



NT 601 *Jesus and the Synoptic Gospels* (3 credit hours)
Fall 2005
Instructor: Kenneth A. Fox

Contacting the Instructor

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Class Times: Wednesdays, 18:30-21:15
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Course Description

This course considers the life of Jesus of Nazareth according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (the so-called 'Synoptic Gospels').

Key subjects include the Parables of Jesus, the Kingdom of God, discipleship, introduction to the contemporary debate on the historical Jesus, introduction to the Synoptic Problem (how the Gospels relate to each other), Jesus' ethical teaching as it comes to expression in the Sermon on the Mount and other passages, various methods employed in interpreting the Gospels, and the role of the Gospel story of Jesus in the ongoing life and ministry of the Church today.

Prerequisite: NT 501 New Testament Foundations (or equivalent)

Course Objectives

At the successful completion of this course in New Testament, students are expected to have achieved competence in the following areas:

- 1 Insight into ways in which they can know and appreciate their vocation and identity in Christ as his disciples
- 2 Understanding of the current debate about Jesus in the academic world and popular media

- 3 Knowledge of (1) the reasons why each of the Synoptic Gospels was written, (2) the major theological ideas found in each Gospel, and (3) the literary and argumentative structure of each Gospel
- 4 Ability to exegete and interpret the Synoptic Gospels according to a clearly articulated hermeneutic
- 5 Facility to apply the teaching of the Gospels in solving problems faced in Christian life and the world today

Required Texts

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Green, J. B., S. McKnight, & I. H. Marshall. eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.

Hultgren, Arland J. *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

On Reserve (recommended reading list)

Throckmorton, B. H. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels/New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992. ISBN: 0840774842

Course Requirements

Discussion Groups (30%)

There will be ten in-class, discussion times of approximately forty-five minutes each. Students will read a portion of *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* and a portion of *The Parables of Jesus* (you do not need to read the bibliographies or the material dealing with non-canonical gospels). The discussions have four purposes:

- 1 to challenge students to develop their critical, thinking skills as they reflect, in a group-context on the content of the Gospels and the textbooks
- 2 to enable students to improve their skills in developing theological arguments and express their views verbally in group discussion

- 3 to empower students to foster their ability in leading fellow students in group discussion
- 4 to encourage students to listen respectfully and tolerantly to views not their own

In the second class, students will be divided into groups of five or six. In groups, students will discuss together what makes for an excellent discussion. They will also establish a way to contact each other outside of class (exchanging email addresses is easiest). They will also assign themselves the weeks for which they will be responsible for leading the discussion.

Responsibilities of the group leader. Once or twice during the course each student will lead the group discussion. The group leader has two responsibilities:

- 1 The group leader's responsibility is to guide the discussion and keep things on track. The group leader should not prepare a mini-lecture. The leader may choose to use some of the questions prepared in advance by the teacher
- 2 After the discussion, the leader will assign a participation grade for each student and submit the grade to the teacher (grade from one to four, with four being highest). Base the grade on the following criteria:
 - If a student's comments during the discussion reflected an informed reading of assigned material, allocate a higher grade
 - If the student has contributed their fair share (not too much, not too little), allocate a higher grade
 - If a student has dominated discussion in inappropriate ways, reduce their grade
 - If a student has not contributed or contributed only minimally, assign a low grade
 - If a student has contributed but their contributions were not informed by a careful reading of the material, assign a low grade
 - *Most importantly, has the discussion led to a better understanding of the textbook and to a critical interaction with it?*

Responsibilities of the student as group participant. Students should come each week having read the assigned materials carefully and reflectively. Since the group leader may use some of the questions distributed in advance, it may be wise to think about those questions. In addition, students should come with their own questions and comments based on the readings.

Final examination (30%)

The examination will be based on class lectures and reading of the textbooks. *The professor will tell students all the questions that will appear on the final exam.* The examination will probably consist of short-answer questions.

