a mass of futility and discontent. If you haven’t learned yet, you had better learn now to work under the conditions of the world as it is. **Therefore:**

1) All missing work is averaged as a 0 in the computation of the course grade.

2) All written work falls due on the dates scheduled in the syllabus, or on the date announced by the instructor in class (usually the next class meeting). ‘Late’ work will not be accepted from students who were privy to its oral evaluation and discussion (i.e., you were present while we ‘went over it’ but you neglected to do it beforehand). In the event of one’s absence, ‘late’ submissions bear the following penalties: one day late/one letter grade; two days late/two letter grades; three or more days late/U. Please note: these ‘days’ are calendar days, not class meeting days. For accounting purposes, letter grades bear the following values: A=95; A-=92; B+=88; B=85; B-=82; C+=78; C=75; C-=72; U=35. Seminar papers are assessed according to the following formulae: √+ = A; √ = B; √- = U. An untyped seminar paper or final project automatically receives the grade U, as do those typed submissions which violate the required parameters or which the instructor deems physically unacceptable and/or grammatically incomprehensible.

3) Since your diligent physical participation is critical for the success of this course, attendance at class meetings will be monitored by the instructor. One absence is regrettable; two absences are the limit of tolerability. Three (3) or more absences will result in an automatic U for the course. Please note that the instructor does not distinguish ‘excused’ from ‘unexcused’ absences. Unsanctioned late arrivals and early departures will be tallied as absences.

4) Policy regarding Audits: the instructor expects auditors (whether formally enrolled as such or not) to meet the same attendance, preparation, and oral participation standards as those students who are taking the course for credit. The instructor does not expect auditors to prepare and submit any written assignments.
c. Assistance and solicitation of criticism is your right as a member of the class. It is not a privilege to be granted or withheld. Do not hesitate to request it nor wait too late in the course for it to be of help.

ROUGH COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 9
Introduction
Biblical Enoch
Required:
   Genesis 1:1-11:32 (esp. 4:17-6:9)

Jan 16
NO CLASS (MLK Day)

Jan 23
Biblical Enoch (cont’d)
Mesopotamian forebears
Required:
   Berossus, *Babyloniaka* 1.1-3

Jan 30
Mesopotamian forebears (cont’d)
Required:

Feb 6
Enoch as culture hero
Required:
**Feb 13**
Enoch as prophet/sage

**Required:**

**Feb 20**
Enoch as apotheosized mortal

**Required:**
- Odeberg, *3 Enoch* (introduction), 79-146.

**Feb 27**
Enoch/Hermes/Idrīs

**Required:**
- Q 19:56-57; 21:85

**Mar 5**
NO CLASS (Spring break)

**Mar 12**
Harrān and the Ṣābiān

**Required:**
- Birūnī, *Āhār* (ed. Sachau), 204.17-206.19

**Mar 19**
Ethiopic Enoch

**Required:**
- 1 Enoch 1-5; 6-16; 17-36; 72-82; 106-107
Mar 26
Ethiopic Enoch (cont’d)
Required:
1 Enoch 83-90; 91-105; 108; 37-71
Charles, Book of Enoch, 1-272.

Apr 2
Slavonic Enoch
Required:
2 Enoch (long) 1-38
Morfill-Charles, Secrets of Enoch, xi-xlvii.

Apr 9
Slavonic Enoch (cont’d)
Required:
2 Enoch (long) 39-68; 69-73 (= Appendix in Morfill-Charles, Secrets of Enoch, 85-93)
Morfill-Charles, Secrets of Enoch, 1-93.

Apr 16
‘Hebrew Enoch’
Required:
Odeberg, 3 Enoch (translation), 1-179.

Apr 23
Witherspoon Lecture, McKnight Hall, 7:00 PM
Required:
Your physical attendance at this and its allied events

Apr 30
Research projects and concluding business

TEMPLATE FOR SEMINAR PAPERS

Each seminar paper will have a similar structure, dependent upon its type. If the seminar paper is devoted to the explication of a particular secondary reading (e.g., an article or a chapter from VanderKam, Charles, et al.), you will first concisely summarize and highlight its primary points or arguments. Then you will either (1) identify and briefly assess the implications of their points, arguments, etc. for the study of Enoch and/or Enochic lore, or (2) discuss how the primary source readings (i.e., 1-3 Enoch, etc.) add support to or undermine their points or arguments. If the seminar paper is devoted to the extraction and isolation of motifs and themes that can be gleaned from an assigned set of passages stemming from the ‘Enochic Library,’ you will generate an annotated list of such items that verbally (a) correlates and (b) defends your proposed taxonomy in light of the primary source materials and the ongoing cumulative work.
of the class. I will maintain and periodically redistribute a ‘master list’ to facilitate our work across
linguistic and religious boundaries. The papers should be no longer than five (5) typed pages (single-
spaced is fine) and fall due the evening of each class (beginning January 23).

TEMPLATE FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

Discussion leaders may use the following template as a guideline for their seminar remarks:

1. Begin promptly.
2. Ask the instructor for announcements.
3. Present to the class an initial consideration of the assigned topic. For primary text(s), identify its
   relevance and potential import for the task at hand (e.g., if the topic is ‘Enoch as flood-hero,’ how do(es)
   the assigned text(s) exemplify this type?). You may want to isolate certain characters, motifs, or plot
   movements. For secondary text(s), summarize (but do not evaluate yet!) the main arguments and points. I
   would suggest spending no more than twenty minutes on all of this.
4. Open the floor for questions and discussion:
   Plan A. Invite discussion of any issue of interest.
   Plan B. Raise an important issue which you have seen in the text(s) and invite response (now
   you can evaluate!).
   Plan C. Elicit comment on how the text(s) relate to points made in earlier classes and/or other
   passages from our primary and secondary sources.
   Plan D. Ask a series of pointed questions designed to provoke a response.
5. Be prepared to put Plans B-D into operation if Plan A falters.
6. Conclude by pointing to one or two aspects of the discussion that you consider to have been
   particularly valuable or productive for further work.

SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR RELS 6615

Translations and Commentaries

Press, 1912).
August Dillmann, Das Buch Henoch (Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1853).


Siegfried Uhlig, *Das äthiopische Henochbuch* (JSHRZ 5.6; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1984).


Studies in Transmission History, with special reference to Enoch


Enoch and Hermeticism


Birger A. Pearson, “Jewish Elements in Corpus Hermeticum I (Poimandres),” in idem, Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 136-47.

Ḥarrān and its Milieu