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WKU Course Evaluations

James W. Barker

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Western Kentucky University

From the Selected Works of James W. Barker

Summer 2022

WKU course evaluations - Fall 2015-Spring 2022

James W Barker



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/james_barker/8/

James Barker—WKU Course Evaluations—Fall 2015–Spring 2022

Judaism
 Christianity
 Life of Jesus
 Jesus in Film
 Senior Seminar

The New Testament
 World History to 1500
 The Making of the Bible
 Christians, Jews, and Pagans
 Introductory–Intermediate Greek

65% of students responding

5 = Strongly Agree ... 1 = Strongly Disagree

1) My instructor is organized and well-prepared for class.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.7	72%	25%	3%	0%	0%

2) Expectations for course assignments are clear and specific.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.4	58%	32%	8%	2%	0%

3) Assignments/exams are aligned with course learning objectives.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.5	62%	31%	6%	1%	0%

4) This course has effectively challenged me to think.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.6	67%	25%	6%	2%	0%

5) My instructor provides constructive feedback.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.5	62%	29%	6%	3%	0%

6) Overall, my instructor is effective.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.5	64%	28%	6%	2%	0%

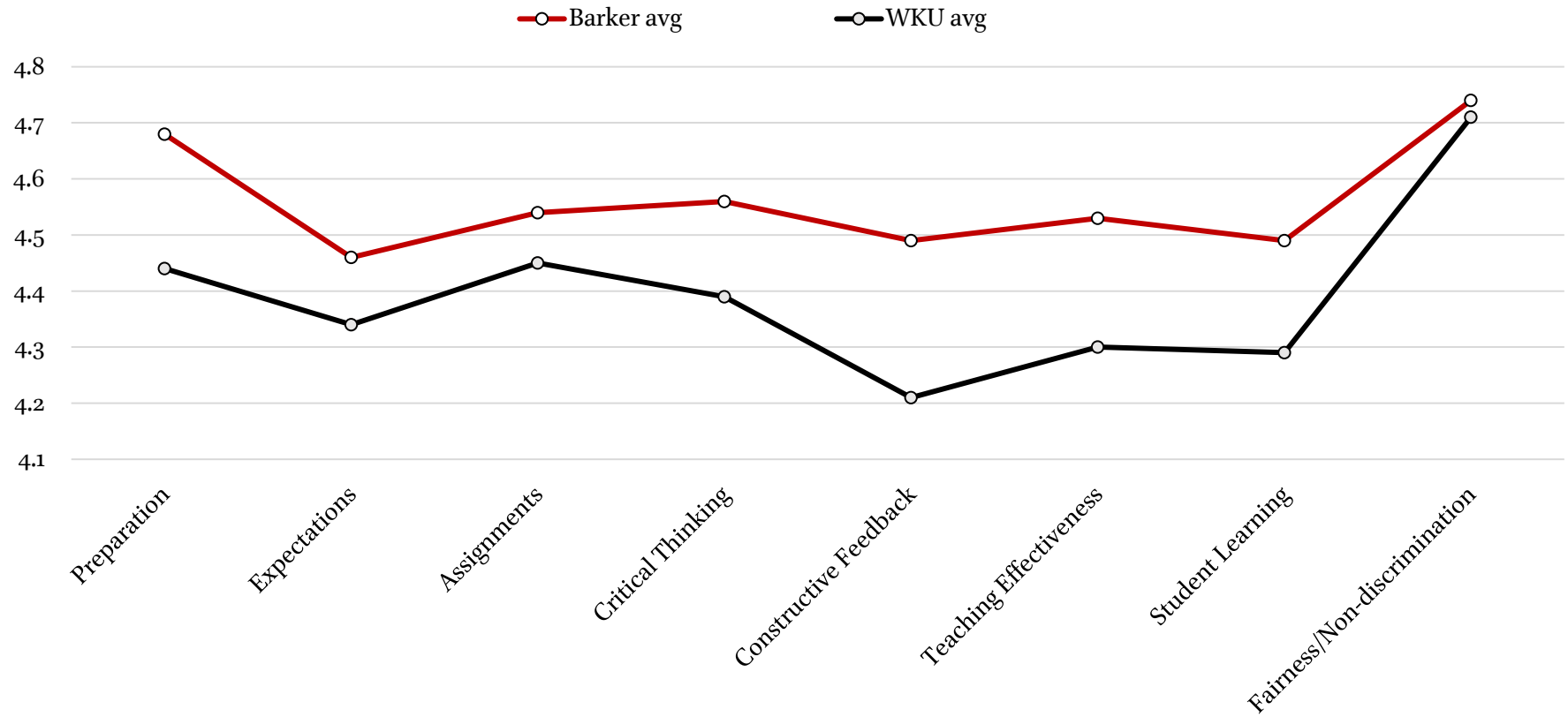
7) I have learned a lot in this course.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.5	64%	26%	7%	2%	1%

