

COS 321 - Bible III: Gospels

July 2023

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This course focuses on the content and message of the Gospels, as well as the theological perspectives of the Gospel writers. The course will emphasize the practice of exegesis.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Successful students will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, message, and purpose of each Gospel.
2. Exegete this form of literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

**Textbook:**

Bible (NRSV, NIV, NASB, or ESV translation)  
Mark Allen Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*.

**Supplementary Textbooks:**

Frederick Murphy, *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*.  
Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Meaning and Message of Jesus Christ*.  
Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*.

**Suggested Books and Commentaries:**

R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament).  
R. Alan Cole, *Mark* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries).  
Sharon Ringe, *Luke* (Westminster Bible Companion).  
Moody Smith, *Abingdon New Testament Commentary on John*.

**Three Pre-class Assignments: Due Fri, July 7, 2023.**

Please email both written assignments to Mark Kim at: [mark.kim@cst.edu](mailto:mark.kim@cst.edu).

Assignment One: Reading the Gospels

Please read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in one of the translations listed above.

Assignment Two: The Reasons for Writing the Gospels

In approximately four double-spaced pages, please describe what our main textbook (Powell) and/or our supplementary textbooks (Murphy, Holladay) has to say about the reasons that each of the Gospels was written. You may write more if you wish, but four pages are sufficient. For example, John tells us in John 20:31 his major reason for writing. There are other reasons, and Powell, Murphy, and Holladay will help you discover them. Please cite passages from the gospels to illustrate your points.

The paper should be submitted as a Word document in Times New Roman font, 12 pt., with 1 inch margins all around, correct in grammar, spelling and syntax, and approximately four double-spaced pages in length.

Assignment Three: The Authors

Please write an account in four double-spaced pages of what two of our textbooks (same list as above) tell us about the authors of our four Gospels. Again, you may write more if you wish, but four pages are sufficient. Who were they? When and where did they write? The format of the paper should be the same as in the previous assignment.

**The Course:**

The course will engage the main issues found in our Gospels, treated in the order Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. It is a hybrid course comprising 2 online class sessions by Zoom videoconference, 2 hours each, followed by five in-person sessions. The link for the Zoom sessions will be sent shortly before the class begins.

**Dates/Times of Zoom Sessions:**

- **Thu, July 13, 5-7pm PST**
- **Thu, July 20, 5-7pm PST**

**Dates of In-Person Sessions:**

- **Mon-Fri, July 24-28**

**Forums:**

Forums are a way for students to actively engage with New Testament scholarship and one another. Students will be assigned weekly articles pertinent to the material covered in class. Each student will read the article and write a reflection to be shared with the rest of the class. Every other student will then post a response(s) to the student's reflection. More instructions about forums will be provided at the beginning of the course.

**Exegesis Papers:**

"Exegesis" is a transliterated Greek word that means "explanation." One exegetes, that is explains, the meaning of a Biblical text in its historical context, using all the tools available to the scholar: language, history, archeology, ancient literature, and especially other Biblical texts. These help us to understand what the author meant and intended, including helping to evaluate the author's assumptions and biases. This is the historical-critical method used by all competent scholars. Learning to do exegesis is one of the main purposes of this course. Do not worry if you are new to exegesis. We will work on it together in class.

Exegesis Papers: Each student will write and submit four papers that exegete the Bible passages indicated. These should be written so that they may serve, it is hoped, as the basis for sermons and/or Bible studies. The papers are to address the issues listed and are due on the days assigned.

They are to be submitted as Word documents in Times New Roman font, 12 pt., with 1 inch margins all around, correct in grammar, spelling and syntax, and 3-4 double-spaced pages in length.

**Due Wed, July 19** - Exegesis Paper #1: Mark 4:1-20 The Parable of the Sower.

Please include discussion of the following related verses:

Mark 8:17 Are your hearts hardened?

Mark 8:35 For those who want to save their life will lose it....

Mark 10:20 Sell what you own, and give the money to the poor....

Mark 13:13 The one who endures to the end will be saved.

These verses illustrate the issues raised in the parable [the kinds of soil] and allow us to explain the parable using Mark's own ideas.

**Due Wed, July 26** - Exegesis Paper #2: Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart.

Please include discussion of the following related passages:

Matt 12:33-35 A tree is known by its fruit. ... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Matt 15:1-20 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles.

Matt 23:25-26 First clean the inside of the cup.

**Due Sat, July 29** - Exegesis Paper #3: Luke 17:21 The Kingdom of God is inside you.

Please include discussion of the following related passages:

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were in effect until John came.

Luke 12:32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 13:20-21 [The kingdom] is like leaven....

Luke 13:28-30 29 Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.

**Due Fri, Aug 4** - Exegesis Paper #4: John 15:1-10 The Vine and the Vinedresser.

Please include discussion of the following related passages:

John 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

John 7:37-38 Let the one who believes in me drink. Out of one's innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

John 8:12 I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

### Grading:

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Class Participation:	20%
2 Pre-class Written Assignments:	20%
4 Weekly Forum Posts and Responses:	20%
4 Exegesis Papers:	40%

### Plagiarism

All students are responsible for their own work, and must complete every assignment in their own words, with all scholarly sources and quotations properly cited. The Course of Study takes plagiarism seriously. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the director, and

will result in consequences to a student's grade. We do not want any of these things for our students so we are happy to answer questions and to help students learn to recognize and avoid plagiarism in their work.