

STMA 536: SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

(Syllabus subject to change)

DESCRIPTION: A comprehensive examination of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, highlighting the distinctive portrait of Jesus as presented by each evangelist. Special attention will be given to the parables and some of the main contemporary methods for the study of gospel literature will be introduced.

This course explores the synoptic gospels as rhetorical documents that respond to the literary conventions of their time; as ancient records that reflect their socio-cultural context of production; and as Sacred Scriptures, documents of faith that have shaped the beliefs of the Christian church.

This course operates under a policy of inclusiveness and diversity. All interpretations of the gospels are partial, non-universal interpretations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course students will have developed:

1. *Knowledge of the content and themes of each Synoptic Gospel*
2. *Understanding of the Synoptic Problem and its hermeneutical implications*
3. *Skills to use the tools of Synoptic criticism – read scriptural texts critically*
4. *Ability to interpret the Synoptic Gospels both in their own context and in our contemporary contexts for the purpose of doing their ministry.*
5. *Awareness of their own social location/assumptions/hermeneutics as they engage the text of the Synoptic Gospels in their own lives, their communities, and the larger world.*

REQUIREMENTS:

- A. One final exegetical paper (3500-3700-words) on a text of your choice from a list that will be provided in class. Specific instructions on how to write an exegetical paper will be provided in class. Due date: June 10: 35% of final grade.
- B. Three short papers (900-1000 words each) on a text from each of the Gospels, applying one of the critical methods studied in class. Instructions will be provided on the first day of class. Paper on Mark is due April 15; paper on Matthew is due April 22; paper on Luke is due April 29. 30%
- C. 25 hours of informed and active participation in class. Come to class ready to examine and discuss the assigned readings and biblical passages: 25%
- D. A 15-minute presentation of an academic article of your choice from a list that will be provided in class. 5%
- E. A 10-minute presentation of your final paper on June 10. 5%
- F. Three reading/listening sessions (one sitting): Mk – 1½ hours; Mt – 2½ hours; Lk - 2½ hours. Find three outlines for each gospel and use them to guide your reading/listening session. You can find one basic outline for the gospels at <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/FourGospelOutlines.pdf>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Reading: Books

1. Mark, Matthew, and Luke (NRSV). (Read/listen to each Gospel at least once, preferably twice)
2. Perkins, PHEME. *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels.*

3. Cartlidge, David R. and David L. Dungan. *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (DSG)
4. Donahue, John R. SJ. *The Gospel in Parable* (GiP)

Suggested Reading

The New Greek/English Interlinear New Testament. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Boring, M. Eugene. "Gospel of Matthew" in *The New Interpreter's Bible. Volume VIII*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995

Culpepper, R. Alan. "Gospel of Luke" in *The New Interpreter's Bible. Volume IX*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Green, Joel et. al. eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Hanks, Tom. *The Subversive Gospel. A New Testament Commentary of Liberation*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000.

Hengel, Martin. *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Harrisburg: Trinity International Press, 2000.

Nickle, Keith E. *The Synoptic Gospels: An Introduction*. Louisville: WJK Press, 2001.

Perkins, Pheme. "Gospel of Mark" in *The New Interpreter's Bible. Volume VIII*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Links for synoptic material:

[Synoptic Problem](http://www.hypotyposeis.org/synoptic-problem/) (<http://www.hypotyposeis.org/synoptic-problem/>)

[Mahlon Smith's Synoptic Gospels Primer](http://virtualreligion.net/primer/)
(<http://virtualreligion.net/primer/>)

COURSE CALENDAR

S.	Date	Topics and assignments	Readings
1	Apr. 1	<p>Introductions Syllabus: content, methods, class format, assignments Framing the study of the Gospels The Synoptic Problem</p>	Suggested: Perkins: chapters 1-3
2	Apr. 8	<p>The Gospel of Mark overview</p>	<p>Gospel of Mark (in one sitting) Perkins: chapter 4 DSG: 13-22</p>
3	Apr. 15 paper on Mark due	<p>The Gospel of Matthew overview</p> <p>Article presentation by: _____</p>	<p>Gospel of Matthew (in one sitting) Perkins: chapter 5 DSG: 98-103</p>
4	Apr. 22 paper on Matthew due	<p>The Gospel of Luke overview</p> <p>Article presentation by: _____</p>	<p>Gospel of Luke (in one sitting) Perkins: chapter 6 DSG: 104-106</p>
5	Apr.29 paper on Luke due	<p>Infancy narratives: 1. The birth of Jesus 2. The adoration of the infant Jesus ∞ The Parables of Mark</p> <p>Article presentation by: _____</p>	<p>Perkins: chapter 7 DSG: 92-97; 129-136 Mt 1:18-25 / L 2:1-7 Mt 2:1-12 / Lk 2 GiP: 1-62</p>
6	May 6	<p>John the Baptist Baptism of Jesus ∞ The Parables of Matthew</p> <p>Article presentation by: _____</p>	<p>Mk 1:2-6; Mt 3:1-6; Lk 3:1-6 Mk 1:9-11; Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-22 GiP: 63-125</p>
7	May 13	<p>The Beginning of Jesus' ministry Call of disciples Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage ∞ The Parables of Luke</p> <p>Article presentation by: _____</p>	<p>Mk 1:14-15; Mt 4:13-17; Lk 4:14-15 Mk 1:16-20; Mt 4:18-22; Lk 5:1-11 Mk 5:21-43; Mt 9:18-26; Lk 8:40-56 GiP: 126-193</p>

8	May 20	<p>3 Parables of Jesus The Sower and the kingdom The Unforgiving Servant The Good Samaritan</p> <p>Article presentation by: _____</p>	<p>Mk 4:1-9/Mt 13:1-9;Lk 8:4-8 Matthew 18:23-35 Luke 10:25-37 DSG: 140-141 GiP: 194-216</p>
	May 27	NO CLASSES	
9	June 3	Trials and crucifixion of Jesus	<p>Mk 15:2-5; Mt 27:11-14; Lk 23:2-5 Mk 15:22-32; Mt 27:33-43; Lk 23:33-38</p>
10	June10 Final paper due	<p>Conclusion: Discussion of main topics Individual presentations on Final paper</p>	