8) My instructor treats me fairly with regard to race, age, sex, religion, national origin, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Average	5	4	3	2	1
4.7	80%	17%	2%	1%	0%

James Barker—WKU Course Evals—Fall 2015–Spring 2022



interesting
phenomenal
fantastic
amazing
energetic
awesome
effective
best
outstanding
great
stimulating
fascinating
knowledgeable
excellent
fun
constructive
entertaining
intriguing
organized
passionate
prepared
brilliant
funny
engaging
enjoyed
animated
enjoyable
dynamic
impressive
favorite
exciting
challenging
wonderful
challenged
enthusiastic

New Testament

Dr. Barker is a fantastic professor who cares about his students. He is focused on challenging us to think, but also helping us fully understand and respecting our own opinions. He is by far one of the greatest professors I have ever had.

Professor Barker is an amazing professor. He is very passionate about what he teaches and is thorough in his lectures. He gives detailed feedback on tests and is always willing to answer any question and help his students when he can. I've learned a lot from this course and I'm glad I took it.

This course absolutely blew my mind. I went in not knowing what to expect, and I'm coming out knowing more than I feel like any pastor knows about the New Testament. Dr. Barker is immensely passionate about what he teaches, and he will tell you that and hold to it. What I took from this class is that nothing is perfect; so many people think the Bible is without flaw or error, and I learned that this thought is beyond ignorant. Dr. Barker in no way tries to sway you for or against a certain belief system; he teaches the history of the New Testament, thoughts and theories derived from it, and how Judaism and Christianity evolve during and after the teachings of Jesus. I looked forward to this class, it was truly the highlight of my week. I wanted to tell people crazy stuff I had learned and eventually started challenging my family based on what I had learned. Dr. Barker is so kind and laugh-out-loud funny; he has a great answer for any kind of question thrown at him. If I could, I would take this course every semester. I intend on taking more classes with him.

Dr. Barker is an outstanding teacher. I've never been so engaged in a lecture day in and day out, I genuinely look forward to attending class and taking notes because I know I'll learn something new everyday. I would take this course again! The way the tests are set up works great and even though there's a lot of material, Dr. Barker makes it very manageable. 10/10!

This is one of the best classes I have taken at WKU and Dr. Barker is by far my favorite professor. He has challenged me look at material and the world from a new perspective. I came to class everyday and knew I was going to learn something that I didn't already know.

Dr. Barker is fantastic and SO KNOWLEDGABLE! He really knows his stuff and you can tell, as a student, just how much he loves his job and the work he does.

Dr. Barker is an enthusiastic professor that can easily engage the class. I appreciate greatly how the class is simply learning the history and facts behind the New Testament, and he would never make any student feel obligated to believe a certain way. I would recommend his class to anyone.

Keep doing what you're doing Dr. Barker. I really enjoyed the class this semester. You really challenged me to think on a bigger scale on a lot of things and taught me things that I never knew especially after attending a religious school the past 13 years of my life. Thank you.

Very funny, you can tell you really enjoy what you do which is amazing. I've learned a lot!

Professor Barker was one of the most amazing professors I've had at Western. I had some health issues throughout the semester and he was more than helpful to keep me on track. He truly wants his students to succeed and learn as much as they can. I would definitely recommend this course to anyone.

Dr. Barker is an amazing professor! I learned so much about the New Testament and was able to look at the Gospels and other writings from different perspectives. I truly enjoyed going to class everyday.

Even though this is a 100 level course, I have still been able to learn so much about this topic. Dr. Barker does an amazing job of portraying information in ways that I would not have thought about any other time and also think critically about things that before I would have never questioned. His ability to portray the information to the class is also one of the most effective ways I have seen from a professor at WKU.

A great professor. I would recommend this course to anyone. The topics discussed have become a main topic in conversation with family and friends from High School. This course challenged my beliefs and my critical thinking skills in regard to questioning what is being told to me. Of all the fascinating information I learned in this course, the most significant thing I learned is to be skeptical and to do your research rather than simply accepting what you are told as absolute truth. This course opened my eyes to all of the aspects of Christianity I was ignorant to, despite thinking that I would be an expert, being the child of a Sunday school teacher. I loved this course and will absolutely take more of Mr. Barker's classes in the future given the opportunity. Every class was exciting and stimulating. By far one of the best classes I've taken at WKU. Thanks for a great semester!

