Reformed Theological Seminary
Synoptics and Acts
NT510 (3 Credit Hours)
Fall 2014
Tuesday 1:00-4:00 pm
BS 1

Dr. Benjamin Gladd
Office: Biblical Studies Dept.
Phone: 601-923-1694
Email: bgladd@rts.edu
TA: Josh Darsaut (joshdarsaut@gmail.com)

I. Course Objectives
• Understand the facets of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection according to the Synoptics.
• Interact with and evaluate higher criticism in the Synoptics and Acts.
• Be familiarized with the various trends of synoptic interpretation and their presuppositions.
• Learn how to interpret the Synoptics.
• Grasp the redemptive-historical significance and theological emphases of the Synoptics and Acts.

II. Course Description taken from the Catalogue
• "This course emphasizes the distinctive portraits of Christ in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and the continuation of Christ's ministry in Acts. Attention is given to each writer's literary art, theological teachings, and pastoral purpose" (RTS 2009-2011 Catalog, p. 67).

III. Texts
• English Bible with cross references (NIV, ESV, etc.). It is imperative that students bring a Bible with clear cross references.

IV. Procedures and Methods
• This class will be a combination of lecture, reading, and discussions. Each class the student should be prepared to discuss what they have learned from their reading assignments and take exceptional class notes.
• Though this class is tailored for MDiv students who have a working knowledge of Greek, it is possible for those who do not know Greek to take the class. “Non-Greek” students are required to do all the assignments except translations. Additional reading will be assigned
to non-Greek students, however. When doing discourse analyses, non-Greek students must take their translation from NASB (1995).

V. Course Requirements

• **Exams** - One exam will be given at the end of the semester. Questions will mainly cover the lectures and assigned reading.

• **Attendance** - Each student is expected to attend all lectures, which comprises 10% of the total grade. *Students who have more than two unexcused absences will be penalized 5 points off the total grade. Presbytery meetings and all conferences (ETS/SBL, T4G, Twin Lakes, etc.) are unexcused.* Students should consult their calendar at the beginning of the semester and discuss any conflicts with the professor. Any additional unexcused absences will result in 5 more points, and so on. If you are sick or have a family emergency, you must email the professor asap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unexcused Absences</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>No Penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>-5 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>-10 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>-20 Points</td>
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• **Weekly Assignments** - Nearly every week, students will be assigned a particular aspect of synoptic interpretation (synoptic comparison, translation, discourse analysis, essays.). *Late assignments will result in a loss of one letter grade per class.*

• **Quizzes** - Students will take online quizzes based on the reading.

• **In-Class Electronics Use** - Students are prohibited from using computers, phones, and tablets during class.

• **Grading:**
  1. Weekly Assignments 35%
  2. Exam 25%
  3. Reading 25%
  4. Classroom Participation/Attendance 5%
  5. Quizzes 10%

• **Grading Scale:** The grading scale for this course is the seminary’s grading scale. You may find it listed at the RTS Catalog, p.44.

• **Plagiarism:** Any cheating (quiz, paper, exam, etc.) will result in a failure of the course.

• **Reading:** In addition to the weekly reading, students must read through the entire Synoptics before exam. It is recommended that students use a modern translation such as the NIV.

VI. Assigned Reading/Lecture Topic
August 26- Introduction to the Course/Genre/Audience
   **Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 24-42

September 2- Source Criticism/Form Criticism/Redaction Criticism
   **Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 44-63 (chapter 2)
   **Quiz:** On Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 24-42

September 9- Eyewitness Testimony/Narrative Criticism/Historical Jesus/Synoptic Comparison
   **Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 68-85 (chapter 3); Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 91-112
   **Weekly Assignment #1:** Do “Assignment 5-3” on pgs. 110-112 in Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*. The professor will hand out these pages in class, and students will write their answers on them.
   **Quiz:** On Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 68-85

September 16- Introduction to Mark/Discourse Analysis
   **Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 172-206 (chapter 7)
   **Weekly Assignment #2:** Synoptic comparison of the Transfiguration #161 (Matt 17:1-6; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-35)
   **Short Essay Questions:** 1) In 6 sentences, describe how Mark 8:34-9:1 relates to Transfiguration in Mark 9:2-8. 2) In 8 sentences, give an overview of Luke’s unique emphases in his version of the Transfiguration. 3) In 4 sentences, describe Matthew’s unique emphases in his account of the Transfiguration. 4) In 6 sentences, how does Mark 8:34-9:1 relate to Mark’s overall purpose of his gospel?
   **Quiz:** On Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 172-206

September 23- Discourse Analysis/Exegesis of Mark
   **Reading:** Carson & Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 169-194
   **Weekly Assignment #3:** D.A./Synoptic Comparison/Translation of Mark 4:10-12 (Reason for Speaking in Parables #123; Matt 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10)
   **Non-Greek: Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 399-408
   **Short Essay Questions:** 1) In 4 sentences write how Mark uses the Old Testament quotation differently from Matthew and Luke. 2) In 8 sentences write about the immediate context Old Testament quotation in Mark 4:12. 3) In 4 sentences writing about how the Old Testament quotation functions in 4:10-34. 4) In 6 sentences, how does Mark 4:10-12 relate to Mark’s overall purpose of his gospel?

