



SMU | PERKINS SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

COS 321 Bible III: Gospels

Summer 2024

M-F, June 24-July 12

Instructor: Abraham Smith

Office Hours: By Zoom appointment

Phone: 214-768-1888

Course Title

COS 321 Bible III: Gospels

Course Goals for COS: 321 Bible III: Gospels

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

Student Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

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

Students who take the course will also be expected:

- to attend online faithfully
- to participate timely
- to be eager in their willingness to collaborate with others

Course of Study Curriculum Design

The design of the curriculum of the Course of Study:

1. Grounds local pastors in core competencies of biblical interpretation, historical and theological understanding, congregational leadership, and pastoral effectiveness.
2. Is developmental in nature, encouraging local pastors to follow the sequence of yearly courses as much as possible.
3. Equips local pastors to be missional leaders with an ability to reflect critically on the social contexts and congregational dynamics particular to their ministry settings.
4. Cultivates in local pastors practices of vital spirituality to nurture and sustain ministry, including a Christian hospitality that welcomes across boundaries.
5. Orients local pastors within the global United Methodist connection, inviting them to claim their role in the fulfillment of the church's mission." (Source: *Policies and Guidelines for Course of Study Schools 2017*. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry)

Required Course Materials

Texts

All of the following may be purchased online.

Required Texts:

- Lozado, Jr., Francisco. *John: An Introduction and Study Guide: History, Community, and Ideology*, T&T Clark Study Guides to the New Testament. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.
- Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2018.
- Smith, Abraham. *Mark: An Introduction and Study Guide: Shaping the Life and Legacy of Jesus*, T&T Clark Study Guides to the New Testament. London: Bloomsbury, 2017.
- Wainwright, Elaine. *Matthew: An Introduction and Study Guide: The Basileia of the Heavens is Near at Hand*, T&T Clark's Study Guides to the New Testament. London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

Reference Texts:

- *New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Edited by Walter Harrelson. New Revised Standard Version. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- Tannehill, Robert C. *Luke*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Teacher Guides

- Various Readings will be provided freely for the students in select Modules

PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

Each student will be expected to attend each class session and to engage in prepared and informed discussions of the assigned lessons. Each student is expected to read each reading assignment before the respective class session. While class is in session, students may not surf the net, play sounds from their computers, make texts or phone calls, or conduct any disruptive behavior. The course should follow the schedule listed below, but I reserve the right to adjust the schedule to maximize the learning experience. I will not offer extensions for any late paper. All written assignments should be written with inclusive language. In addition, the exegesis paper must use the footnote, endnote or bibliographical style documented in the latest edition of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. All papers must be double-spaced and typed with a 12-pt font. **No exams will be given.** The required texts are available online. All the readings not found in the textbooks are available through Bridwell online or on Canvas.

Course Format

This is a three-week course. The class will meet each M-F, from 7:45 am- 9:40 am from June 24-July 12. The course will be conducted as a plenary in class, with a few online interactive asynchronous activities and with attendees being able to complete all of the readings and activities asynchronously through Canvas, SMU's Learning Management System, and with additional outside web-based resources.

Course Website and Required Materials

Management of the course will be conducted through Canvas, SMU's Learning Management System. Some reading assignments will be found in the required texts. All other readings and course material will be available without cost online through Canvas. I have given detailed information about the readings and course material in the Modules. Before beginning the course, please make sure your computer or mobile devices meet the technical requirements for the course. Should you face a difficulty with in having the technical requirement, please notify your course instructor.

Statement on Netiquette

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Something about cyberspace makes it easy for people to forget that they are interacting with other real people. The following bullet points cover some basics to communicating online:

Be sensitive to the fact that there will be cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as different political and religious beliefs, plus just differences in general.

Use good taste when composing your responses in Discussion Forums. Swearing and profanity is also part of being sensitive to your classmates and should be avoided. Also consider that slang can be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Don't use all capital letters when composing your responses as this is considered "shouting" on the Internet and is regarded as impolite or aggressive. It can also be stressful on the eye when trying to read your message.

Be respectful of others' views and opinions. Avoid "flaming" (publicly attacking or insulting) them as this can cause hurt feelings and decrease the chances of getting all different types of points of view.

Be careful when using acronyms. If you use an acronym it is best to spell out its meaning first, then put the acronym in parentheses afterward, for example: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). After that you can use the acronym freely throughout your message.

Use good grammar and spelling, and avoid using text messaging shortcuts.

Emoticons and emojis can be used to add emotion to your text or convey invisible body language, as long as they are used tastefully.

Statement on Title IX and Sexual Misconduct

All forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking, are violations of SMU's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and may also violate Texas law. Students who wish to file a complaint or to receive more information about the grievance process may contact Samantha Thomas, SMU's Title IX Coordinator, at accessequity@smu.edu or 214-768-3601. Please note that faculty and staff are mandatory reporters. If students notify faculty or staff of sexual harassment, they must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information about sexual harassment, including resources available to assist students, please visit www.smu.edu/sexualmisconduct.

To find information on Title IX and sexual misconduct, please visit www.smu.edu/sexualmisconduct.