Prof. Barker is one of the best professors I've had during my time at WKU (and I'm a senior about to graduate!). I just took this class as an elective, but I've learned so much that I wouldn't have known otherwise. Prof. Barker always comes to class prepared, and his lectures are dynamic and chock full of information.

Dr. Barker has taught a phenomenal course. Even though we are reading the New Testament, which many of us are accustomed to reading, we are forced to look at it with new insight. We simply can't glaze over the words—we are encouraged to think and challenge our prior experiences. I have been able to effectively communicate with others outside of the classroom what I have learned and this is I believe is one of the greatest benefits I have gotten out of the course. Although most of the class was focused on antiquity I enjoyed how the semester was wrapped up with a discussion over Jewish-Christian relations. This is something very important to this day and I'm glad someone talked about it.

I would not change a thing about this course. I really enjoyed learning in this class and found a lot of places in my everyday life and other classes where I could relate what I was learning in this course. The feedback he gives is always constructive, detailed and encouraging. This was definitely my favorite course of the semester.

Professor Barker is a highly energetic instructor. Out of all the professors I have had, I can honestly say that he is by far the most energetic and passionate professor that I have had in all my time at WKU.

Dr. Barker is a great teacher and extremely smart, you can tell he has a real passion for teaching about the Bible. I was never very religious and did not know a lot about the Bible, so I signed up for this class so I could understand how and why it was created. I feel like this class has helped me a great deal with understand the Bible on a deeper level.

From the perspective of a student who is generally average and uninterested, Dr. Barker is without a doubt the best teacher I have had throughout my entire life. He is genuinely an amazing teacher. Everyday I left his class calling up friends or family speaking to them about what I learned in his New Testament class. Above all else, his commitment and enthusiasm for the subject should be noted. You can truly tell he loves to teach it and is absolutely obsessed with it. He had to undergo surgery during our semester and worked very hard to make sure we stayed informed and educated. Although his physical condition was limited during our course, his enthusiasm of the subjects at hand could not be contained.

Jesus in Film

Jesus in Film has been the most interesting class that I've had the opportunity to take at WKU, and that is largely thanks to Dr. Barker's knowledge of the subject, as well as his enthusiasm. He is also very willing to give feedback to students, and doesn't assert his religious views into his lectures.

Please keep doing what you are doing. Amazing class I will never forget. I have learned more in this class than I have learned in church for the past few years, thank you so much.

Fantastic class the instructor was passionate and funny. Everyday I learned and laughed.

Dr. Barker is a great teacher and understands the subject matter. He is passionate about this course and that shows when he teaches!

Dr. Barker is a gem. This will almost definitively be the only religious film class I will ever take in my life, and Dr. Barker managed to change my perspective about so much when reading the Gospels, as well as ancient text in general. He is a professor that not only does an outstanding at being prepared and knowledgeable, but he has also figured out how to incorporate his personality into the classroom. He easily has the most intelligent sense of humor of any instructor I've met at WKU. I think it's his clear knowledge of the history, combined with his relatability to students in modern times that makes him such an effective professor. I am genuinely going to miss seeing Dr. Barker in class, and he's a professor I definitely want to talk to even after this class!

Dr. Barker is by far one of the best professors I have had at WKU. He is very passionate about what he teaches and keeps his lectures very exciting and entertaining. He provides excellent feedback and always has the student's interests at hand.

Dr. Barker is awesome!!! He makes class so enjoyable, and actually makes you want to learn more. There was never a dull moment in the class, and I thoroughly enjoyed that. I would take Dr. Barker again. This class really challenges you to think!

Dr. Barker is a very good teacher, and it's very obvious that he is very passionate about what he does. He always made me laugh a lot in class and always made class enjoyable.

Dr. Barker is one of the best professors I have ever had. He has great insight, well researched lectures, and a wonderful balance between lecturing and discussion (which usually aren't my favorite learning preference but he keeps me engaged), and a great sense of dry humor. The homework and projects he assigns are demanding, but not overwhelming. I had a lot of fun in this class! 10/10

Dr. Barker is one of the best professors I've had throughout my college experience so far. He clearly knows his material and enjoys teaching it to the class. He is very understanding and patient when I am struggling with something. I can tell that he cares about helping his students and really loves what he does. Great professor, he is very entertaining and keeps the students' attention during the entire class.

Prof. Barker is an excellent teacher. I've not only enjoyed the content, but also the amount of enthusiasm he displays every class. Having a teacher that loves what he's doing as much as Prof. Barker creates a very positive learning environment.

