NT 1501: The Four Gospels
Spring Semester 2013
Mondays 4:45 – 7:45 p.m.

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Course Description
This course is an in-depth study of the formation, content, and style of each of the four Gospels with attention given to the historical contexts from which they emerged. We will examine the distinctive portraits of Jesus presented in each Gospel as well as each gospel writer’s unique theological formulations. At the same time, a process of biblical exegesis will shape our engagement with the Gospels; the course will provide opportunities for practice. Finally, issues related to hermeneutics and the interpretation of biblical texts will be addressed and discussed. (There will also be art, crayons, beads, and poetry. Seriously.)

Course Objectives:
At the end of this course, the students will:

1. have read all four Gospels in their entirety and be able to describe their basic content and structure.

2. be able to describe the distinctive “portrait of Jesus” painted by each gospel writer having developed a working knowledge of the theological themes, literary motifs, and unique features characteristic of each Gospel.

3. be able to analyze how the historical, cultural, social, and religious contexts in which Jesus and the gospel writers lived have shaped the literary form of the Gospels.

4. be able read the Gospels critically, engaging a variety of methods used to interpret Biblical texts.

5. be more skilled in the art and practice of exegesis and the use of research tools for translating and interpreting Gospel texts.

6. be able to articulate why a serious engagement with the Gospel texts matters for the life of faith, for the life of faith communities, and for the needs of the world today.
Fit with Degree Program Goals:

**Knowledge** of the breadth and depth of the ecumenical Christian heritage, including Scripture, historical and contemporary theology and doctrine, liturgical traditions, and the history of the church.

**Ability** to develop and express mature personal faith, and with sensitivity and skill, teach the traditions of the church, lead worship and preach, and engage in pastoral care.

**Opportunities** for growth in the spiritual traditions and practices in the life of the Church.

Required Reading

1. **ALAND, Kurt.** *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*  [ANY SYNOPSIS WILL DO!! ]
   Library call number: 226.1 AL11s 1982

2. **BROWN, Raymond.** *An Introduction to the New Testament*  [Brown, Intro]
   New York: Doubleday, 1997
   Library call number: 225.6 B814

3. **GORMAN, Michael J.** *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*  [Gorman, Exegesis]

4. **POWELL, Mark Allan.** *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels*  [Powell, Gospels]
   Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998
   Library call number: 226.P871f

5. **POWELL, Mark Allan.** *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee.*  [Powell, JAFIH]
   Library call number: 232.9P871j

6. **Doty, Mark.** *Still Life with Oysters and Lemon*  [Doty, Still Life]
   Boston: Beacon Press, 2001

One of the following study Bibles:


7. There may be additional readings which will be provided for you.

**Recommended:**

   Library call number: 226.06 AL54r

   Library call number: 225.6 B153L

   Library call number: 225.34 Eh89n 2003

   Library call number: 232.5 F959f 1980

   Library call number: 226.067 M295s 2003

Course requirements

1. Active class participation and preparedness. (30%)
   - Regular attendance, constructive participation in class discussions, active listening.
   - Read the assigned biblical texts and be prepared for class discussions by completing the assigned exercises for the day*; in addition, identify any other passages that are confusing, provocative, require more background knowledge, would be challenging to preach, are good examples of points made in the secondary reading, etc.
   - Read secondary reading assignments and be prepared to participate in discussions – bringing two to three questions, discussion starters, comments.

*The exercises are drawn from Gorman’s *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* and will be referred to in the syllabus as “FFIPs” (pronounced “fips”; the acronym for exercises found at the end of the chapters in the sections called “For Further Insight and Practice”) and PHints (pronounced “fints,” referring to exercises found at the end of the chapters in the section called “Practical Hints”). I know these little names are lame so, as this is a tentative syllabus, I’m oh, so open to renaming these exercises if you come up with something better.

