Northern Seminary  
NT 301 Jesus and the Gospels  
Fall 2015  
Mondays, 1:00-3:40 pm  
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Purpose of the Course (from catalog):  
This course provides a basic introduction to Matthew, Mark, Luke (the "Synoptic Gospels") and the Gospel of John, and acquaints students with an overview of the teaching and mission of Jesus in these Gospels. Prerequisite: IN 301. (Required)

Objectives/Outcomes:  
The student, upon completion of this course, will be able to:

- Understand the major models of critical interpretation in Synoptic Gospel studies and John.

- Write a competent, fair-minded, and critical review of a major book on Jesus or the Synoptic Gospels or the Gospel of John.

- Sketch in essay format (1000 words) major critical issues (e.g., textual criticism, gospel criticisms, major themes in Jesus’ mission and the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John) in words understandable to ordinary lay persons in a church.

- Understand and articulate conversion theory and how it applies to your own journey and formation.

- Articulate major themes in each of the Synoptic Gospels as well as in John.

Required Textbooks:


Strongly Recommended Text to have:

**Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, 2d edition [=DJG2]**

**Additional Reading** (see each week’s entry below)

250 pages+ for a book review of the student’s choice on either the historical Jesus or one of the Gospels’ theology.

**Course Requirements:**

1. All assigned papers and essays are to be submitted on Moodle.

2. All assignments are due before 7am the day of class unless otherwise noted.

3. 1000 word essays are condensed and tight, full of evidence when needed, and not brief, breezy papers. I may ask you to read your paper aloud in class. (Write with that end in view.) They will be graded for comprehensive perception; articulation; display of evidence and inductive method; proper formatting.

4. Late submissions: for each day late in submission, the grade will be docked 10%.

5. **Book Review:** Each student is to submit a 1000 word critical book review of a 250+ page book on Jesus or on one of the Synoptic Gospels or the Gospel of John. That book review is to have a 250 word comprehensive, tight summary of the arguments of the book and a 750 word response. Write this review for publication. **Due date: December 4 (Wednesday after last class).**

6. Contribute meaningfully and in a civil manner to class discussions and lectures.
7. Do all assignments in the syllabus; submit a report of percentage of reading at the end of the term.

8. Class attendance: It is expected that students will attend and participate in all class sessions. Failure to attend at least 80% of class sessions is grounds for automatic failure. Students are expected to communicate with me in advance if they are to miss a class session.

9. All essays are to be submitted in accordance with Turabian, 7th edition.

10. I strongly urge each student to download and begin to learn how to use Zotero – a bibliography and footnoting program that formats the notes in proper style. Zotero is tied to Amazon so that you can click once and have a bibliographic item downloaded into your Zotero library.

11. Papers submitted electronically are to be in Word .doc or .docx (preferably the latter) format.

**Grading:**

Scale:  
A: 100-96%;  
A-: 95-93  
B+: 92-90  
B: 89-87  
B-: 86-84  
C+: 83-80  
C: 79-75  
C-: 74-70  
D: 69-65  
F: 64 or below

**Course Outline and Weekly Assignments:**

*Note: Through 2 November, essays are due the Monday after the lecture. From 9 November forward, they are due the day of the lecture.*

**Week 1: Sept 28**  
Historical Context: Judaism and Jesus

1. Assignments Due: Nothing.
2. Mapping Judaisms and the Shema
3. Concept maps for the principal sects at the time of Jesus.

**Week 2: Oct 5**  Synoptic Methodology

1. Assignment Due (7am): Using the “Jesus and the Pharisees” Handout on Moodle, read through every reference in the four Gospels (printed on the handout) and compose a 1000 word essay (single space) defining the five major tensions between Jesus and the Pharisees – and document each point you make with Bible references [avoid quoting the Bible text].

2. Matthew 8:5-13 par, the Lord’s Prayer and Gospel Methodology (Textual, Source, Form, Redaction, Literary, Social-scientific and Socio-pragmatic criticisms, and the Historical Jesus debate).