I love how passionate this professor is about his subject. It makes me want to engage in the learning.

Christians, Jews, and Pagans

Dr. Barker's teaching style is very engaging, fulfilling, and intellectually stimulating. I enjoyed the readings and he helped to open my mind to the conversations between Christians, Jews, and Pagans. It was definitely worth it to take this class!

I really love this class. I have learned a lot about the history of my own religion as well as the religions that my religion has interacted with. I have really enjoyed my time in this class. Thanks, Dr. Barker!

I wish I could agree more than strongly in regard to the question that this course has challenged my to think. I am not a religions major, but I feel like this has been one of the most informative classes I have taken at WKU. Dr Barker is without a doubt the most knowledgeable man when it comes to this material and his deep understanding of the subject only aided to our knowledge development. A great professor and an effective course!

Dr. Barker's course has opened up my eyes to a lot of things. Dr. Barker is great at giving unbiased outlooks on all religions and makes sure that the content is truly meant to learn about religions and how they interact. Because of this I have a better understanding on the outlook of Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Roman world and today. The coursework is demanding, but necessarily so. Class time really helped to make sense of the readings and tie it all together.

Dr. Barker is fantastic. He balances out being a complete hard-ass with a large dose of humor and enthusiasm. He has a very low tolerance for a lack of effort, and expects all his students to put the appropriate amount of effort into his class. He communicates very well with the class, and it's obvious he knows what he's talking about. Even though I am DEFINITELY not getting an A in this class, I am enjoying it immensely and learning a lot.

This class was very interesting, and I had a very enjoyable learning experience. I would also recommend this Professor and class to anyone interested. He is always well prepared and on task. He always answers questions or thoughts on the subject at hand and has office hours open for all who need help.

I enjoyed the connections to modern day life, they provided a richer understanding of topics and allowed me to get a better grasp on the information. The professor is very helpful with advice and criticism for the course work. He is always willing, and actually eager, to meet with students to provide them with what they need. He doesn't seem to be trying to hide the information for the course, which is a common practice among professors. He's willing to lay it out for students to understand. He's lively and willing to goof around to make things interesting and memorable. He's very knowledgeable, even about fine details, that the class provides a great thorough introduction on the topics.

I love Professor Barker because he is passionate about his area of study. He is very outspoken and conducts his lectures with humor and vitality. I've enjoyed every class. I feel very lucky to have taken his classes and believe he is a very valuable faculty member. He challenges his students to use their minds and engage the material all of which helped me get the most out of the readings. I am happy with this class and really enjoyed doing the dialogues. Thank you Dr. Barker, I appreciate your help.

Christianity

Dr. Barker is very passionate about the subject material, which makes class more interesting. I am an atheist, but learning theology through Dr. Barker has been a very enriching experience. He does his best to incorporate many views in the course material.

This is by far one of the best courses I have ever taken.

Dr. Barker is one of the best professors I've had in my college life. He explains everything thoroughly. When the class reads difficult material, he makes it clear what was said down to the very word. Taking a secular and scholarly look at the thinkers throughout Christian history is objective as well as fascinating. He also has a wonderful sense of humor.

This has been one of my favorite classes I've taken. Professor Barker is very obviously passionate about his work and is eager to share his knowledge with his students. I hope to take another one of his classes in the future.

Judaism

I felt challenged in a positive way in this class, as it made me evaluate my own beliefs and values in life. The class also helped me to think more critically and be more open-minded towards other beliefs. I understand now that in our society today and especially in the Christian church, Judaism is not studied enough and there are still a lot of misperceptions in society due to ignorance. This class was effective in diminishing this ignorance and misperceptions for me. I would definitely recommend this class to others. I also respect the professor's educated opinions and criticism of some beliefs, and strong advocacy for social justice.

Dr. Barker is always enthusiastic about class material, which makes it more interesting for me as a student. Dr. Barker is a challenging grader, which I appreciate. He pushes us to think everything through and to push ourselves. Overall, I have very much enjoyed the class and having Dr. Barker.

Dr. Barker presents the information in an understandable way, and that helped me to learn a lot in this class. It is obvious that he is very knowledgeable on the subject, but explains it well for those who are not. One of the best professors I've had in the religious studies department.

Honestly, this course is not one I wanted to take but I have truly enjoyed it and learned more than I expected. Despite the circumstance, Dr. Baker has orchestrated this class very well. Even though religion is not really my field or of interest to me Dr. Baker made this class interesting for me and I would like to take more classes of his.

Dr. Baker is by far one of the best professors here at WKU. His classes are always interesting and challenge you to think in ways that you haven't before. Dr. Baker cares about the well being of his students and wants all of his students to be successful. He is great at working around circumstances that you may have come up during the year and very understand with them. I wish more professors here were like Dr. Baker.

