

'Gospels' (4NT508) – 3 hours Fall 2011

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR

Dr Bruce Lowe received his first doctorate in Analytical Chemistry and taught, consulted and researched in a university setting over several years in both Chemistry and Chemical Engineering departments. He then completed his MDiv at RTS Orlando, becoming an ordained Presbyterian minister and working in university ministry, as a youth pastor and in church revitalization. He is in the final stages of a doctorate in New Testament Studies, where his thesis has focused on the cultural backdrop to Romans. Bruce has a special interest in hermeneutics (the process of interpretation), and is keen to not simply teach the contents of the gospels, but equip students for a lifetime of fruitful learning & growth. Part of this involves learning how to teach the gospels, a major focus of this course.

< Office hrs: M-T, 12-2pm. Email me to guarantee appointment; blowe@rts.edu >

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Knowing the real Jesus has been the quest of many people over the centuries, and though often poorly conceived, it is rightly the quest of every Christian today. This course will examine the four accounts of Jesus' life, in order to gain a four dimensional picture of our Lord. More than this though, by developing sensitivity to how each account was crafted, we will gain a better sense of how to apply each gospel today. Students will thus be helped in both their knowledge of the gospels, and in tools for understanding them better.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. That students will come to a clearer personal understanding of Jesus.
2. That students will understand the unique contributions of Mark, Matthew, Luke & John.
3. That students will be in a position to teach from any of the four gospels with confidence.

READING

Craig Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (IVP, 1997) ISBN 9780805410587

Kurt Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (American Bible Soc., 1982) ISBN 9780826705006 [or 9781598561777 for Greek/English version if you wish]

David Rhoads *et al*, *Mark as Story* (2nd ed., Fortress, 1999) ISBN 9780800631604

Robert Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus* (P&R, 1995)
ISBN 9780875524559

ASSESSMENT

- 4 x 5%** “Big Ideas” (on selected passages from each gospels); **due dates, see below**¹
- 2 x 10%** Two-page Critical Book Reviews of Rhoads & Strimple; **due dates, see below**²
- 30%** Written Assignment (2000 words - **due on December 1st** before class).³
- 30%** Final Exam – 3 weeks after last class, to be completed and emailed to me (blowe@rts.edu) before **Dec 22rd**(2010), **midnight**.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

¹ This involves producing a sentence which summarizes the purpose of the selected passage, which must be posted on Self-service prior to the upcoming class. You must then be able to discuss your reason for this ‘Big Idea’ within class discussion.

² A good critical book review should include 4 sections: 1) A summary of what the book covers (no more than half a page, often less); 2) Things you agree with and why; 3) Things you disagreed with and why; 4) A brief overall comment on the value of this book.

³ I will be suggesting some topics, but I am also open (and glad!) to approving a topic of your choice. Because of it being almost a third of the course assessment, I will be expecting this to be a genuine research assignment interacting with the opinions of others in both commentaries and journal articles. A good critical essay should 1) have a clear structure, reflecting the question being addressed (SUCH AS...); 2) begin with a general overview of the subject and others opinions (INTRODUCTION/GENERAL STEP); 3) focus more closely on a text or opinion for critical review (REFINING STEP); 4) draw a conclusion as to how the question has been answered in light of this essay (CONCLUSION).

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

WHEN IS THE COURSE BEING RUN?

Wednesday **24th August** to Wednesday **30th November** (excluding **16th November** [Fall Break] & **23rd November** [Thanksgiving]); **1pm to 4pm.**

General Outline

Week	Date	Assessment/HW Due	Class Lectures
1 A 1 B 1 C	A24		Window/Mirror/Picture/Dialogue Interpreting a Painting (Part 1) Interpreting a Painting (Part 2)
2 A 2 B 2 C	S7		“The Demoniac(s)” Exercise Considering the Critical Approach (Part 1) Considering the Critical Approach (Part 2)
3 A 3 B 3 C	S14	10% Review of <i>Rhoads</i> HW Read Mark 1-6 (3x)	Considering the Critical Approach (Part 3) Mark (Part 1: <i>Purpose & Chs 1 & 16</i>) Mark (Part 2: <i>1.21-34</i>)
4 A 4 B 4 C	S21	HW Read Zech 14 (3x)	Mark (Part 3: <i>Ch 4</i>) Mark (Part 4: <i>Ch 8</i>) Mark (Part 5: <i>11.20-25</i>)
5 A 5 B 5 C	S28	5% “Big idea”	Mark (Part 6: <i>13.32-37 & 14.32-42</i>) Mark (Part 7: <i>Chs 14-16</i>) Matthew (Part 1)
6 A 6 B 6 C	O5		Matthew (Part 2) Matthew (Part 3) Matthew (Part 4)
7 A 7 B 7 C	O12	5% ‘Big Idea’	Matthew (Part 5) Matthew (Part 6) Matthew (Part 7)
8 A 8 B 8 C	O19		John (Part 1) John (Part 2) John (Part 3)
9 A 9 B 9 C	O26	10% Review of <i>Strimple</i>	John (Part 4) John (Part 5) John (Part 6)
10A 10B 10C	027	5% ‘Big Idea’	John (Part 7) Luke (Part 1) Luke (Part 2)
11A 11B 11C	N2		Luke (Part 3) Luke (Part 4) Luke (Part 5)
12A 12B 12C	N9		Beyond the Gospels (Part 1) Beyond the Gospels (Part 2) Beyond the Gospels (Part 3)
Thanksgiving Break (2 weeks) – no class			
13A 13B 13C	N30	5% ‘Big Idea’ 30% Assignment	Luke (Part 6) Luke (Part 7) Course Summary