2. Take home exam (25%)
   Given the last day of class, this exam is designed to be a means by which you can have a structured review of the materials covered in the class. It’s where the fire hose gets turned off and you get to drink more slowly, as if from an actual cup or glass, maybe even sip and savor. It is akin to an open-book exam; you may have at hand any and all materials used throughout the semester. You may consult with each other and/or with me.
   The exam will be due the last day of the semester – MAY 17, 2013

3. FFIPs, PHints, and a project/presentation on the passage of your choosing. (45%  20 FFIPS/PHints 25 Presentation)
   While FFIPs and PHints are assigned on particular days for gospel texts we are studying in class, you will also complete them for a gospel passage of your own choosing that you will exegete throughout the semester.
   The FFIPs and PHints related to your selected passage, will be due MARCH 11 and APRIL 15.

   Presentation/Project to be discussed first day of class – I’m thinking about something more creative/constructive here – NOT an exegetical paper…. 😊
**CLASS SCHEDULE AND PREPARATIONS**

**JANUARY 28**  
Personal introductions, course introduction, review of syllabus, goals  

**Topics:** seeing; reading texts; exegesis and interpretation; Jesus  

**Bible texts:** The Gospel of Mark  

**Other reading:**  
Gorman, *Exegesis*: Chapter 1, “The Task” (24)  
Chapter 2, “The Text” (24)

**View:** From Jesus to Christ, Part One, Chapters 1-5 (55 minutes)  

**FEBRUARY 4**  
**Topics:** the world of the Jesus and of the gospel writers; views of the historical Jesus; Jewish Messianic expectation  

**Bible texts:** reread The Gospel of Mark 1-5  

**FFIPs and PHints:** Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 67  

**PHint 1** – Mark 1  
**FFIP 1** – Mark 1:16-20  
Mark 2:23-28  
Mark 3:20-30

**Other reading:**  
Brown, *Intro*: Chapter 4, “Political and Social World” (21)  
Chapter 5, “Religious and Philosophical World” (19)  
Gorman, *Exegesis*: Chapter 3, “Survey/First Element” (5)  
Powell, *JAFIH*: Chapters 1-3 (53)  
Doty, *Still Life with Oysters and Lemon* (1-35)

**View:** From Jesus to Christ, Part One, Chapters 6-11 (50 minutes)  
**FEBRUARY 11**

**Topics:** world of Jesus and gospel writers (continued); overview of the four Gospels; exploring the metaphor of portraits/snapshots of Jesus

**Bible texts:** Mark 1-3

**FFIPs and PHints:** Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 80

**FFIP 2 and PHints 1 and 2** – working with Mark 3:1-6

**Other reading:**

Powell, *Gospels*: Introduction and Chapters 1-4 (110/easy)

Chapter 1 “Nature and Origin of NT” (12)

Gorman, *Exegesis*: Chapter 4, “Contextual Analysis/Element 2” (11)

Doty, *Still Life with Oysters and Lemon* (35-70)

**View:** From Jesus to Christ, Part Two, Chapters 1-6 (45 minutes)

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**FEBRUARY 18**

**Topics:** formation of the gospels; the synoptic problem; form analysis; the Gospel of Mark; “the reign of God”

**Bible texts:** Mark 6, 7, and 10

**FFIPs and PHints:** Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 100, 99

**FFIP 3** – Mark 6:30-56
Mark 7:1-23

**PHint 3** – Mark 10:46-52

**Other reading:**

Brown, *Intro*: Chapter 6, “Gospels in Gen.; Synoptics in Particular” (23)
Chapter 7, “The Gospel According to Mark” (41)

**FEBRUARY 25**
**READING/RESEARCH WEEK**

**ASSIGMENTS:** FFIPS and PHints on Matthew 8:18-34; 12:46-50  
  FFIPS and PHints on Gospel passage of your choosing  
  Read any two chapters in *JAFIH* (from 4-9); choosing whatever  
  two historians most interest you; also chapter 10

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**MARCH 4**

**Topics:** discussion of *JAFIH* chapters; Mark’s passion and resurrection  
  narratives; introduction to the Gospel of Matthew; more work on forms –  
  extending Gorman’s chapter on formal analysis  

**Bible texts:** Mark 11-16; Matthew 3, 4 and 8-12  

**FFIPs and PHints:** Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 100, 99  
  **FFIP 3** – Matthew 8:18-34  
  **PHint 3** – Matthew 12:46-50  