DATE: December 7 (in class)

Written work (40%)

Students should submit a maximum of fifteen (15) pages (double-spaced) of written work for the course. They may write one large paper or two smaller papers. Students are free to prepare exegetical and/or thematic papers.

A few pages of the total amount should consider ways by which you might apply your exegetical research today. You may have general comments of application, or Bible study and sermon outlines. Guidelines will be provided in class for researching and writing. These, together with *The Craft of Research*, must be followed closely in order to achieve a grade higher than a B.

Students will present their findings to the class *only* on the date the assignment is due. Condense your paper into a five-minute, oral presentation with a one-page handout for the class. Design the one-page handout in such a way that it may be useful to the other students in future. Please submit the one-page handout together with the paper to the professor.

DUE DATES:	One paper	November 16
	Two papers	October 18 November 23

Course Grade

Group discussions	30%
Final Examination	30%
Written work	40%

Full attendance is expected. Absenteeism will be calculated into the final grade.

Important Notes

- *Craft of Research Seminar.* This seminar, though not required, will be useful for researching, writing, and revising the papers for this course. Bring your copy of the book and a hi-liter to the seminar
- Submit all written work with your mailbox number in large font at the top center of the title page
- Last day to enter course without permission and/or voluntarily withdraw from course without financial penalty: September 16
- Last day to voluntarily withdraw from course or change to audit without academic penalty: November 16
- *Policy on extensions.* Requests for a course extension must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by December 14. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control." All written assignments turned in after December 14 must be submitted to the switchboard on the sixth floor. The professor will not accept any written work after December 14 unless permission has been granted from the registrar's office
- *Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy.* The seminary maintains a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, academic dishonesty (cheating), and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean

Course Schedule

Week

1	September 7	Gospel of Matthew
2	September 14	Gospel of Matthew
3	September 21	Gospel of Matthew Discussion #1: Hultgren, <i>Parables</i> , chap. 1 (pp. 1-19) "Matthew, Gospel of" (<i>Dictionary</i> 526-541)

- 4 September 28 Gospel of Matthew
 Discussion #2: "Redaction Criticism" (*Dictionary* 662-669)
 "Kingdom of God" (*Dictionary* 417-430)
 "Clean and Unclean" *Dictionary* 125-132)
 "Discipleship" (*Dictionary* 182-189)
- 5 October 5 Gospel of Matthew
 Discussion #5: "Divorce" (*Dictionary* 192-199)
 "Rich and Poor (*Dictionary* 701-710)
 "Historical Jesus, Quest of" (*Dictionary* 326-341)
- 6 October 12 Gospel of Mark
 Discussion #6: "Mark, Gospel of" (*Dictionary* 512-525)
 "Repentance" (*Dictionary* 669-673)
 "Table Fellowship" (*Dictionary* 796-800)
 "Gospels (Historical Reliability)" (*Dictionary* 291-297)
- 7 October 19 Gospel of Mark
 Discussion #7: Hultgren, *Parables*, chap. 6 (pp. 292-330)
- October 26 NO CLASS – MISSIONS EMPHASIS
- 8 November 2 Gospel of Mark
 Discussion #8: Hultgren, *Parables*, chap. 7 (pp. 331-382)
- 9 November 9 Gospel of Luke
 Discussion #9: "Luke, Gospel of" (*Dictionary* 495-510)
 "Prayer" (*Dictionary* 617-625)
 "Liberation Hermeneutics" (*Dictionary* 464-469)
 "Literary Criticism" (*Dictionary* 473-481)
- 10 November 16 Gospel of Luke
 Discussion #10: Hultgren, *Parables*, chap. 8 (pp. 383-423)
 "Preaching from the Gospels" (*Dictionary* 625-630)
- 11 November 23 Gospel of Luke
- 12 November 30 Gospel of Luke
- 13 December 7 In-class examination
- 14 December 14 Class scheduled at the professor's home in Sept/Oct
 Discussion #3: Hultgren, *Parables*, chap. 2 (pp. 20-91)
 Discussion #4: Hultgren, *Parables*, chap. 3 (pp. 92-128)