Reformed Theological Seminary-Houston

The Gospels

NT508 (3 Credit Hours)

Spring 2016

Friday 7:00-9:00 pm

Saturday 8:00am-4:00pm

Dr. Benjamin Gladd

RTS Jackson

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I. Course Objectives

* Understand the facets of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection according to the Gospels.
* Grasp the redemptive-historical significance and theological emphases of the Gospels.
* Learn how to interpret the Synoptics.

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.).
* *Synopsis of the Four Gospels. Revised Standard Version*. (American Bible Society, 2010).
* Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).
* Richard Hays, *Reading Backwards* (Baylor, 2014).

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.

V. Course Requirements

* **Exams**- One exam will be given at the end of the semester. Questions will mainly cover the lectures and assigned reading.
* **Class Participation**- Each student is expected to engage the material during the lectures, which comprises 10% of the total grade.
* **Weekly Assignments**- Nearly every meeting, students will be assigned a particular aspect of synoptic interpretation (synoptic comparison). Late assignments will result in a loss of one letter grade per class.
* **Quizzes**- Students will take online quizzes based on the reading. The quizzes are a combination of true/false and multiple choice.
* **In-Class Electronics Use**- In light of recent studies and my own classroom experience, students are prohibited from using computers, phones, and tablets during class. Prohibiting electronic use forces the students to focus on the lecture and take better notes. Exceptions are permitted for those with disabilities.
* **Papers**- One paper will be given to provide the student with hands-on experience in interpreting the Synoptics. Late papers will result in a loss of one letter grade.
* This should be a serious research paper of at least several serious commentaries.
* 10-12 typed pages (double spaced).
* The paper is to focus on the OT background of the passage and how it’s used in the passage under discussion.
* The professor will hand out a detailed list of paper requirements and expectations.
* **Grading**:
	+ 1. Weekly Assignments 20%
		2. Exam 20%
		3. Reading 15%
		4. Paper 25%
		5. Classroom Participation 10%
		6. 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, exam, paper, etc.) will result in a failure of the course.
* **Reading**: In addition to the weekly reading, students must read through the entire Gospels before exam and Richard Hays, *Reading Backwards*. It is recommended that students use a modern translation such as the ESV or NIV.

VI. Assigned Reading/Lecture Topic

**February 26 (7:00pm-9:00pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** Introduction to the Course/Introduction to the Synoptics

(Genre and Redaction Criticism)

**February 27 (8:00am-11:30am)**

**Lecture Overview:** Apostolic Eyewitnesses/Synoptic Comparison/Introduction to Mark and

JESUS, GOD INCARNATE AND THE LAST ADAM (Mark 1:1-12)

**Reading:** Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 24-206

**Online Quiz:**On Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 23-42, 171-206

**February 27 (12:30pm-4:00pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** JESUS, THE PROPHET AND MESSIAH **(**Mark 3:13-19; 3:20-34; 4:10-12**)**

**April 1 (7:00pm-9pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** Introduction to Matthew and JESUS, THE KING OF ISRAEL (Matt 1:1-17; 2:13-15)

**Reading**: Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 214-253

**Online Quiz:**On Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 214-253

**April 2 (8:00am-11:30am)**

**Lecture Overview:** JESUS, THE CREATOR(Matt 8:23-34)

**Weekly Assignment #1**: Synoptic Comparison of Matt 8:23-27

(The Stilling of the Storm #136; Matt 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)

**Synoptic Comparison questions:** 1) In 12 sentences, compare Matthew and Mark’s telling of the stilling of the storm. 2) In 10 sentences explain how Matt 8:23-27 relates to Matthew’s overall purpose of his gospel.

**April 2 (12:00pm-3:30pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** JESUS, KING OF THE PARADOXICAL KINGDOM (Matt 13:1-52; 17:1-9; 21:1-11; 24:29-31)

**April 8 (7-9pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** Introduction to Luke and JESUS, THE PERFECT ADAM(Luke 4:1-13)

**April 9 (8:00am-11:30am)**

**Lecture Overview:** JESUS, THE CONQUERING KING(Luke 4:16-19)

**Reading**: Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 260-291

**Online Quiz:**On Strauss, *Four Portraits*, 260-291

**April 9 (12:00pm-3:30pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** JESUS, THE PRAYER WARRIOR (Luke 6:1-11; 10:1-24)

**Weekly Assignment #2**: Synoptic Comparison of Luke 11:1-4 (The Lord’s Prayer #185; Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4)

**Synoptic Comparison questions:** 1) In 10 sentences write on the Old Testament conception of God as “Father.” 2) In 8 sentences, compare Matthew and Luke’s telling of the Lord’s Prayer. 3) In 8 sentences explain how Luke 11:1-4 relates to Luke’s overall purpose of his gospel.

**May 6 (7:00pm-9pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** Introduction to John and JESUS, THE CREATOR AND THE TEMPLE (John 1:1-5; 1:49-51)

**May 7 (8:00am-11:30am)**

Lecture Overview: JESUS, THE HERALD OF NEW CREATION (John 2:7-11; 2:18-22; 5:1-37)

**Weekly Assignment #3:** Synoptic Comparison of Mark 15.33-39 (The Death of Jesus #347; Matt 27.45-54; Mark 15.33-39; Luke 11:1-4)

**Essay Questions:** 1) Write 6 sentences on the relationship on the OT background of John 2:1-12 (hint: do an Old Testament study on “wine”). In 8 sentences explain how John 2:7-11 relates to John’s overall purpose of his gospel.

**Synoptic Comparison questions:** 1) Write 6 sentences on the OT background of “darkness.” In 8 sentences explain how Mark 15.33-39 relates to John’s overall purpose of his gospel.

**Reading:** Strauss, *Four Gospels*, 297-340

**Online Quiz:** Strauss, *Four Gospels*, 297-340

**May 7 (12:00pm-3:30pm)**

**Lecture Overview:** JESUS, THE CRUCIFIED AND RESURRECTED SON OF GOD (John 19:1-37; 20:1-18)

 **(Paper Due) ??**

 **(Exam Due) ??**



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

Course: The Gospels (NT508)

Professor: Ben Gladd

Campus: Houston

Date: Spring 2016

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| **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.* | **Rubric*** Strong
* Moderate
* Minimal
* None
 | **Mini-Justification** |
| **Articulation**  **(oral & 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 | The course strongly engages Scripture and the Jewish milieu of the first century, furnishing students with knowledge of a variety of topics. |
| **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 | 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. |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.  | Moderate | Central to this class is the exaltation of Christ and his role in redemptive history. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Moderate | 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. |
| **Desire for Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Strong | Key to this course is living in light of Jesus’ kingdom message. Jesus taught that his kingdom inverts the world’s ideals.  |
| **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 | Though most Synoptic scholars are not evangelicals, there is much to be gained by their insights.  |
| **Preach** | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Moderate | 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?” |
| **Worship** | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Minimal | As a result of this course, students will be wiser in how they worship Jesus by having a more concrete picture of who he is. |
| **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 | Having a right view of Jesus and his ministry is central to pastoring. |
| **Church/World** | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Minimal | 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.  |