THE GREEK INFLUENCE on EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Instructor: Norman Austin
Professor Emeritus of Classics


SYLLABUS

WEEK 1 Introduction, Survey of the seminar, Objectives; Hebrew foundation: Law, the Covenant; Consciousness and rise of religion

WEEK 2 The Tragic Hero: Homer's Achilles, the *Odyssey*; Sophocles' *Ajax*; Transgression; Sacrifice; Socrates as Martyr

WEEK 3 The Image Jahweh: no attributes. The Image in Greek Art, Early Christian Art, Dura Europos, Roman Catacombs, Renaissance, Donatello and Sculpture; Gothic cathedrals, stained glass windows; San Xavier del Bac; Hebraism v Hellenism; Image as Epiphany

WEEK 4 Alexander the Great (conquests 333-323 BCE). Hellenization of the Mediterranean: Alexandria, Pergamum Athens as university town The common language: Greek *koine* Diogenes the Cosmopolitan Hellenist v. Hellene; Plato's *Meno*

WEEK 5 Romanization of the Mediterranean: Julius Caesar, Augustus Caesar Roman *imperium*

WEEK 6 The Jesus Story: Composition of the Gospels, fusion of the Jesus story with Old Testament Jewish tradition (kings and prophets)

WEEK 7 St Paul: the Damascus Road St Paul as Greek, Roman, Hebrew; Study with Rabbi Gameliel Peter & Cornelius in the Book of Acts, the Vision & Agamemnon's Dream in *Iliad* 2.

WEEK 8 St Paul and Apostles as Evangelists: Hebrew v Greek; Law v. Sophia; the Logos; Apostles Peter and James v Paul
WEEK 9  Development and diffusion of early Christianity. Orthodoxy v. Heterodoxy; Gnostics; Roman Imperialism (the divinity of the Emperor); Clement I of Rome, and Paideia

WEEK 10  Constantine: Milvia Bridge, Rome; Constantine re-creates Rome in Constantinople; Council of Nicaea; the Nicene Creed (opposition to Gnostics): the Christological conundrum: the Nature of God and the Nature of Jesus, and relations between the two. The Holy Spirit; the Trinity; Platonism; the development of a Creed ("symbol" in Greek).