

STMM 527-01 Christian Scriptures

Web version -Syllabus subject to change
DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course is designed to equip students with a fundamental knowledge of the Christian Scriptures and a particular emphasis on the four canonical Gospels.

We will explore the Gospels:

- Historically, as ancient records that reflect their socio-cultural context of production.
- Rhetorically, as literary documents that respond to the conventions of their time, addressed to particular audience for a purpose.
- Theologically/Hermeneutically as authoritative discourses of faith, foundational for Christianity.

This course will also survey some major interpretive methods in biblical criticism to provide both a framework for the study of the NT and some hermeneutical tools for preaching and teaching its messages.

This course operates under a policy of inclusiveness and diversity. From a postmodern perspective, all interpretations of the New Testament, whether historical, theological, literary or of any other sort -presented by the facilitator or the students-- are partial, non-universal interpretations. All readers, including ourselves, read subjectively.

Our approach to the NT will be both academic and ministerial. Overall, from the academic standpoint, we will use historical, literary and cultural perspectives in the analysis of biblical texts. From the ministerial standpoint, we will read the NT with a special interest on its emphatic message of inclusivity and discipleship.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Ability to read scriptural texts critically.
- Ability to use biblical tools and resources to inform the exegetical, hermeneutical, and homiletical process for the purpose of doing ministry.
- Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can engage the worldview of others.
- Awareness of personal social location/assumptions/hermeneutics when engaging the text individually, in the personal community, and the larger world.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance and participation – 25%: your presence and informed participation in class discussion is crucial for your learning experience and the learning experience of the group. Please complete the assigned readings before coming to class and be punctual. (Follow calendar for assigned readings)

2. Learning log and Peer discussion – 15%: Instructions will be provided on the first session of class. **June 4.**

2. Written assignments – 60%:

- a) An exegetical essay on the Gospel of Mark 10:13-16 (**900-1000 words – 10%**) Due on **April 16.**
- b) An exegetical essay on the Gospel of Matthew 25:14-30 (**1200-1500 words – 13%**) Due on **April 30.** Use two academic sources: will be provided
- c) An exegetical essay on the Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (**1500-1800 words – 17%**) Due on **May 14.**
- d) An exegetical essay on the Gospel of John 16:1-15 (**2100-2400 words – 20%**) Due on **May 28.** Use two academic sources: will be provided

Detailed instructions and rubric on how to write these exegetical papers will be provided on the first day of class.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (required)

Books:

1. *The New Testament.* New Revised Standard Version.
2. Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus: a survey of Jesus and the Gospels.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

Articles:

A list of 20 articles to be used for class will be provided the first day of class.

**STMM 527-01 Christian Scriptures
CALENDAR OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

CLASS SESSION # 1

April 2

Introduction: the four canonical Gospels as Christian Scriptures

- Presentation of syllabus: Course description, purpose, requirements and presuppositions

PRIMARY READING:

- Chapter 1: *What Are the Gospels?*
 - Chapter 4: *The Historical Setting of the Gospels*
 - Chapter 5: *The Religious Setting: First-Century Judaism*
 - Chapter 6: *The Social and Cultural Setting*
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The Gospel of Mark I

PRIMARY READING:

Chapter 7: *Mark: The Gospel of the Suffering Son of God*

NT – Gospel of Mark (in one sitting)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 2: *Exploring the Origin and Nature of the Gospels*

Chapter 11: *Searching for the Real Jesus*

Chapter 12: *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*

The Gospel of Mark II

PRIMARY READING:

- 2 Articles (TBA)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 3: *Reading and Hearing the Gospel Stories*

Chapter 13: *The Contours and Chronology of Jesus' Ministry*

1st paper due

The Gospel of Matthew I

PRIMARY READING:

Chapter 8: *Matthew: The Gospel of the Messiah*

NT – Gospel of Matthew (in one sitting)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 14: *Jesus' Birth and Childhood*

The Gospel of Matthew II

PRIMARY READING:

- 2 Articles (TBA)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 15: *The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry*

2nd paper due

CLASS SESSION # 6

May 7

The Gospel of Luke I

PRIMARY READING:

Chapter 9: *Luke: The Gospel of the Savior for All People*

NT – Gospel of Luke (in one sitting)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 16: *The Message of Jesus*

CLASS SESSION # 7

May 14

The Gospel of Luke / Acts II

PRIMARY READING:

- 2 articles (TBA)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 17: *The Miracles of Jesus*

3rd paper due

CLASS SESSION # 8

May 21

The Gospel of John I

PRIMARY READING:

Chapter 10: *John: The Gospel of the Son Who Reveals the Father*

NT – Gospel of John (in one sitting)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 18: *The Messianic Words and Actions of Jesus*

CLASS SESSION # 9

May 28

The Gospel of John II

PRIMARY READING:

- 2 articles (TBA)

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 19: *The Death of Jesus*

4th paper due

CLASS SESSION # 10

June 4

Conclusions: Four Portraits, One Jesus

PRIMARY READING:

Peer-conclusions

BACKGROUND READING:

Chapter 20: *The Resurrection of Jesus*

Learning log and peer conclusion-paper due

Grading Scale
Superior performance:
A 97.34 – 100
A- 94.59 – 97.33
B+ 91.08 – 94.58
Good performance:
B 88.57 – 91.07
B- 86.06 – 88.56
C+ 82.55 – 86.05
Minimal performance:
C 79.04 – 82.54
C- 75.53 – 79.03
D+ 72.02 – 75.52
Poor performance:
D 68.51 – 72.01
D- 65.00 – 68.50
Failing:
F 00.00 – 64.99