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REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
DISTANCE EDUCATION

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GOSPELS  
DR. MICHAEL J. KRUGER

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# Course Overview

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## Course Description:

0NT508 Gospels, 3 hours  
Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:  
Dr. Michael J. Kruger

Attention is given to each writer's literary art, theological teaching, pastoral purpose, and message for today's church and world.

## Course Objectives:

- To gain familiarity with the contents of the four Gospels.
- To gain acquaintance with the main theories of authorship, origin, and compositional relationship of the Gospels.
- To understand and evaluate, discerningly, the main lines of historical criticism of the Gospels in the modern period.
- To understand the main elements of the message of Jesus, revealed in word and deed, as reflected in the unified witness of the Gospels.
- To recognize the distinctive emphases of each of the four Gospels, and the implications of their diversity for interpretation and proclamation.
- To grow in personal responsiveness to the Gospel's message of faith, repentance, humility, obedience, joy, etc.

## Required Textbooks:

Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. 2d ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

Kruger, Michael J. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016

Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. revised ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.

Strimple, Robert B. *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1994.

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

### *Online Student Handbook:*

The [Online Student Handbook](#) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

### *Summary of Requirements:*

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the [Midterm Exam](#)
5. Take the [Final Exam](#)
6. Submit [Research Paper](#)
7. Submit [Reading Requirement](#)
8. Submit [Mentor Report/Course Application Paper](#)

# Meet the Professor

## Lecturing Professor:



**Dr. Michael J. Kruger** (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh) is President and the Samuel C. Patterson Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC. He is one of the leading scholars today in the study of the origins of the New Testament, particularly the development of the New Testament canon and the transmission of the New Testament text. He is the author of numerous books including *The Gospel of the Savior* (Brill, 2005), *The Heresy of Orthodoxy* (Crossway, 2010, with Andreas Köstenberger), *Canon Revisited* (Crossway, 2012), and *The Question of Canon* (IVP, 2013). He is also the co-editor of *The Early Text of the New Testament* (Oxford, 2012), and *Gospel Fragments* (Oxford, 2009).

Dr. Kruger is ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America and also serves (part-time) as Pastor of Teaching at Uptown PCA in downtown Charlotte. You can follow his blog at [www.michaeljkruger.com](http://www.michaeljkruger.com) or on Twitter [@michaeljkruger](https://twitter.com/michaeljkruger).

## Publications by Dr. Kruger:

Hill, Charles E. and Michael J. Kruger. *The Early Text of the New Testament*. ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. and Michael J. Kruger. *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Kraus, Thomas J., Michael J. Kruger and Tobias Nicklas. *Gospel Fragments*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Kruger, Michael J. *The Gospel of the Savior: An Analysis of P. oxy. 840 and Its Place in the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity*. Leiden, NL: E.J. Brill, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Various articles published in...

*The Journal of Theological Studies*

*The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*

*The Expository Times*

*The Master's Seminary Journal*

# Grades

## *Forum Discussion (15%):*

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
  - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
  - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question, therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
  - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
  - A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

## *Examinations (Midterm 20%, Final 20%):*

There will be two examinations in this course: a midterm exam covering both lectures and readings for lessons 1-6 and a final exam covering lessons 7-12 lectures and readings. Students should use the Lesson Review Questions and Topical Discussion Questions to guide them in their study for the exam

The midterm and final exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

## *Research Paper (30%):*

Serious research paper approximately 15 typed pages (double spaced) in length (20 pages max) with page numbers. Students must use the guidelines in the current edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian. The paper should have single-spaced footnotes (not endnotes) and resemble the articles found in the standard journals; e.g., JBL, JTS, JETS, NTS, etc. See section titled "[Research Paper Instructions](#)" in this syllabus for more instructions.

### *Reading Report (10%):*

Read the four Gospels through twice in English and read all of the assigned reading from the required textbooks.

### *Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):*

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

### *Assignments:*

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

### *Contact Information:*

Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education

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Charlotte, NC 28226

(704) 900-1257

1-855-854-6920

FAX: (704) 366-9295

E-mail: [dess@rts.edu](mailto:dess@rts.edu)

Web site: [www.rts.edu/distance](http://www.rts.edu/distance)



# Lessons

## Lesson One

Introduction to Gospel Criticism

## Lesson Two

The Quest for Historical Jesus

## Lesson Three

The Gospels and Higher Criticism

## Lesson Four

Other Forms of Higher Criticism

## Lesson Five

Matthew - Introduction, Structure and Major Characteristics

## Lesson Six

Matthew - Issues and Texts

## Lesson Seven

Mark - Introduction, Structure and Major Characteristics

## Lesson Eight

Mark - Issues and Texts

## Lesson Nine

Luke - Introduction, Structure and Major Characteristics

## Lesson Ten

Luke - Issues and Texts

## Lesson Eleven

John - Introduction, Structure and Major Characteristics

## Lesson Twelve

John - Issues and Texts



# Research Paper Instructions

Serious research paper approximately 15 typed pages (double spaced) in length (20 pages max) with page numbers. Students must use the guidelines in the current edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian. The paper should have single-spaced footnotes (not endnotes) and resemble the articles found in the standard journals; e.g., JBL, JTS, JETS, NTS, etc.

This paper should use numerous sources (at least 10 is recommended), and included in those sources needs to be at least two (2) academic journal articles. The requirement for journal articles is designed to encourage students to use sources beyond just commentaries and books.

## Paper Options

1. Exegesis of a Gospels text/pericope, highlighting its distinctive contribution to the Gospel's message, taking into account both its immediate and larger historical context.
2. A biblical-theological study of any major or minor theme in the four gospels.
3. A historical study of an aspect of the origins of one or all of the four gospels; e.g., the date of John, the authorship of Matthew, etc.
4. A resolution of an apparent contradiction (or other problem) in the four Gospels.

**Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: Gospels

Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger

<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b> <i>In order to measure the success of the curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the outcomes.</i>		<b>Rubric</b> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<b>Mini-Justification</b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	- Theology of Gospels - Historical background of Gospels - Significant paper on the Gospels
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	- Focus on exegesis and understanding the text - Use of original languages - Application to modern circumstances
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	- Discuss aspects of Reformed theology in these books, such as eschatology, kingdom of God, and structure of the covenants
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	- Texts of Gospels applied to the lives of the students
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	- Content of Gospels applied to various aspects of life (e.g., church, work, society, etc.)
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	- Survey of critical scholarship and its relevance/application for evangelicals; students are taught good aspects and bad aspects of critical thinking. - Other theological approaches are surveyed and critiqued in a respectful manner.
<b>Teach</b>	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	- Teaching applications are made regularly from Gospels texts. - Students are equipped to communicate these books via the mode of teaching.
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	- Some application is made to broader culture issues, but only in a minimal manner.
<b>MAR Specific SLO</b>	An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society	Moderate	- Students are encouraged to consider their social responsibility and the application of Gospels to this calling.