

## NT508 — Gospels

Course Syllabus, Spring 2017 — RTS-Houston

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### 1. Course Details

- Three credit hours
- Meeting dates
  - Online video streaming: Thursdays, Feb 1, 8, and 13
  - In-person weekend meetings: Feb 16–17, Mar 9–10, Apr 13–14
- Course Description: *An exposition the four canonical gospels, with attention given to each gospel writer's literary art, theological teaching, pastoral purpose, and message for today's church and world.*

### 2. Instructor Information

Gregory R. Lanier, Ph.D

- Assistant Professor of New Testament, Dean of Students at RTS-Orlando
- Associate Pastor, River Oaks Presbyterian Church
- Email: [glanier@rts.edu](mailto:glanier@rts.edu)
- Blog: <http://glanier.wordpress.com>

### 3. Objectives

- To obtain greater confidence in the inspiration and authority of the gospels and to grow in the obedience of faith in proclaiming the “good news” of the kingdom of God
- To understand the contents, structure, theology, and writing of the canonical gospels, including their similarities and distinctive emphases
- To obtain greater apprehension of the kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus Christ
- To develop the ability to engage closely with the text of the gospels, with particular attention to context and sub-genre
- To learn how to engage with scholarship on the gospels—such as the “Jesus Quest,” synoptic problem, and so forth—in a responsible manner

### 4. Required Texts

- The Holy Bible: each student must bring his/her own copy of the Bible (in a modern English translation, e.g., ESV, NASB, NIV) to class each day. Students who have taken Greek are encouraged to bring a critical Greek edition (UBS4/5 or NA27/28).
- Michael J. Kruger (ed.), *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).
- Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (trans. H. de Jongste; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1978). **To be provided in PDF form via Canvas** (though student is welcome to purchase a hardcopy).
- Charles E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Other required readings (scans of articles) will be provided via Canvas.

## 5. Course Assignments

- *Reading of Biblical Texts*
  - Read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John once in English
  - Evaluation: on the final exam, you will be asked to indicate “yes”/“no” whether you have completed 100% of this reading. There is no partial credit.
  
- *Reading of Assigned Textbooks*
  - Assignment
    - Read Kruger pp 29–136
    - Read Ridderbos pp 1–284; skim the remainder (not to be tested)
    - Read entirety of Hill
    - Read Strauss 23–167; 347–408; 455–491
    - Read PDFs provided via Canvas on miscellaneous topics
    - You are free to read according to a schedule of your own choosing, though students may benefit from reading Strauss first as a general introduction to Gospels studies.
  - Evaluation
    - The reading quiz must be taken before the last day of class.
    - It will cover all the assigned textbook reading (other than Bible reading) and will be taken in Canvas. You will be allotted 45 minutes to complete the quiz. The quiz will be closed book, and the honor system is in play.
    - Grading: 44 objective (e.g., T/F or multiple choice) questions covering major points of each assigned reading (not minutiae). The grade will be determined on the basis of the number of questions answered *out of 40*. For example, 32 correct = 80%; 40+ correct = 100%.
  
- *Research Paper*
  - Assignment
    - Complete a research paper of 3,500-5,000 words, adhering to the “Research Paper Guidelines” document provided separately via Canvas.
    - Students must submit their paper topic to the instructor via Canvas by the date specified on the course homepage.
    - Papers must be submitted electronically in PDF format via Canvas by the date specified on the course homepage.
  - Evaluation
    - Argument (30%): Is the paper arguing a clear, coherent thesis throughout?
    - Scholarship (40%): Has the paper handled the biblical text responsibly? Has the paper made careful and discerning use of secondary sources, including honest engagement with viewpoints with which the author disagrees?
    - Quality (25%): Is the paper well-structured, logical, and cohesive? Is it well-written for its target audience? Is it clear and easy to read?
    - Style (5%): Does it meet the required style guidelines? Are footnotes and bibliography composed correctly?

- *Midterm and Final Examinations*
  - Assignment
    - Each exam will cover content from lectures only. The midterm will cover lectures leading up to the date of the midterm; the final will cover lectures between the midterm and the final.
    - Each exam will consist of the following:
      - Short essays, requiring ~5-7 sentences to answer. Student will choose 6 to answer out of a list provided.
      - Long essays, requiring ~20–30 sentences to answer. Student will choose 3 to answer out of a list provided.
    - Additionally, the *midterm* will require the student to provide a bullet-point outline (chapter-level) of Matthew, Mark or Luke. The *final* will require the student to provide a bullet-point outline (chapter-level) of John.
    - The examinations will be administered via Canvas; details on how to take each examination will be provided on the first day of class.
  - Evaluation
    - Short essays = 7% each (total 42%)
    - Long essays = 17% each (total 51%)
    - Memorized outline = 7%

## 6. Grading

• Reading of biblical texts	5%
• Reading of assigned textbooks	5%
• Research paper	30%
• Midterm examination	30%
• <u>Final examination</u>	<u>30%</u>
	100%

## 7. Schedule

- A detailed lecture schedule will be provided in Canvas before the first day of the course.
- Outline of the course
  - Course Introduction and Survey of Each Gospel
  - How to Read the Gospels
  - Reading the Gospel according to Matthew
  - Reading the Gospel according to Mark
  - Reading the Gospel according to Luke
  - Reading the Gospel according to John

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: NT508 – Gospels  
 Professor: Gregory R. Lanier  
 Campus: Houston  
 Date: Spring 2018

<b>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</b> <i>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. *As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</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	1. Research paper on exegetical, theological, or ministry topic 2. Written examinations
<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	1. Lectures include significant exegesis component 2. Original languages used in class and encouraged for students 3. Memorization of gospel outlines required
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	1. Use of traditional Reformed theological categories, with emphasis on exegetical grounding in the gospels
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	1. Reading of Bible text 2. Emphasis on personal and pastoral application in lectures
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	1. Emphasis on thinking biblically about social, political, and ecclesiological issues
<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	1. Responsibly engaging with critical scholarship in lecture 2. Encouraging students to read non-evangelical materials for paper
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	1. Emphasis on equipping students how to read and exposit on their own rather than simply regurgitate "safe" commentaries
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
<b>Shepherd</b>	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.	Minimal	1. Pastoral/counseling application during lectures 2. "Church issue" option for paper
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	1. Discussion of church issues related to kingdom, baptism, ecclesiology, etc.