

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg – Spring 2005  
**1.270 - PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE PARABLES OF JESUS**

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Course homepage: <http://www.gettysburgsem.org/mhoffman>

## **SYLLABUS**

### **Course Rationale**

The parables of Jesus are among the best known memories of Jesus. The parables of Jesus are also among the most controversial aspects of our understanding of Jesus' message. This course will provide a survey of the interpretation of parables, but the main focus will be on the study of specific parables of Jesus.

### **Course Objectives**

Successful outcomes for this course include:

- Displaying an understanding of the issues involved in the interpretation of parables
- Exhibiting competence and confidence in analyzing and interpreting parables
- Demonstrating proficiency in re-imagining and re-presenting parables

### **Course Learning Strategy**

Part of my goal for this course is to teach you about the parables of Jesus. A more important goal, however, is to have you experience the parables and help you be able to interpret and re-present the parables for yourselves. Information about the parables will, therefore, be conveyed through lectures and readings, but the learning will occur through discussion, collaboration, and your own involvement in leading the class. With this goal in mind, the following items will be the components of the learning strategy.

#### ▪ **Course Project**

- **Discussion Leading:** At our first meeting, you will select a parable from a listing of those which are available for consideration. You will be responsible for leading the class discussion on that parable on the appropriate day. Provide any background information necessary for understanding the parable and identify interpretive issues or significant translation or text-critical matters. Use this discussion to help you come to some conclusions about this parable that will be reflected in your subsequent re-presentation and paper. You are encouraged to supply a study guide handout (2 page maximum) and listing of resources (including web sites). You will have up to half the class period to present the parable and lead the discussion.
- **Parable Re-Presentation:** Based on the parable you have chosen, a presentation based on it will be made to the class. This presentation can take the form of a sermon, PowerPoint presentation, dramatization or skit, youth or adult group study guide, artistic work, etc. You will have up to one third of the class period. You will receive a review on your re-presentation from both the instructor and one of your peers in the class.
- **Paper:** A week after the presentation is made, a paper will also be written on the chosen parable (8-12 pages) that shows what work was done that led up to the presentation and also includes some reflection on what was learned as a result of the presentation.

- **Peer Review:** Each participant will be assigned to write a brief review (~2 pages) of another member of the class' parable re-presentation.
- **Class Participation:** The relatively high percentage of your grade allotted to this component reflects my commitment to this class as a forum not simply for information but especially for reflection, questioning, and discussion. We will learn together!
  - You must check the course home page at [www.gettysburgsem.org/mhoffman/parable05s](http://www.gettysburgsem.org/mhoffman/parable05s) for the latest schedule, additional readings, and reading assignments!
  - Participants are expected to attend class regularly. If you know in advance that you will be absent, please notify me and turn in any assignments by the due date. Please contact me about any other absences to work out satisfactory arrangements. Unexcused absences may negatively affect the final course grade.
  - Participants are to come to class prepared to discuss, having read the assigned materials, and having translated the texts we will be examining. I encourage you to work with others in preparing for the class.
  - There is online forum available for this course. Sometimes you may be asked to join in a discussion. This online forum also serves as a way for you to continue discussions begun in class.
  - Diversity of experience and opinion are to be expected, invited, and respected in class. With a working knowledge of the information, resources, and methodologies presented in the class, each participant is encouraged to ask questions, disagree, provide extending confirmation, or provide reasoned alternative perspectives.

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

Class participants can elect to take the course either as Pass/Fail or for a letter grade.

Grading will be based on the following factors:

- **Discussion Leading Project: 25%** - scheduled throughout semester
- **Parable Re-Presentation: 20%** - scheduled throughout semester
- **Paper: 25%** - due within 2 weeks after the parable re-presentation
- **Peer Review: 10%** - scheduled throughout semester; due within 2 days after presentation
- **Class and Online Participation: 20%**

Grade scale:

- 90%-100%: A (excellent)
- 80%-89%: B (very good)
- 70%-79%: C (sufficient)
- Below 70%: F (fail)

A Pass grade requires 70% or better.