

## 1.205 - THE WITNESS OF THE GOSPELS

SPRING 2006

Dr. Mark Vitalis Hoffman

### RATIONALE

The four canonical gospels have stood at the core the church's faith, confession, and witness. A basic understanding of these foundational Biblical books is essential for those called to rostered ministry in order to listen to God's Word in community and function as leaders in church and world through worship, education, service, and encouragement. Understanding the gospels includes engaging in critical reading and reflection on these texts as well as studying their social, literary, cultural, historical, source, theological, and textual dynamics. In this course, students will be introduced to the basic aspects of exegeting texts in their original language as foundational work for preaching, teaching, and integrating gospel texts for the life of the church. Through studying the four gospels, students will also come to a greater understanding of the early Christian proclamation of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection as well as the meaning of discipleship and mission in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The study of four distinct gospel narratives will also highlight the theological diversity that is fundamental to the biblical witness and to the life of the church at the crossroads of history and hope.

### OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able:

1. to describe the basic literary and theological framework of each gospel story (including themes such as Christology, soteriology, discipleship).
2. to characterize the religious, social, geographical, and historical dynamics of 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine as they relate to the life of Jesus, the growth of early Christian movements, and the formation of each gospel story.
3. to demonstrate an ability to engage in a critical reading of select gospel texts in order to discern and communicate what those texts originally proclaimed in their canonical contexts and what they may proclaim to individuals and the church today.
4. to present exegetical studies on assigned gospel passages using the Greek text as well as text, source, form, redaction, and narrative criticisms.
5. to explain the basic issues and attendant problems involved in scholarly quests for the historical Jesus.
6. to articulate dynamics related to the ethics of reading Biblical texts including the significance that language has for communicating the Bible's message in contemporary contexts.
7. to integrate the discoveries and studies from this course with their experiences and studies in Teaching Parish and in the 3.701 Introduction to Preaching.

## STRATEGIES

In order to accomplish the stated Objectives of this course, the following Strategies will be employed:

### 1. CLASS SESSIONS

All sessions meet in Valentine 310. Class will be held twice each week:

- Large Group: Tuesday 8:45-11:40 a.m.
- Small Group: Section A (8:45-10:00 a.m./Wednesday)  
Section B (8:45-10:00 a.m./Friday)  
Section C (10:25-11:40 a.m./Friday)

*STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BRING THE NET BIBLE TO EVERY CLASS (both large and small groups).*

### 2. CLASS PARTICIPATION

The students will be expected to attend class regularly; to have read all required readings prior to class; to accomplish all pertinent translations/exegeses; and to be prepared to discuss the topics for each class session.

### 3. CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be expected to hand in all assignments on time. Assignments will be accepted past the due date **ONLY** if the reason for tardiness is commensurate with a reason why a rostered leader would not be prepared to preach or teach as expected by their congregation on a given Sunday.

### 4. REQUIRED READING

The following are included as the required texts for this course:

- *The New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha* (recommended: HarperCollins Study Edition or Zondervan's *NRSV Student Bible* or *The Access Bible*)
- NET Bible Nestle-Aland<sup>27</sup> Diglot ([http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=2056](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2056))
- Theissen, Gerd. *The Shadow of the Galilean: The Quest of the Historical Jesus in Narrative Form*
- Hanson, K.C. and Douglas E. Oakman. *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts*
- Powell, Mark Allan. *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee*
- Powell, Mark Allan. *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels*
- Rhoads, David, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story. An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*

#### **RECOMMENDED READING** (NOT required, but optional extra credit possible)

- Powell, Mark Allan. *God with Us: A Pastoral Theology of Matthew's Gospel*
- Carter, Warren. *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*
- Green, Joel B. *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*
- Smith, D. Moody. *The Theology of the Gospel of John*
- Malina, Bruce J. and Rohrbaugh, Richard L. *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*

Note: there may also be periodic readings from other texts that may be found on reserve in the LTSG library or on the Internet

## 5. **REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS**

### A. *Quizzes*

Throughout the semester students will receive 7 take home quizzes that will be based on the readings for the coming week. Students may work individually or with one other member of the class for the quizzes (i.e., if a student works individually, she/he is expected to do so for all of the quizzes; if a student works with a class partner, she/he is expected to do so for all of the quizzes). **Quizzes are due at 8:45 a.m. on Tuesday mornings.** One final quiz will be given in class on the last day of the course. The quiz schedule may be found in the Course Schedule below.

### B. *The Non-Trivial Pursuit Gospel Edition Quiz*

In the 2nd week of the course, students will receive The Non-Trivial Pursuit Gospel Edition Quiz take home assignment that will be due March 14. More specific instructions will be given at the time this assignment is distributed.

### C. *Exegetical Summaries*

Students will pick one of the following passages at the beginning of the semester to use for their focused exegetical summaries and final exegetical paper.

- Matthew 14.22-33 (Jesus walks on water: Proper 14A)
- Mark 7.24-30 (Syrophoenician women: Proper 18B – 9/10/2006)
- Luke 1.26-38 (Annunciation: YearsABC – 3/25/2006)
- John 10.11-18 (Jesus the good shepherd: Easter 4B – 5/7/2006)
- *Focused Exegetical Summaries:* 8 of these will be due at the sections meetings as noted in the syllabus. These summaries will usually be less than 1 page long.
- *The Final Exegetical Paper* is due on Tuesday, April 18 by 8:45 a.m. and should be between 4-5 pages long (single spaced; 1.25" margins on all sides; 12 point font). This paper should reflect but not repeat the work of your exegetical summaries.

### D. *Integrative Project*

Based on the text used for the Final Exegetical Summary, each student will complete a project that integrates that text with a possible ministry application. It could take the form of a Bible study, sermon, art, music, web page, etc. The completed project is to be handed in at 8:45 a.m. on Tuesday, May 2.

