

NT5305 EXEGESIS OF GOSPEL NARRATIVE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Exegesis of Gospel Narrative is a methods course designed to help the student obtain proficiency in studying the gospels for teaching and preaching. The course will concentrate on areas such as Jewish backgrounds, miracles, parables, the use of a synopsis, and the determination of the theological message of a given passage. In particular, this course will focus upon how exegesis of gospel material differs from the exegesis of epistolary and didactic material.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims:

- A. To familiarize the student with the different literary genres encountered in the exegesis of the gospels, including issues of form.
- B. To acquaint the student with the extra-biblical literary sources which contribute to the understanding of the gospels' message.
- C. To introduce the student to a synopsis, in order to determine where parallel accounts exist and how such accounts are both similar and dissimilar.
- D. To discuss how the student can determine and present the theological message of both sections of material in individual gospels and also of entire gospels.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

1. Bock, Darrell L. *Jesus according to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait From the Gospels*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017
2. Bock, Darrell L. *Jesus, God-Man*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016.
3. Bock, Darrell L. *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
4. Powell, Mark A. *What Is Narrative Criticism?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship, ed. Dan O. Via, Jr. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1990.
5. Stein, Robert H. *Studying the Synoptic Gospels: Origin and Interpretation*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
6. A choice of either the exclusive Greek edition of the Aland Synopsis or the English-Greek edition.
NOTE: Buy the paper copy, NOT the Logos digital edition, which differs significantly.

B. Suggested

Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992. (The whole IVP Dictionary Series on the NT is valuable.)

In addition, during the semester we will suggest in class numerous extra-biblical text collections available in digital format from Logos Bible Software or in print format from the Book Center.

C. Supplementary Bibliography

1. Barrett, C. K., ed. *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. London: S.P.C.K., 1956. Rev. ed., San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989. A useful selection of extra-biblical background material on history, philosophy, religion, and literature from original sources.
2. Carson, D. A., Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. A well written work on “special introduction” of the New Testament books. It is concise and up-to-date. Besides the individual books, it has brief sections on the Synoptic Gospels, Paul, and the New Testament Canon.
3. Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. A well organized analytical and systematic introduction to the political, social, literary, and religious backgrounds to the New Testament for the beginning student.
4. Niswonger, Richard L. *New Testament History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. A well written and concise treatment of the historical, religious, and political backgrounds to the New Testament for the beginning student.
5. Jeremias, Joachim. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. Translated by F. H. and C. H. Cave. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969. A detailed, valuable treatment of background information for the study of the New Testament, especially the Gospels. This represents a lifetime of work on this subject by a competent scholar.
6. Kümmel, Werner Georg. *Introduction to the New Testament*. 17th ed. Translated by Howard Clark Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975. A well written, concise (by comparison to Guthrie) introduction to the New Testament from a liberal Protestant perspective. It has excellent bibliographies. (We assume you have Guthrie since it is a required text for ID 102.)
7. Ladd, George Eldon. *The New Testament and Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967. A helpful evangelical work on the place and problems of “higher” criticism in New Testament studies.
8. McKnight, Scot. *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988. A concise guide to synoptic exegesis. It introduces the student to various interpretive approaches to the synoptic gospels as a distinct literary genre in the New Testament. He has specialized topical bibliographies.
9. Porter, Stanley E. and Lee M. McDonald. *New Testament Introduction*. IBR Bibliographies 12. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995. A useful, relatively up-to-date, briefly annotated bibliographic listing of the more important works related to NT studies in the following areas:
1) interpretation skills and Greek language, 2) NT criticism and history of interpretation, 3) historical backgrounds, and 4) NT introductions, commentaries and the NT canon.
10. Reicke, Bo. *The New Testament Era*. Translated by David E. Green. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968. A well written presentation of the historical backgrounds to the New Testament. It gives an excellent treatment of the Hellenistic, Roman, and Jewish environment.