Life of Jesus

Dr. Barker is one of the most knowledgeable people at WKU. Very few times have I been in a class where my teacher is so informed on a topic and teaches it in a way that is so effective. He is always extremely helpful both in the classroom while teaching and with feedback on assignments. Overall, Dr. Barker is incredible at his job.

It is very clear that Dr. Barker is extremely knowledgeable and passionate about what he's teaching in Life of Jesus. This class has made me think critically and get out of the way I would typically think about things.

Dr. Barker is one of the most phenomenal professors I've ever had in my college career. As stated in the question above, "The Professor challenges me to think," I marked strongly agree. I wish there was a way I could mark something higher than strongly agree. I have learned so much that I can confidently apply out of the classroom and be able to teach others in a constructive way. My biggest regret is that I wish I had applied myself more throughout the semester. I know that I have a better potential and I wish I did better. Dr. Barker is fiercely passionate in his work and it shows through the way he teaches and his passion shows thorough.

The Making of the Bible

Dr. Barker has been the most effective professor I've had at WKU. I was consistently impressed by how knowledgeable he is about the subject matter, and it is apparent that he is passionate about what he does, which makes it enjoyable to learn from him. He was also very good about giving constructive feedback and responding to emails, which I appreciated. Other than being an effective professor, he was also very approachable and friendly, which encouraged class participation. I honestly have no complaints or suggestions, because I feel that everything about the course is reasonable, manageable, and fair. It's ironic that the one class I enjoyed the most I was able to dedicate the least time to, but this is no fault of Dr. Barker's, rather that the class didn't relate to my major or minor and I got overwhelmed with other issues throughout the semester. I would encourage other students to take his classes in a heartbeat.

This class has opened my eyes to a new perspective on how the Bible was formed. Not only that, but I've also learned the concepts that go into Biblical Study, which really does pique my interest.

By far this was my favorite class this semester!!!

World History to 1500

I am very thankful to have him as my professor. When I need assistance he responds in a timely manner and gives good feedback to be able to correct my mistakes.

Awesome experience and will hopefully take another course taught by Professor Barker.

I couldn't have asked for a better history teacher.

Greek

This class was an online class. The instructor provided all the materials I needed to be successful in this course. I had to email my instructor about an assignment and received a response within mere hours. Very impressed, this was my first online class.

This course was challenging and really pushed me, but I'm glad I took it. I'm hoping to continue my studies in Greek at some point, if not the near future. I'm also hoping to do some more translating over the break. Have a great break, Dr. Barker!

Dr. Barker is an excellent professor. He is extremely competent, helpful, knowledgeable, and passionate about the subject he teaches. He also incorporates his unique sense of humor into his lectures, which makes the learning process in his classes a delight. The Religious Studies Department made an excellent choice in selecting him as our New Testament scholar. For my graduate studies next year, my knowledge of Greek will be an essential component in determining my success, and I know that having our Greek courses available at Western aided my admission to several Master's programs in early Christianity. I can say without reservation that I would not have been able to enjoy the success I have had in getting admitted to graduate school programs without Dr. Barker's help. I hope WKU is fortunate enough to retain Dr. Barker's services for the rest of his academic career, as he is an invaluable asset to both the Religious Studies Department and all students with an appetite for learning about the New Testament, the Bible, or Koine Greek.

Professor James Barker! A truly amazing teacher! Not only was I able to learn about Greek but my professor was very understanding on assignments and gave great feedback, very quick feedback at that! Truly love having this professor!

Senior Seminar

Great class, I learned a lot and enjoyed it.

This senior seminar has reiterated a lot of theory, the scholarly aspect of our studies that can sometimes get lost under history and beliefs. This course has brought criticism back to the top of our minds and coated our academic lens with a skepticism to what can/cannot be considered reasonable treatments of religion and what can/cannot be considered religion. The course has reinforced the idea that comparing is not equating, and that comparative studies are OKAY when qualifications and triadic statements are made in conjunction. I'm deeply satisfied with what I learned and gained from the class.

This was one of my favorite courses this semester. One thing I loved about this course was how clear-cut all the assignments were, and Dr. Barker's enthusiasm and teaching style. With our weekly response papers, the professor commented weekly, and these comments were conversations rather than just saying "good job" and moving on. I loved the topics emphasized in this class, such as discussing religion as a modern concept and talking about comparison.

Professor Barker cares about us as students and it shows. He always comes to class prepared with discussion questions and challenges all of us to think deeply and share opinions.