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**Gospels/ NT-5200**

# Fall Term, 2021

##### Details

1. Time: Mondays, 1PM-4PM
2. Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger
3. Email: [mkruger@rts.edu](mailto:mkruger@rts.edu)
4. Office: Main Administrative building
5. Office hours: Feel free to stop by or make an appointment.
6. TA: Joshua Duemler: [j.m.duemler@gmail.com](mailto:j.m.duemler@gmail.com)
7. Assistant: Carolyn Airing: [cairing@rts.edu](mailto:cairing@rts.edu)

##### Purpose

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

##### Course Requirements

1. 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

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student’s own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

1. 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 (December 6). *Each* outline must be **2-3 pages** in length, **1.5 spacing**. Outlines need to use standard format, Roman numerals (I, II, etc.) with indentations (A, B, etc.), and not be copied from any other source. *They must be reflective of your own efforts to summarize* and order the contents of each Gospel. Submit your outlines on Canvas. Please submit 1 document **in PDF format** containing all four outlines.
2. Research Paper

* Serious paper approximately **15 typed pages** (**1.5 spaced**) in length (20 pages max) due on **December 9** (**to the front office to be time stamped, or on canvas in PDF format**).
* Standard *SBL* format, as outlined in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (SBL Press, 2014). (Book is available in the library, but you should own your own copy). The paper should have single-spaced 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.

* Additional Note: RTS Charlotte wants to promote the writing of good research papers among the students and wants to encourage students when they write good papers. One paper from this class could be chosen as the best paper of the class. The professor will notify the student that his/her paper has been chosen. The student will then submit that paper to the dean ([rbelcher@rts.edu](mailto:rbelcher@rts.edu)), preferably in the pdf format. The paper will then be posted on the RTS Charlotte website at *Pen and* *Parchment: An Archive of the Best Student Papers at RTS Charlotte*.

1. Complete the required reading in preparation for class sessions and examinations.
2. Exams: Midterm Exam to be taken out of class anytime between October 5 and October 18, covering both lectures and readings through October 4, and a Final Exam covering the remaining lectures and readings (Final exams are December 9-14).

##### Grading

1. Gospel readings and outlines—10%
2. Research Paper—30%
3. 2 Exams—60% (30% each)

##### Textbooks

1. Michael J. Kruger, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016).
2. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).
3. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity,* second edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
4. Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels,* second edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007).
5. Robert B. Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1994).

##### Schedule and Required Reading Assignments

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| Class 1—Aug 30 Strimple, 15-126 (\*have this read before first day of class)  Class 2—Sept 6  No Class – Labor Day  Class 3—Sept 13  Kruger, 581-591  Blomberg, 24-103  Class 4—Sept 20  Ferguson, 396-440  Blomberg, 152-195 Class 5—Sept 27 Ferguson, 440-501  Blomberg, 241-295 Class 6—Oct 4 Ferguson, 501-582  Kruger, 29-60 Class 7—Oct 11 No Class – Fall Break Class 8—Oct 18 Ladd, 31-88 | Class 9—Oct 25  Kruger, 61-91  Ladd, 89-132  Class 10—Nov 1  Ladd, 133-169 Class 11—Nov 8 Kruger, 93-113  Ladd, 170-211 Class 12—Nov 15 Ladd, 249-305 Class 13—Nov 22 No Class – ETS  Class 14—Nov 29  Kruger, 115-135  Blomberg, 196-240  Class 15—Dec 6  Ladd, 306-344  \***Gospel Outlines due** |

##### 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

1. Perspective on the Text: Biblical Theology vs. Systematic Theology
2. Context of the Text: Understanding the Background
3. Meaning of the Text: Historical, Modern, and Typological
4. Historicity of the Text: What about Contradictions?

II. Overview and Analysis of the Four Gospels

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John



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

Course: NT5200 Gospels

Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger

Campus: Charlotte

Date: Fall 2020

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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.*  *\*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.* | | **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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Strong | * Theology of Gospels * Historical background of Gospels * Significant paper on the Gospels |
| **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 | * Focus on exegesis and understanding the text * Use of original languages * Application to modern circumstances |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Moderate | * Discuss aspects of Reformed theology in these books, such as eschatology, kingdom of God, and structure of the covenants |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Moderate | * Texts of Gospels applied to the lives of the students |
| **Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | * Content of Gospels applied to various aspects of life (e.g., church, work, society, etc.) |
| **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.) | 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. |
| **Pastoral Ministry** | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians. | Moderate | * Preaching applications are made regularly from Gospels texts. * Content in the course leads students to worship, encourages them to consider their shepherding role, and includes some application to broader cultural issues, * Growth in spiritual maturity and an increased concern for non-Christians goals for the course |

**Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser**

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link: [*https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613*](https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613)

* This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
* Be sure that you are able to login to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before scheduling a time to take your exam.
* The LockDown Browser application is already installed on the computers in the RTS Charlotte library. (Note that if you elect to use the library computers, your proctor must still be present throughout the duration of the exam.)
* If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer’s connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: [*https://rts.instructure.com*](https://rts.instructure.com)

1. Make arrangements with a proctor to supervise the exam within the date timeframe set by the professor. The proctor cannot be a family member, current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated), or member of the library staff. Typical proctors are pastors or church staff members. The document “Procter Expectations Letter.doc” has been provided on your Canvas homepage in order to facilitate communication with your proctor. For your convenience, there will be several on-campus proctor blocks where a proctor will be available to supervise your exam. Dates and times will be posted on Canvas and announced in the weekly Semper.
2. The proctor must observe student taking exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
3. Access the exam during the date window specified for that midterm:
   1. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable WIFI connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop WIFI to take exams.
   2. Have your student ID number available to input into the exam.
   3. If you use internet filtering software, you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser.
   4. Login to your Canvas account using your Self-Service username and password. If you need to reset your Self-Service password, you may do so at <https://selfservice.rts.edu> .
   5. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [**Student Quick Start Guide (PDF)**](https://www.respondus.com/downloads/RLDB-QuickStartGuide-Instructure-Student.pdf).
   6. Time clock will begin once you open the exam.
   7. Exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to exam later.
   8. The exam will contain questions requiring the proctor contact information, an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
4. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
5. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if internet service goes out during exam), the proctor should contact the course TA. While the TA’s may not be immediately available, the date and time of the email will document when the issue was reported. Please have your TA’s contact information available for your proctor before opening the exam. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computers.