I. **Details**
   A. Time: Fridays, 9AM-12PM
   B. Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger
      1. **Email**: mkruger@rts.edu
      2. **Office**: Main Administrative building
      3. Office hours: Feel free to stop by, or make appointment.

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

III. **Course Requirements**
   A. Faithful class attendance
      - Attendance is vital: to miss one day of class is to miss three lectures
      - Expect class participation when applicable
      - Feel free to ask questions during lecture
   B. Read the four Gospels through twice in English. To signify that you have completed this reading you must submit your own outline of each Gospel on the last day of class (Nov 15th). *Each* outline must be 2-3 pages in length and not copied from any other source, but reflective of your own efforts to summarize and order the contents of each Gospel.
   C. Research Paper
      - Serious paper approximately 15 pages in length (typed) due on Dec. 5th, at 5PM.
      - Standard SBL format, as outlined in, *The SBL Handbook of Style*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999). (Book is available in the library, but you should own your own copy). The paper should have footnotes (not endnotes) and resemble the articles found in the standard journals; e.g., *JBL, JTS, JETS, NTS*, etc.
      - Research paper must contain citations of at least two journal articles.
      - Paper must have a properly formatted *bibliography* at the end.
      - 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.

D. Complete the required reading in preparation for class sessions and examinations.
E. Midterm Exam to be taken out of class anytime between Sept 27 and Oct 11, covering both lectures and readings through Sept 27, and a Final Exam covering the remaining lectures and readings (Final exams are Dec 5-10).

IV. Grading
A. Gospel readings and outlines—10%
B. Research Paper—30%
C. 2 Exams—60% (30% each)

V. Textbooks
## VI. Schedule and Required Reading Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1—Aug 23</th>
<th>Class 8—Oct 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strimple, 15-126 (*have this read</td>
<td>FALL BREAK</td>
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<td>before first day of class)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 2—Aug 30</th>
<th>Class 9—Oct 18</th>
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<tr>
<td>CM, 77-133</td>
<td>Ladd, 133-169</td>
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<td>Blomberg, 24-103</td>
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<tr>
<th>Class 3—Sept 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Class 10—Oct 25</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ferguson, 396-440</td>
<td>CM, 198-224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blomberg, 152-195</td>
<td>Ladd, 170-211</td>
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<th>Class 4—Sept 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Class 11—Nov 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ferguson, 440-501</td>
<td>Ladd, 249-305</td>
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<td>Blomberg, 241-295</td>
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<th>Class 5—Sept 20th</th>
<th>Class 12—Nov 8</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ferguson, 501-582</td>
<td>CM, 225-284</td>
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<td>CM, 134-168</td>
<td>Blomberg, 196-240</td>
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<th>Class 6—Sept 27</th>
<th>Class 13—Nov 15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ladd, 31-88</td>
<td>Ladd, 306-344</td>
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<td>*Gospel Outlines due</td>
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<th>Class 7—Oct 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<td>CM 169-197</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ladd, 89-132</td>
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VII. Brief Course Overview

Part One: Gospel Criticism

I. Old Quest
II. No Quest
III. New Quest
IV. Third Quest

Part Two: Gospel Origins

I. Intro
II. What is a Gospel?—The Question of Genre
III. Stage of Oral Tradition: Form Criticism
IV. Stage of Written Sources: Source Criticism
V. Stage of Final Composition: Redaction Criticism
VI. Stage of Scribal Transmission: Textual Criticism
VII. Stage of Church History: Canonical Criticism

Part Three: Gospel Interpretation (longest section of course)

I. Aids to Interpretation
   A. Perspective on the Text: Biblical Theology vs. Systematic Theology
   B. Context of the Text: Understanding the Background
   C. Meaning of the Text: Historical, Modern, and Typological
   D. Historicity of the Text: What about Contradictions?

II. Overview and Analysis of the Four Gospels
   A. Matthew
   B. Mark
   C. Luke
   D. John
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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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</table>
| **Articulation (oral & written)** | Strong | - Theology of Gospels  
| | | - Historical background of Gospels  
| | | - Significant paper on the Gospels  
| **Scripture** | Strong | - Focus on exegesis and understanding the text  
| | | - Use of original languages  
| | | - Application to modern circumstances  
| **Reformed Theology** | Moderate | - Discuss aspects of Reformed theology in these books, such as eschatology, kingdom of God, and structure of the covenants  
| **Sanctification** | Moderate | - Texts of Gospels applied to the lives of the students  
| **Desire for Worldview** | Moderate | - Content of Gospels applied to various aspects of life (e.g., church, work, society, etc.)  
| **Winsomely Reformed** | 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.  
| **Preach** | Moderate | - Preaching applications are made regularly from Gospels texts.  
| | | - Students are equipped to communicate these books via the mode of preaching.  
| **Worship** | Minimal | - Students are encouraged to allow content of Gospels to lead them towards worship.  

*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Ability Description</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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| **Shepherd** | Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. | Moderate | - Students are encouraged to consider their shepherding role and the application of Gospels to this calling.  
- Discussion of shepherding and protecting the flock in the midst of heresy |
| **Church/World** | 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. |