3. Reading for Further Study: S. McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*

**Week 3: Oct 12**  Jesus: Events of His Life

1. No assignment

2. Birth, Baptism, Temptation, Table Fellowship, Death, Resurrection


**Week 4: Oct 19**  Kingdom of God/Heavens

1. Assignment Due (7am): Write a 1000 word essay on the Baptism of Jesus answering one question: Why was Jesus baptized in the Jordan River by John? Compare each of the Synoptic Gospels in your study.

2. Assignment: S. McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*. 
3. Jesus and the Kingdom of God; Liberation Theology and the “Kingdom” in the church today.

**Week 5: Oct 26 Discipleship**

1. Assignment Due (7am): Write a 1000 word essay on the meaning of “kingdom” in the teachings of Jesus. Use the Handout on Moodle “Kingdom in the Gospels.”
3. Class Topic: Jesus and Discipleship

**Week 6: Nov 2 Mark**

1. Read Mark in one sitting in less than one hour.
2. Assignment: S. McKnight, *Turning to Jesus*.
3. Assignment: 1000 word essay on conversion theory and its implications for understanding your own journey (“conversion”) and formation. The essential approach is simple: Tell your own spiritual journey but **use the categories of conversion theory in *Turning to Jesus* as you tell your story.** (So, talk about your context, your crisis, your quest, etc.)

**Week 7: Nov 9 Matthew 1**

1. Assignment: Read Matthew in one sitting in less than one hour.
2. Matthew: Structure, Theology
Week 8: Nov 16  Matthew 2

1. Assignment: Read Matthew in one sitting in less than one hour.
2. Assignment: Write a 1000 word essay on the Ethics of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, focusing especially on the Sermon on the Mount. Answer this question: What are the five most important terms describing Christian ethics according to Matthew and what does each term mean in the context of Jesus?
3. Matthew: Sermon on the Mount, Missionary Discourse, Eschatological Discourse

Week 9: Nov 30  Luke

1. Assignment: Read Luke in one sitting in less than one hour.

Week 11: Dec 7  John

1. Assignment: Read the Gospel of John in one sitting in less than one hour.
4. John: Christology, Life, and Faith

December 9, Book Review due. 7am.
POLICIES FOR ALL MASTERS CLASSES

NOTE: All communications from the seminary will go to your seminary email account. Contact ithelpdesk@seminary.edu if you need help forwarding your seminary email address to your personal email address.

As a seminary community we hold integrity/hospitality as core values. Individuals are able to do their best work and thinking when their peers are fully present and engaged. We expect each person to both participate in class and carefully listen to others with the belief that everyone’s contribution is equally important. Therefore, the following policies have been established in order to provide clarity in regard to attendance expectations and relationships in the classroom.

Class Attendance Policy
It is expected that students will attend and participate in all class sessions. Failure to attend at least 80% of class sessions is grounds for automatic failure. A professor may set other attendance expectations. Students are always expected to communicate with a professor in advance if they will be absent. Expectations are higher for online and intensive courses (see syllabus for specific requirements).

Class Tardiness Policy
The third time a student is late to the start of class, it will be counted as a class absence. It is also expected that students will return from a break by the time specified by the professor.

Late Work Policy
If a student cannot complete the work for a course by the due date listed on the syllabus, they must submit a “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form to the Registrar by 4:30 of the last day of the term. The form must be signed by the instructor and Dean of Students. The professor may set stipulations and grade reductions. In the absence of a formal request form, the student will receive a grade based upon work completed by the last day of the term.

Turabian Format
All papers, including footnotes and Reading for Further Study, must be submitted in the correct format according to Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th ed., 2007.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgement or documentation. See the “Academic Honesty Policy” in the Seminary Catalog for more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Electronic Format
All work submitted electronically must be in a Word document format (.doc, .docx).

Technology Use in the Classroom
Unless it is directly tied to note-taking or research for the class, students are expected to refrain from using cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class.

Course Evaluation in Moodle
Students must complete an online course evaluation using the seminary Moodle system at http://moodle.edu in order to receive a final grade for the course. The evaluation will be open for one week starting the last day of the term. If you need assistance connecting to Moodle or accessing the evaluation, please send an email to ithelpdesk@seminary.edu.