

NT 508: Introduction to the Gospels

3 Credit Hours

Paul S. Jeon, Ph.D.

Location:

The Lodge at McLean Presbyterian Church

Time:

Tuesdays 7:30 – 9:40p

August 30, 2011 – December 13, 2011

No class the week of Thanksgiving

Teaching Assistant:

Chris Wood

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Introduction:

“Who is Jesus? Who is the ‘real’ Jesus?” These have been the burning questions of many people for many centuries now. This course will survey the four accounts of Jesus’ life to gain a better footing for answering these questions. In addition, this course will highlight how each gospel was written so that the students, in turn, will better know how to approach the accounts for ministry and life.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop an approach to the above questions by studying the history of gospels’ research and by personally exploring the gospels
- Develop a working knowledge of the organization and content of each gospel
- Develop a plan for teaching/preaching the gospels

Approach:

- We will begin the course with a survey of various hermeneutical approaches that have been applied to the gospels and important theological themes found in the gospels.
- We will conclude the course with a review of hermeneutical approaches to the gospels and important theological themes.
- For each gospel we will (1) examine the “flow” (organization) of the letter, (2) explore key themes, and (3) consider some pastoral and/or contemporary applications.

Grade Breakdown:¹

Assignments (Reading & Writing)	10%
Gospels’ Summary Paper	10%

¹ For info on RTS’s grade distribution, see www.rts.edu.

Exegetical Paper	25%
Midterm	20%
Final (Cumulative)	30%
Discretionary	5%

Required Reading:

- The four Gospels, twice (preferably different translations)
- Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*
- Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus according to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*
- Jack D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*
- Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (chs. 1-4, 8, 10)

Recommended Resources:

- Joel B. Green, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*
- Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*
- Kurt Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*
- **Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (extra credit for final)**

Course Outline:

08/30/11	Introduction to Course: Review of Syllabus
09/06/11	Overview of Critical Scholarship Key Theological Themes Assignment 1: Write a 1-page critical book review of Evans, <i>Fabricating Jesus</i> . ²
09/13/11	Mark
09/20/11	Mark (cont.) Assignment 2: Write a 1-page critical book review of Bock, <i>Jesus</i> .
09/27/11	Matthew Summary Paper: 4-page, single spaced, Times New Romans 12pt-fonts, 1-inch margins paper, summarizing the content of each gospel and highlighting what you believe are distinct theological and/or literature features.
10/04/11	Matthew (cont.)
10/11/11	Matthew (cont.) Assignment 3: Write a 1-page critical book review of Kingsbury, <i>Matthew</i> .
10/18/11	Midterm
10/25/11	Luke
11/01/11	Luke (cont.) Assignment 4: Write a 1-page critical book review of Ridderbos, <i>The Coming of the Kingdom</i> .
11/08/11	Luke (cont.)
11/15/11	John Exegetical Paper: 12-page, double spaced, Times New Romans 12pt-fonts, 1-inch

² I will provide a sample book review in class.

margins paper, adopting the format: (1) Research from Past 10 Years [1 Page]; (2) Outline of Passage [1 Page]; (3) Exegesis [8 Pages]; (4) Ministry Application [2 Pages].

11/22/11 Thanksgiving Break

11/29/11 John

12/06/11 John | Course Conclusion

Assignment 5: Develop a plan for teaching one of the gospels in a ministry context (e.g., preaching schedule, series on the Parables, etc.).

12/14/11 **Final**

Late Policy: *No late work is accepted.*

“a. The issue is not so much an inconvenience to the professor. If that were the primary issue, then he would grade late papers because it is fundamental to his Christian commitment to put the interests of others before his own.

b. The issue concerns the apparent laxity with which extensions are often granted. This is not Christian education. Wisdom is living within boundaries. The cosmos exists because the Creator provided boundaries for air, water, land. Moreover, he provided temporal boundaries for seasons. Without boundaries, the cosmos would degenerate back into anarchy. It is the essence of Christian living that we live within boundaries. Liberals want no boundaries. They want freedom without form, liberty without law, lovemaking without marriage. This is a fundamental battle. It is distressing when Christians do not show respect for boundaries and when students do not respect temporal boundaries.

c. Wisdom also entails knowing the goal and devising a strategy to achieve it. Students must be aware from the syllabus what is required of them and should be able to strategize a successful model to achieve it. Laxity and uncertainty with regard to deadlines actually confuse the students and militate against a good Christian education. Paradoxically, “grace” sounds Christian and pastoral and “law” sounds non-Christian; but, sometimes so-called “grace” and “pastoral concerns” encourage libertarianism and in truth is non-Christian and non-pastoral. Consciously or unconsciously students realize that there is a fudge factor here, enabling them to rationalize their not turning in work on time.

d. The issue also pertains to spiritual life, a subject on which a seminary rightly prides itself. However, the spiritual life includes self-control, discipline, etc. Students reap good fruit from hard work.”³

³ Adapted from Professor Bruce K. Waltke