

Course ID:	Course Title:	Fall 2018
NT502-CL	Synoptic Gospels	Prerequisite:
		Credits: 3

Class Information		Instructor Information		Important Dates	
Days:		Instructor:	Ken Chan, PhD biblical studies	First day of classes:	Wed, Sept 5
Time:		Email:		Last day to add/drop, or change to audit:	Sun, Sept 16
Room:		Phone:		Last day to request revised exam:	Mon, Oct 22
Lab/ Tutorial:	3 hours per week	Office:		Last day to withdraw from course:	Mon, Nov 12
	11 weeks	Office Hours:		Last day to apply for coursework extension:	Mon, Nov 19
Final Exam:				Last day of classes:	Tue, Dec 11

Course Description

An introduction to New Testament studies and exegetical skills through the study of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

This course is conducted as a tutored writing seminar.

The focus of this course is on the hermeneutics of the synoptic gospels, rather than the story in the synoptic gospels.

Expected Learning Outcomes

According to the Ambrose prospectus, you're expected to "remember, understand, apply, and analyze" in a 500-series course.

This course will help you to:

- Practice the ability to reflect on the world around you, which will help you to teach and preach better;
- Develop answers to questions raised by practical theology;
- Think, write, and verbalize biblical reasoning better;
- Anticipate and respond to critiques of the Bible;
- See that exegesis is a process of debating and theorizing;

Use readings as springboard for thinking; and
Interpret texts and derive biblical theology through exegetical reasoning.

Textbooks

Required textbook:

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus*

=CHIN BS2555.52.S7712 2013=史特劳斯《福音书与耶稣生平》(South Pasadena, Calif. : 美國
麥種傳道會, 2013)

I'll be referring to this text extensively. Students are advised to read it thoughtfully.

No other texts are assigned.

Course Schedule

The topics that will be covered and their sequence will be adjusted fluidly to accommodate the interest and ability of the class.

Roughly half of the time will be devoted to quiet individual reflection and writing. Students are strongly advised to use this time for concentrated writing.

Sessions #1-8:

INTRODUCTION

get to know each other

go through the syllabus

what do you want to learn? please write down

how do I reach you?

where is this course in relation to other courses at Ambrose (review the school's prospectus)

FAQ

START COURSE

Knowing truth

different interpretations of the same passage; using commentaries

truth; theory; exegesis and hermeneutics; evidence; rebuttals; counter rebuttals

stages of oral transmission, tradition, redaction

textual criticism

tracing the formation of the synoptic gospels; Q

FAQ

(Please read the first and the fourth part of the textbook before coming to this class. But if you're short of time, read the first part as a priority.)

Review writing assignment from last time

HOW NOT TO EXEGETE

liberal exegesis; Jesus seminar; form criticism

HOW TO EXEGETE

grammatical exegesis of synoptic gospels; charting

synoptic gospels and Johannine writings; what's unique about Johannine writings

literary criticism

genre

finding unique themes of the synoptic gospels: sequencing; deleting; adding; expanding; contracting; using synopses

Understanding the "inconsistencies" in the synoptic gospels; harmonization; doctrine of inspiration

FAQ

Review writing assignment from last time

STORY OF Jesus: death, resurrection

THEMES

Miracles, authority, goal, Messiah

FAQ

Review writing assignment from last time

parables and allegory

the end time

FAQ

(Please read the third part of the textbook before coming to class.)

Review writing assignment from last time

The uniqueness of each synoptic gospel

Mark

Matthew

Luke

Please do a midterm evaluation of this course.

FAQ

(Please read the second part of the textbook before coming to class.)

Review writing assignment from last time

OTHER EXEGETICAL ANGLES

historical exegesis of synoptic gospels; limits

positing a historical background

archaeology

FAQ

Review writing assignment from last time
Was Jesus for or against Judaism
Old Testament in New Testament; typology
J fulfills the OT; Messiah
trinity; Arian Christology; the son of man
FAQ

Review writing assignment from last time
USING ILLUSTRATIONS
what makes a good illustration; postmodern criticism
the reader in hermeneutics
spiritual exegesis; meditating Jesus
Constructing spiritual typology
steps in preparing a sermon
APPLYING HERMENEUTICS

Find a topic:
Think of your church members
What do you disagree with in UN declarations, books on atheism, inter-religious dialogues, or blogs
What do people need to think about but don't talk about
Your thesis
Possible topics:
Sexual mores; anger and tact; euthanasia
FAQ
WRITE

(You have two weeks from this point to present your topic.)

