I have just finished grading my final exams for my undergraduate first-year seminar, Reli 070, “Jesus in Scholarship and Film.” I don’t ever recall teaching an undergraduate class that I enjoyed more. This was an amazingly bright and engaged group of twenty-one first-year students. The exams were superb – the best bunch I’ve ever seen. Some of them were stunningly good. (A few of the students are on the blog: you done good!)

For the exam, I gave the students the following questions two weeks in advance, and told them I would choose two of them for the final. They would not know which two I would choose. They had three hours to write their essays.

This year I rolled the dice, and chose questions #2 and #6. So -- how would *you* do?

FOR THE REST OF THIS POST, log in as a Member. If you don’t belong yet, GET WITH THE PROGRAM!!!

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Reli 070

Potential Final Exam Questions

For your final exam you will be asked to answer two of the following questions. You will have three hours total

1. Choose any two methods we have learned for studying the Gospels, and describe how they work; then select one of the Gospels and show how the two methods could be used to unpack its meaning.

2. Choose any two Gospels we have studied so far and do a comparative analysis (looking at both similarities and differences) in order to show the distinctive emphases of each.

3. Take either side of the following debate resolution and argue it, providing as much evidence as you can. Resolved: the New Testament Gospels contain irreconcilable differences.

4. Discuss the distinctive portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel according to XXX (XXX stands for the Gospel that I, the professor and exam-creator, would choose; this could be either a canonical or a non-canonical Gospel that we have studied).

5. Evaluate the criterion of dissimilarity and the criterion of independent attestation. Why are these criteria needed to establish what really happened in the life of Jesus? What is the logic behind both of them? What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of each? Finally discuss various words and deeds of Jesus recorded in our ancient sources that pass each of the criteria in your judgment. In the final analysis, do you find these criteria necessary and/or useful?

6. Choose one of the canonical Gospels and discuss why scholars might find it problematic as a historical source for reconstructing the life of Jesus.
7. Choose any of the full-length movies we have seen in class and compare and contrast its portrayal of Jesus with that found in any of the Gospels we have studied.

8. Take either side of the following debate resolution and argue it, providing as much evidence as you can. Resolved: Jesus is best understood as an apocalyptic prophet who expected an imminent end of the age.

9. Compare and contrast the methods and conclusions presented in (a) Reza Aslan’s *Zealot* and (b) Bart Ehrman’s *Jesus: The Apocalyptic Prophet*.

*My New Teaching Company Course*
*Video: Ehrman & Evans 2012 Debate – Part 2*