



NT 601 Jesus and the Synoptic Gospels

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1. Course Description:

This course is a study of the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke with particular attention given to the literary unity and theological themes of each Gospel. In the first several lectures, students will be introduced to the historical world of early first-century C.E. Judaism, the Gospel genre, the Synoptic Problem and finally to various contemporary methods of Gospel study. More broadly speaking, the course also seeks to determine how the respective messages of Matthew, Mark and Luke speak to our lives and the church.

2. Course Objectives

- a. to consider briefly the historical world of first-century Judaism.
- b. to understand the so-called "Synoptic Problem" and the varying attempts to solve it.
- c. to appreciate the unique literary worlds of Matthew, Mark and Luke and their respective contribution to the themes of the NT.
- d. to allow, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the message of the Gospels speak to us individually and corporately.

3. Course Requirements (details for these requirements are in Appendix 2)

- a. **Book review # 1 (1500 words):** You will write a review of *Holiness in the Gospels* by Kent Brower. **Due Friday July 2, 2010.**
- b. **Book review # 2 (1500 words):** You will write a review of a monograph of your choice from the Intermediate Further Reading sections of the textbook. The book shall be at least 250 pages in length. **Due Friday July 2, 2010.**
- c. **Synoptic paper (2500 words):** In this essay, you will prepare a synoptic analysis on a passage from the triple tradition. **Due Friday July 2, 2010.**
- d. **Take home final exam:** This will cover material from all of the lectures and readings. **Due Friday July 2, 2010.**

4. Evaluation:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| a. Book reviews | 30% |
| b. Synopsis Paper | 35% |
| c. Final exam | 35% |

5. Grading:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Equivalents</u>
A+	95-100
A	86-94
A-	80-85
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	55-59
D	50-54
F	0-49

6. Important Notes

a. Format for papers: All papers need to be double-spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman. Number each page. Indicate word count on the title page.

b. Extensions/Submissions: Extensions are highly unusual occurrences contingent upon equally highly unusual circumstances (being too busy does not count!). A late penalty of 8% per day including week-end days will be enforced for those who fail to submit their book review and term paper on time. No assignments are to be emailed to the instructor. Hard copies only.

c. Plagiarism: This institution is committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the University College. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters.

d. Cell phones: SHUT THEM OFF IN CLASS!!!

7. Textbooks:

- Wenham, David and Steve Walton. *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Gospels and Acts*. Volume 1. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2001.
- Brower, Kent E. *Holiness in the Gospels*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2005.
- Throckmorton, Burton H. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. 5th Edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992.

Appendix 1

Schedule of lectures and readings for REL 240/NT 601 Synoptic Gospels

	Monday May 3	Tuesday May 4	Wednesday May 5	Thursday May 6	Friday May 7
9:00-10:15	Introduction Lecture 1: Beliefs of first-century Jews READ ENT*: 3-29	Lecture 6: Narrative world of the Gospels READ ENT: 81-99	Lecture 11 Mark: Act 3 Jerusalem READ ENT: 155-160	Lecture 15 Matthew: Disciples and the Church READ ENT: 100-104; 133-140	Lecture 19 Luke: The Holy Spirit and the humanity of Jesus
10:30-12:00	Lecture 2: Symbols of first-century Jews READ ENT: 29-44 Lecture 3: From the gospel to the Gospels READ ENT: 52-55; 70-74; 111-120	Lecture 7 Mark: Historical world READ ENT: 204-206 Lecture 8 Mark: Prologue READ ENT: 145-147; 174-185	Lecture 12 Matthew: Birth of Israel's Messiah READ ENT: 143-145; 209-225	Lecture 16 Matthew: Final reckoning and judgement READ ENT: 108-111	Lecture 20 Luke: Life of a prophet READ ENT: 227-240
12:00-1:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00-2:15	Lecture 3: con't Lecture 4: What is a Gospel? READ ENT: 47-55	Lecture 9 Mark: Act 1 Galilee and Beyond READ ENT: 191-204; 147-149; 160-169	Lecture 13 Matthew: Sermon on the Mount READ ENT: 169-174	Lecture 16: con't	Lecture 21 Luke: Death of a prophet
2:30-4:00	Lecture 5: Synoptic Gospels and the Synoptic Problem READ ENT: 57-70; 74-79	Lecture 9 Mark: con't Lecture 10 Mark: Act 2 "The Way" of Suffering and Death READ ENT: 149-153	Lecture 14 Matthew: Ministry of the Messiah in Israel READ ENT: 104-108	Lecture 17 Luke: Birth of a prophet READ "A Spiritual Key: Luke 1-2" (handout)	Lecture 22 Luke: Exaltation

* Exploring the New Testament (D. Wenham and S. Walton)

Appendix 2: Details for course requirements

1. Book review:

The purpose of a book review is twofold:

a. to summarize the contents of the book, including a discussion of how the author has organized his/her material. Also, the reviewer needs to indicate the author's purpose for writing and any parameters or limitations of the work.

b. to critically evaluate the book's strengths and weakness. This is the most important part of the review and should be given more attention (approximately two thirds of the review, about 1000 words for this assignment) than the summary. The reviewer seeks to determine how well the author has fulfilled his/her purpose in writing? How has the organization of the book either helped or hindered meeting this purpose? Where are the arguments weak and why, or vice versa, where are they strong and why? If writing for a particular audience, has s/he accomplished this goal, in your opinion?

Some helpful questions to ask yourself when writing the review:

- am I aware of author's aims and perspective?
- have I adequately described the content and structure?
- have I focused on significant issues? (i.e., not minor ones)
- have I critically evaluated the book's strengths?

- have I critically evaluated the book's weaknesses?
- is my review organized clearly?
- are my statements accurate?
- is the review free of spelling and grammatical errors?
- have I left this assignment until the very last minute?

2. Synoptic paper:

In this essay, you will prepare a synoptic analysis of Matthew 16:13–28//Mark 8:27–9:1//Luke 9:18–27. In order to do this, colour code the synopsis according to:

- i. agreement amongst Matthew, Mark, and Luke: Blue underline
- ii. agreement between Matthew and Mark only: Yellow underline
- iii. agreement between Matthew and Luke only: Red underline
- iv. agreement between Mark and Luke only: Green underline

Remember to be accurate down to the individual word. Consider the parts that are not underlined at all, which express that particular Gospel's unique contribution. If you know Greek, use it!

Finally, using all of this information prepare a 2500 word essay in which you summarize notable differences **and** discuss how these contribute to the unique themes of each Gospel writing based on what you've learned in the course (both from the lectures and readings) **and** from two or three commentaries on the selected passages (in other words, you will use at least six commentaries – two for each Gospel). This discussion shall constitute the majority of your paper (not a summary of differences).

For the correct format of footnotes and bibliography, consult the following link: (I do deduct marks for incorrect formatting of both footnotes and bibliography).

Don't forget to include the highlighted work in your paper.