Sessions #9-11:
WRITE
(OPTIONAL CLASS IF YOU NEED FAQ)

presentations
class discussion
FAQ
WRITE

rebuttals
recap three things you've found useful in this course
Concluding reflections

do feedback forms

Final prayers

FAQ

WRITE

Requirements:

Final grade is based on your writings only. There will not be exams.

You may write in Chinese. Students who prefer to write in English should note that translation of English into Chinese makes the word count go up by a factor of 1.5. Students may choose to write on one or several topics. Your combined written portfolio should be around 6000 Chinese words (or 4000 English words).

Instead of turning in one big project at the end of the course, students are strongly advised to turn in around 600 Chinese words per week. This weekly dialog with your lecturer on paper is the primary means for improving your exegetical skills. You'll receive individualized tutoring.

At the end of each class, the lecturer will email you at least one topic that you can write on as the assignment for that week (to be due at least 24 hours before the start of the next class session).

Students should write their questions and comments on the presentations of the other students. These feedbacks will be read out after each presentation. Written rebuttals should address these feedbacks.

Please turn in a written copy of your presentations and rebuttals. This is counted as part of your portfolio.

Your writing is a form of publishing. The instructor may use all or part of it for the purpose of helping other students by disclosing your publication. Students who sign up for this course give the instructor implicit consent, unless a written request be made to opt out of this in part or in total.

Each written assignment will be graded. Its grade and word count will be aggregated as a weighted average to form the final grade.

Students who spend an average amount of time on this course should receive a B. It's quality instead of quantity that counts. Those who demonstrate above average ability in the course subject will find their grades go up accordingly. Grading in the humanities (to which biblical studies belong) can never be objective in a mathematical sense; but the instructor will give due diligence to ensure that grading will be fair. The focus will be on the written material rather than the instructor's impression of the student as a person. An assignment that receives an "A" grade should be clear, cogent, logical, concise in style; demonstrate good grasp of the synoptic gospels in light of its place in the Bible; engage appropriately with a theological issue at hand.

The student workload overall is estimated at about 120 hours. In an 11-week term, class time will be about 33 hours, so the rest of the course work is about 87 hours.

In order to protect the environment, it will be the norm in this course for all communications between us to take place electronically. Please email your assignments to: ken.chan@ambrose.edu

Audit students do not have to write.

Format of written works:

(One should always give proper citation in order to avoid plagiarism.) But please don't use footnotes or other citations in your assignments for this course because you must not refer to any secondary literature (including the textbook). Please note the write up on Academic Integrity below under Ambrose University Academic Policies. This will help you to focus on the substance of your argumentation on a theological issue only based on the Bible. Please don't include extended examples; please keep the context and applications to the point. This is a highly condensed way of thinking and expressing yourself, which takes adjustment and effort.

Requirements that are not graded:

Please read through the synoptic gospels. Feel free to use any translation that's generally accepted in the Protestant tradition.

Students are expected to know the gospel narrative well as a prerequisite. Students should have read through the synoptic gospels at least once prior to the course.

Attendance:

Please refer to the Ambrose prospectus for attendance expectations.

Please note that there are 30 minutes of rest out of every 180 minutes of class time.

Perfect attendance is assumed and is based on an honor system. Students who aren't able to show up for a lecture should make up for it by spending an equivalent amount of time in reading and writing on the course subject.

Grade Summary:

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Satisfactory
C-	
D+	
D	Minimal Pass
F	Failure

Please note that final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are not mailed out.

Pedagogical Style:

In keeping with best practice, as recommended by Asia Theological Association, that learning takes place dialogically, this course will focus on reading, writing, and discussing writings. Learning in tutorials has long been a tradition at the best universities. This learning style has worked well with Chinese graduate students in Asia, although it takes getting used to and it's not for everyone.

In general, prepared lectures and PowerPoint presentations will not be given.

Ambrose University Academic Policies:

Communication

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, they will need to forward all messages from the Ambrose account to another personal account.

Registration

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty or record. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a "Request to Withdraw from a Course" form or by sending an email to the Registrar's Office by the **Withdrawal Deadline**; please consult the List of Important Dates on the my.ambrose.edu website. Students will not receive a tuition refund for courses from which they withdraw after the Registration Revision period. A grade of "W" will appear on their transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Exam Scheduling

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a Revised Examination Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) the student has three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to use electronics for purposes unrelated to the course during a class session. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. Some professors will not allow the use of any electronic devices in class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a

laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information (information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual) may be required as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a course Extension from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office in writing and providing the basis for appeal within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to acknowledge to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Note: Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.