### E. *Optional Extra Credit*

Students may choose to write a 1-2 page book review of one of the books in the “Recommended Reading” list. This review needs to be turned in by the last day of class.

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of students will be as follows:

- Quizzes: 15 %
- Non-Trivial Pursuit Gospel Quiz: 10 %
- Focused Exegetical Summaries: 25 %
- Final Exegetical Summary: 25 %
- Integrative Project: 10 %
- Classroom Preparation and Quality Classroom and Online Participation: 15 %
- Extra Credit: 1-2 page Book Review (Matthew/Luke/John) up to + 4%

To receive a passing grade for the course students will need to attain at least 70% total

For those taking the course for a grade: 70-79 = C; 80-92 = B; 93-100 = A

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

WEEK, <i>TOPIC</i>	TUESDAY CLASS <i>WORK DUE - READING ASSIGNMENT</i>	WEDNESDAY/FRIDAY SECTIONS <i>Translation Text / EXERCISE DUE</i>
February 1-3 <i>Getting a Grip on the Situation</i>		Mark 1.9-15 <i>1LentB (3/5)</i>
February 6-10 <i>Jesus' World Part I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>(Working on Quiz 1 Due on 2/14)</b></li> <li>▪ <i>Palestine in the Time of Jesus</i>, pages xvii-61</li> <li>▪ <i>The Shadow of the Galilean</i> ~ ¼</li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Gospels</i>, pages 1-37</li> </ul>	Mark 2.1-12 <i>7EpiphB (2/19)</i> <b>Text Criticism Exercise</b>
February 13-17 <i>Jesus' World Part II</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 1 on the Gospels</b></li> <li>▪ <i>Palestine in the Time of Jesus</i>, pages 62-130</li> <li>▪ <i>The Shadow of the Galilean</i> ~ ½</li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Jesus</i>, pp. 1-50</li> </ul>	Mark 8.27-38 <i>2LentB (=8.31-38: 3/12) // Proper 19B</i> <b>Exegetical Tools Exercise</b>
February 20-24 <i>Jesus' World Part III</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 2 Palestine / Social World</b></li> <li>▪ <i>Palestine in the Time of Jesus</i>, pages 131-165</li> <li>▪ <i>The Shadow of the Galilean</i> ~ ¾</li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Jesus</i>, pp.51-82</li> </ul>	Mark 9.2-9 <i>TransfigB (2/26)</i> <b>OT / NT Exercise</b>
Feb 27-March 3 <i>Jesus' World Part IV</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Jesus</i>, pp. 83-148</li> <li>▪ <i>The Shadow of the Galilean</i> finish</li> </ul>	Mark 15.22-39 <i>~PassionSunB (4/9)</i> <b>Source Criticism Exercise</b>
March 6-10 <i>Mark's Story Part I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 3 on Historical Jesus</b></li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Jesus</i>, pp. 149-184</li> <li>▪ Gospel of Mark</li> </ul>	Mark 16.1-8 <i>EasterB (4/16)</i> <b>Form Criticism Exercise</b>
March 13-17 <i>Mark's Story Part II</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>NonTrivial Pursuit due 3/14</b></li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Gospels</i>, pp. 38-60</li> <li>▪ Rhoads, Dewey, Michie, <i>Mark</i>, pp. 1-7 (8-38) 39-97</li> </ul>	John 12.20-33 <i>5LentB (4/6)</i> <b>Redaction Criticism Exercise</b>
March 20-24 - SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS		
March 27-31 <i>John's Story Part I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 4 on Mark</b></li> <li>▪ Rhoads, Dewey, Michie, <i>Mark</i>, pp. 98-146</li> <li>▪ The Gospel of John (video in class)</li> </ul>	John 20.19-31 <i>2EasterB (4/23)</i> <b>Narrative Criticism Exercise</b>
April 3-7 <i>John's Story Part II</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 5 on John</b></li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Gospels</i>, pp. 112-38</li> </ul>	Luke 16.19-31 <i>Proper21C</i> <b>Socio-Historical Criticism Exercise</b>
April 10-13 <i>Luke's Story Part I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 6 on Luke</b></li> <li>▪ Gospel of Luke</li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Gospels</i>, pp. 85-111</li> </ul>	NO WEDNESDAY NO FRIDAY SESSIONS
April 14, Good Friday – NO CLASS		
April 17-21 <i>Luke's Story Part II</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Exegetical Summary Due</b></li> </ul>	Luke 24.36b-48 <i>3EasterB (4/30)</i>

<p>April 24-28 <i>Matthew's Story Part I</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 7 on Matthew</b></li> <li>▪ Gospel of Matthew</li> <li>▪ Powell, <i>Gospels</i>, pp. 61-84</li> <li>▪ Dostevysky, "Grand Inquistor's Tale"</li> </ul>	<p>Matthew 5.1-12 <i>4EpiphA – AllSnts.</i></p>
<p>April 26, Wednesday – Spring Convocation – NO CLASS Special arrangements will be made: Attend a Friday Session if possible</p>		
<p>May 1-5 <i>Matthew's Story Part II</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Integrative Take Home Project due 8:45am, 5/2</b> <i>If you complete your project early, please submit it to me for use in class on the 2nd.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Matthew 5.38-48 <i>5EpiphanyA</i></p>
<p>May 8-12 <i>Putting It Together</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quiz 8 Overview (in class)</b></li> <li>▪ Rhoads, Dewey, Michie, <i>Mark</i>, pp. 147-50</li> <li>▪ <b>Optional Matthew/Luke/John book review due at 8:45am, 5/10</b></li> </ul>	<p>NO WEDNESDAY NO FRIDAY SESSIONS</p>