**Other reading:**  
  Allen, *Reading the Synoptic Gospels*  
  Chapter 4 “Form and Function” (14/easy)  
  Excursus, “Conventional Forms” (6/easy)  
  Bailey and Vander Broeck, *Literary Forms*  
  selected pages between 98 and 161

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**MARCH 11**

**Topics:** the Gospel of Matthew; review of exegetical elements and processes  
  covered to date with Matthew passages selected from chapters 13-25  

**Bible texts:** Matthew 13-25  

**FFIPS and PHints:** on selected texts from Matthew (TBA)  

**Other reading:**  
  Reread/review Gorman, *Exegesis*: Chapter 5, “Formal Analysis”  

**DUE:** ASSIGNED PHINTS AND FFIPS ON YOUR SELECTED PASSAGE

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**MARCH 18**

**Topics:** The Gospel of Luke
Bible texts: Luke 3-21

FFIPs and PHints: Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 124-25

PHint 1 – Luke 4:16-30
FFIP 1, 4, and 5 – Luke 4:16-30

Other reading:

Gorman, *Exegesis*: Chapter 6 “Detailed Analysis/Element 4” (24)

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**MARCH 25**

**EASTER RECESS**

FFIPS and PHints on Gospel passage of your choosing

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**APRIL 1**

**Topics:** the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew) and Sermon on the Plain (Luke);
the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew and in Luke

(also read these in synopsis with other gospels, please)

FFIPs and PHints: Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 124-25

FFIP 4 – Luke 7:36-50
FFIP 5 – Luke 14:7-24
PHint 1 – Luke 16:19-31

Other reading:

Bailey and Vander Broeck, *Literary Forms*
“Stories about Jesus,” pp. 147-51
[“Genealogies,” 183-87]

Reread Brown, *Intro*: Chapters 8 and 9, topic-related sections
Reread/review Gorman, *Exegesis*: Chapter 6 “Detailed Analysis”

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**APRIL 8**

**Topics:** parables in the Synoptic Gospels
**Bible texts:** parables in the Synoptic Gospels; read in Aland’s *Synopsis*

**Other reading:**
- Something on parables: TBA
- Reread Brown, *Intro:* Chapters 7, 8, and 9, sections on parables
  (note: chapter 7 takes you back to Mark’s gospel)
- Bailey and Vander Broeck, *Literary Forms*
  “Parables,” pp. 105-112

**APRIL 15**

**Topics:** Passion and Resurrection Narratives in Matthew and Luke

**Bible texts:** Matthew 26-26; Luke 22-24 (also look at these in synopsis with the other gospels, please)

**FFIPs and PHints:** Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 124-25

PHints 1 and 2; FFIPs 1-5 – do all activities on a passage you select from either Matthew’s or Luke’s passion/resurrection narratives

**Other reading:**
- Bailey and Vander Broeck, *Literary Forms*
  “Stories about Jesus,” pp. 151-54
- Reread Brown, *Intro:* Chapters 8 and 9, sections on passion/resurrection

**DUE:** ASSIGNED PHINTS AND FFIPS ON YOUR SELECTED PASSAGE (AND YOUR TAX RETURNS…)

**APRIL 22**

**Topics:** discussion of *The Shadow of the Galilean*; introduction to the Gospel of John

**Bible texts:** John 1-4

**FFIPs and PHints:** Gorman, *Exegesis* p. 99, 100, 125

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**Other reading:**
- Theissen, *Shadow of the Galilean*

TBA
Topics: Gospel of John; theological interpretation; project presentations

Bible texts: John 18-20 passion and resurrection narratives
(also read this in synopsis with other gospels, please)

Other reading:
Gorman, *Exegesis*: Chapter 8, “Reflection: Theological Interpretation”
(26)

Topics: project presentations

Reading: Gorman, *Exegesis*
Chapter 7: “Synthesis/Element 5”
Chapter 9: “Expansion and Refinement/Element 7”

DUE: Take-home exam