Recommended Commentaries on each of the Gospels:

- Matthew—D. A. Carson, R. T. France, D. A. Hagner, D. Allison / W. D. Davies, C. Keener, D. Turner, G. Osborne, J. Nolland
Mark—W. L. Lane, C. E. B. Cranfield, V. Taylor, R. Gundry, D. Garland, L. Hurtado, C. Evans, R. Stein, B. Witherington, D. L. Bock
Luke—J. A. Fitzmyer, I. H. Marshall, D. Tiede, C. A. Evans, D. L. Bock, J. Nolland, J. Green
John—C. Keener, R. E. Brown, D. A. Carson, R. Schnackenburg, C. K. Barrett, L. Morris, F. Moloney, A. Köstenberger, A. Lincoln

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Jewish Backgrounds Assignment (20%)

A paper examining the contribution of Jewish backgrounds to a custom or teaching in the gospels is required. The student will be asked to name the passage, identify the custom, and cite the texts (not just name the passages) and briefly discuss the texts which contribute to an understanding or clarification of the custom or teaching in question. Among possible topics are:

- an ancient Jewish meal
- Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, or Zealots
- ancient Jewish funeral customs and burial
- hand washing at meals
- crucifixion
- Jewish and Roman trials
- Sabbath and threshing
- Sabbath and healing
- a man's public interaction with women
- ancient taxes
- angels
- Messiah's role in the kingdom
- "inherit eternal life"
- eschatological prophet
- Son of Man or any other major Christological title
- Vineyard rental practice
- Sheol/Hades/Gehenna
- forgiveness of sins
- Logos
- Light/darkness
- View of Gentiles

A student can request a special topic, subject to the approval of the professors.

The paper should be no longer than 5-6 pages doubled spaced (minimum 12 pt font). Most of the paper should cite the significant extra-biblical passages and discuss how they are like, unlike, and/or contribute to the understanding of a given Biblical passage and its parallels, if any. The student will be graded for how carefully the extra-biblical ancient passage has been examined, the range and relevance of passages noted, and the ability to apply the material to the text in question.

This is due September 16.

B. Synoptic Parallels Assignment (30%)

The student is to examine the relationship between various parallel or disputed parallel passages. The student is to note in outline form, proceeding verse by verse, how they are similar and different and the significance for interpretation of major similarities and differences (as was the case for the previous assignment but more briefly- a paragraph per key difference). The paper should conclude with a judgment about whether in fact the passages in question are parallel conceptually, where they fit in chronologically in Jesus' ministry (in general), and/or whether they deal with the same incident. In addition, the fundamental message of the explicitly named passage in question should be summarized and compared to that of its parallels (both in terms of similarities and in terms of differences), whether one has decided it is actually parallel or not. **Be sure to include a colored synopsis page of the passage unit (i.e., of each potential parallel).**

- Mark 6:1-6 and Parr.
- Mark 6:17-18 and Parr.
- Matthew 7:7-11 and Parr.
- Matthew 6:9-13 and Parr.
- Luke 11:39-52 and Parr.
- Matt. 8:5-13 and Parr.
- Luke 19:11-27 and Parr.

- Luke 8:4-15 and Parr.
- Luke 17:22-37 and Parr.
- Luke 8:22-25 and Parr.
- Luke 22:54-71 and Parr.
- John 18:15-27 and Parr.

In this assignment, the major passage to be discussed is the one which is listed first. The parallels are to be related to it. Each passage can have a maximum of two students working on it. Students may work together to discuss the issues in their passage. The paper can be in outline form. For passages longer than five verses, only the most relevant features need be noted. This paper should be 6-7 pages in length. Be sure and supply a colored synopsis page for the passage. This does not count for your number of pages. **This is due October 21.**

Agape Project (20 or 30%)

The student can substitute an agape project assignment for one of the above papers. If you opt for this let us know to get details.

D. The Theological Message Paper (50%)

The student is to participate in a group and be part of a presentation to defend the basic message of a major discourse or event of Jesus, applying the various skills acquired during the course. The group will be interviewed by the professors in class about their passage and the relevant features of the text in terms of critical issues, historical and background matters, questions about parallels, and theological-ethical teaching (i.e., just about anything!).

Among the candidates are:

- Matthew 18:1-35
- Mark 13:1-37 (or either synoptic counterparts)
- Luke 6:20-48
- Luke 11:39-52
- Luke 23:33-49
- John 6:22-65
- John 20:1-18

Each passage can have up to seven students and they can work together on the text. Each passage must have at least three students. The paper is to present and briefly validate the basic message of each paragraph. Interpretational disputes should be briefly noted: options listed, one supporter named for each, and a list of why each position is taken, and major reason(s) for the student taking the view adopted. This paper can be in prose or outline form, whatever the student prefers. The paper should be 8 pages in length and conclude with a list of major preaching idea(s) and applications. **The papers are due on the day the passage is discussed in class.**

Only the Bock, *Historical Jesus*, Bock, *Jesus: God-Man*, and Powell will be required reading for the course. They are to be read during the semester as the student sees fit. Otherwise, *Jesus according to Scripture* is available for reference to orient oneself to the passage and “placement” of the texts we will cover. Stein is to be used to supplement the discussion of the various critical methods for some detail. The bulk of our time will be spent in discussion of method and examination of passages. Assigned passages will provide a basis for class discussion. You should have approximately three weeks to produce each paper required for the course.

V. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- A.** Dallas Theological Seminary works to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with psychological, medical, physical, and learning disabilities. A student desiring or needing accommodations on the basis of such disabilities or of medical incidents such as hospitalization or severe injury is to contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://students.dts.edu/studentlife/disability-services/>). If the student is aware of a condition that

may impact his/her studies, the student should contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities at prior to the beginning of the semester or at the onset of a crisis.

B. Receive Alerts by Text Message

DTS wants you to be aware of our emergency texting service. We strongly urge to go to <http://www.dts.edu/account/alerts/> and sign up to receive emergency texts related to weather or disaster school closing, as well as other campus information.

VI. COURSE POLICIES

A. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A+ 99-100	B+ 91-93	C+ 83-85	D+ 75-77	F 0-69
A 96-98	B 88-90	C 80-82	D 72-74	
A- 94-95	B- 86-87	C- 78-79	D- 70-71	

B. Weighing of Course Requirements for Grading

The percentages of the assignments are as follows:

Jewish backgrounds assignment	20%
Synoptic parallels assignment	30%
Theological message paper	50%

C. Class Participation

Students are expected to participate in class discussion although this is not a factor in determining the student's grade.

D. Late Assignments

Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per weekday unless due to extenuating circumstances (as determined by the professor).

E. Absences

Each student may miss up to 4 class periods during the semester without grade penalty. Each further unexcused absence will result in a semester grade reduction of 2%. Absences due to extenuating circumstances (as determined by the professor) will not be penalized.

V. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

This schedule is somewhat flexible as we reserve the right to prolong and reduce discussion depending on class need and interaction.

No.	Date	Lecture Topic	Assignments
1	Aug 26	Introduction to the Course	
		Introduction to Jewish Sources	
2	Sept 2	Examples from Jewish Materials, Part 1	
		Examples from Jewish Materials, Part 2	

No.	Date	Lecture Topic	Assignments
3	Sept 9	Use of the Synopsis & Examining Parallels, Part 1	
		Use of the Synopsis & Examining Parallels, Part 2	
4	Sept 16	Before There Was a Gospel: Eyewitnesses, Memory, Orality	
		Gospel Sources	Jewish Backgrounds Assignment Due
5	Sept 23	Form Criticism Part 1: Introduction	
		Form Criticism Part 2: Parables, Miracles, and Discourse Material	
6	Sept 30	Redaction and Tradition Criticism; Three Quests for the Historical Jesus	
		Jesus and the Public Square, Part 1	<i>From Jesus to Christ (in class)</i>
7	Oct 7	Jesus and the Public Square, Part 2	<i>From Jesus to Christ (in class)</i>
		Jesus and the Public Square, Part 3	<i>From Jesus to Christ (in class)</i>
8	Oct 14	Exegesis of a Pericope (Example)	
9	Oct 21	The Gospels as Literature and Narrative, Part 1: <i>Bios</i> and Story	Parallels Assignment Due
		The Gospels as Literature and Narrative, Part 2: Story and Ethics	
10	Oct 28	Johannine Issues, Part 1	
		Johannine Issues, Part 2	
11	Nov 4	Questions about Exegetical Method: Gospels versus Epistles	
12	Nov 11	Biblical Theology in the Gospels	
13		Luke 6:20-48	*
	Nov. 16-20	Reading Week / No Class	No Class
	Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving Break / No Class	No Class
14	Nov 18	Matthew 18:1-35	*
		John 6:22-65	*
15	Nov 25	Luke 23:33-49	*

No.	Date	Lecture Topic	Assignments
		Mark 13:1-37 (or either synoptic counterpart)	*
16	Dec 2	John 20:1-18	*
17	Dec 9	Summary/Discussion	

*** Theological Message Papers are due on the day the passage is discussed in class.**

Revised 2/24/20 - CD