September 30- Introduction to Matthew/Exegesis of Matthew
   **Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 214-253 (chapter 8)
   **Weekly Assignment #4:** D.A./Synoptic Comparison/Translation of Matt 8:23-27 (The Stilling of the Storm #136; Matt 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)
   **Non-Greek: Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 411-419
   **Quiz:** On Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 214-253
   **Short Essay Questions:** 1) In 4 sentences write how Matt 8:18-22 ties into Matt
8:23-27. 2) In 4 sentences write how Matt 8:28-34 ties into Matt 8:23-27. 3) In 10 sentences write on the Old Testament conception of chaotic waters (consult your cross-references). 4) In 8 sentences, compare Matthew and Mark’s telling of the story. 5) In 6 sentences, how does Matt 8:18-22 relate to Matthew’s overall purpose of his gospel?

October 7- Reading Week

October 14- Exegesis of Matthew

Reading: Carson & Moo, Introduction to the New Testament, 134-165
Weekly Assignment #5: D.A./Synoptic Comparison/Translation of Matt 21:1-9
(The Triumphal Entry #269; Matt 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40)
Non-Greek: Reading: Strauss, Four Portraits, 425-430
Short Essay Questions: 1) In 4 sentences write how Matt 20:29-34 ties into Matt 21:1-9; 2) In 10 sentences write on how Matt 21:1-9 ties into Matt 21:12-27. 3) In 12 sentences summarize the immediate context of the two OT quotations in Matt 21:13. 4) In 8 sentences write on how the OT is used in Matt 21:13. 5) In 6 sentences, how does Matt 21:12-27 relate to Matthew’s overall purpose of his gospel?

October 21- Exegesis of Matthew

Weekly Assignment #6: D.A./Synoptic Comparison/Translation of Matt 24:29-31
(The Coming of the Son of Man #292; Matt 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28)
Non-Greek: Reading: Strauss, Four Portraits, 435-449
Short Essay Questions: 1) In 4 sentences write how Matt 24:29-35 tie into Matt 24:36-41. 2) In 12 sentences write about the OT background of Matt 24:29 and how the OT is being used in Matt 24:29. 3) In 15 sentences compare and contrast the three Synoptic accounts of Matt 24:29-31. 4) In 6 sentences write on how Matt 24:29-31 fits into Matthew’s overall purpose of his gospel.


Reading: Strauss, Four Portraits, 260-291
(The Lord’s Prayer #185; Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4)
Non-Greek: Reading: Strauss, Four Portraits, 455-466
Quiz: On Strauss, Four Portraits, 260-291

November 4- Exegesis of Mark

Weekly Assignment #8: D.A./Synoptic Comparison/Translation of Mark 15:33-39
(The Death of Jesus #347; Matt 27:45-54; Mark 15:33-39; Luke 23:44-48)
Non-Greek: Reading: Strauss, Four Portraits, 469-488

November 11 - Exegesis of Matthew


**Non-Greek Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 493-504

**Short Essay Questions:** 1) Write 8 sentences on how Matt 27:45-56 relates to Matt 27:57-61; 2) Write 12 sentences on the OT conception of the resurrection (use a dictionary if you need to); 3) Write 10 sentences on how Matt 27:57-61 fits into Matthew’s overall purpose.

November 18 - Exegesis of Luke

**Reading:** Carson & Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 198-221

**Weekly Assignment #10:** D.A. and Translation of Luke 24:25-27

**Short Essay Questions:**

November 25 - Video Lecture: Richard Bauckham: “The Gospels as Historical Biography.”

Students must write a one-page summary (single spaced) of the lecture and submit them to the professor on Nov 21 via email. The lecture can be found here: http://goo.gl/mI1SNz

December 2 - The Book of Acts


**Weekly Assignment #11:** D.A./Translation of Acts 1:6-8


December 9-11 - **FINAL EXAMS**
## MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

In order to measure the success of the MDiv 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 MDiv outcomes.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>The course strongly engages Scripture and the Jewish milieu of the first century, furnishing students with knowledge of a variety of topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>With their nose in the text, students will spend a significant amount of time studying and mediating upon Scripture. The class requires students to research and write on topics pertaining to the Synoptics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Central to this class is the exaltation of Christ and his role in redemptive history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Since students are exposed to the various facets of the Synoptics and Acts, a love for Christ will inevitably grow as they continually look upon his character.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Key to this course is living in light of Jesus’ kingdom message. Jesus taught that his kingdom inverts the world’s ideals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Though most Synoptic scholars are not evangelicals, there is much to be gained by their insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Throughout the course, attention will be given to how students are to preach the Synoptics. We will often seek to answer “what difference does it make?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>As a result of this course, students will be wiser in how they worship Jesus by having a more concrete picture of who...</td>
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<p>| Articulation (oral &amp; written) | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. | Strong |
| Scripture | 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 |
| Reformed Theology | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Moderate |
| Sanctification | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Moderate |
| Desire for Worldview | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Strong |
| Winsomely Reformed | 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.) | Strong |
| Preach | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Moderate |
| Worship | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Minimal |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Shepherd</th>
<th>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.</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Having a right view of Jesus and his ministry is central to pastoring.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Church/World</td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>As a net result of studying this Synoptics, students will have the ability to discern whether or not a teaching or movement is faithful to Jesus’ message.</td>
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