Statement on Attendance

Each student will be expected to attend each class session in person and to engage in prepared and informed discussions of the assigned lessons. Each student is expected to read each reading assignment and to participate in each learning activity or forum interaction. According to the Perkins Catalog, students are not allowed to receive course credit if more than 25% of the course is missed. Online attendance will be met by the timely completion of the required assignments and activities embedded within this course. If you cannot complete an activity on time, communicate directly with the facilitator. If you fail to complete three assignments without notifying the facilitator, you will be dropped from the course.

Statement on Communication

If you have any questions about this course and its assignments, please submit your question via the Course Q&A. That way, if any of your classmates have the same question, they will have access to the answer there and I can answer the questions of two or more persons at one time. (Links to an external site.) Still, you may also contact me via email I will respond to your question or email within 24 hours. Responses might be slightly delayed on holidays and weekends. Assignments

will customarily be graded within 24-48 hours of the assignment due date, but there could be a delay for long essays and long projects.

VERY IMPORTANT: All course communication will be done via Canvas. Please make sure to check that email regularly.

Student Academic Success Programs

Students needing assistance with writing assignments for SMU courses may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center through the Bridwell Library by contacting one of our reference librarians.

Grading

Grades will be available through Canvas and students may access them to determine where they stand in this course at any time. Your grade will be calculated according to the "*Assignments are weighted by group:*" table displayed in this syllabus page. Please make sure to check your grade book to see your instructor's feedback on your projects and activities. It is your responsibility to check for your instructor's feedback and make appropriate improvements to assignments if necessary.

Grading Scale

A	A -	B +	B	B -	C +	C	C -	D +	D	D -	F
100-93%	92-90%	89-87%	86-83%	82-80%	79-77%	76-73%	72-70%	69-67%	66-63%	62-60%	59-50%

Requirements/Description of Assignments

Pre-Class Assignments (30%)

The first group of assignments will be the pre-class assignments

1. Pre-class Assignment #1 (10%)

- a. Please fill in all of the requested information in the Canvas workbook entitled "A Narrative Critical Analysis of Peter." The workbook provides basic information for an exegetical analysis of Mark 14:53-72. At the end of the workbook, you will use the answers you have given in the workbook to help you construct a thesis on Mark 14:53-72. The workbook, with the thesis statement included, must be submitted within the text entry space and uploaded as an attachment.
- b. Please see the Canvas grading rubric for the criteria by which this pre-assignment will be graded. This pre-class assignment is due on June 3.

2. Pre-class Assignment #2 (10%)

- a. Please read the following texts from Powell:
 - a) On the Gospels: *Introducing the NT*, 95-117.
 - b) On Mark, *Introducing the NT*, 141-159.
 - c) On Matthew, *Introducing the NT*, 119-139.

- d) On Luke, *Introducing the NT*, 161-181.
- e) On John, *Introducing the NT*, 183-203.

In light of your reading for the second pre-class assignment, pick *one* of the Gospels as the basis for writing an essay of 4 full pages on the subject “Major Issues in the Interpretation of the selected Gospel” (which must cover the issues of authorship, place and time of composition, intended readers and setting, purpose, and some unique features characterizing the book). Make sure you also provide a brief critique or reaction to the material studied and that your words are different from the sources you are using. This is not a sermon, devotional, or a word-by-word repetition of what scholars say, but your understanding of the most important issues that need to be dealt with if one is to understand what the author of the selected Gospel was communicating to that author’s audience.

b. Please see the Canvas grading rubric for the criteria by which this pre-assignment will be graded. This pre-class assignment is due on June 3.

3. Pre-class Assignment #3 (10%)

a. While you must read all of the textbooks on Mark, Matthew, and John by June 27, you are required to submit a 4-6 page, typed, ds, critical review of *one* of the following required textbooks by June 10: the one by Abraham Smith, the one by Elaine Wainwright, or the one by Francisco Lozada, Jr. The critical review must be on a text that covers a different gospel from the one you selected for your pre-class assignment #2.

b. Please see the Canvas grading rubric for the criteria by which this pre-assignment will be graded. This pre-class assignment is due on June 3.

Class Participation and Interactive Forums (30%)

The second group of assignments is a collection of Interactive Forums. The forums will demonstrate the students' ability to interact with each other as all respond to the assigned readings and discussion prompts. More detailed instructions will be shared via the individual assignments' instructions and rubrics.

Exegesis Paper (40%)

The last assignment is an exegesis paper, an analysis of one or more assigned brief texts in the Gospel of Mark. The paper allows students to have an opportunity to offer a thesis about a text as they both draw on the wisdom of other scholars and advance nuances on the existing scholarship on the aforementioned texts) in Mark. More detailed instructions will be shared via the individual assignments' instructions and rubrics.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

1. Orientation to the Course: Critical Methods: *Week 1*

- a. Goals
- b. Requirements

c. Discussion of Perspectives and Critical Tools

2. Orientation to the Course: Canons and Categories of Writings in the New Testament: Week 1

Readings: Five on Five: Examining Assumptions; Re-reading for Liberation

What is a canon? What is the difference between an exegetical method and a hermeneutical stance? What are the four genres or types of works in the New Testament?

3. Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels: Week 1

Readings: Powell, 95-117; also see Mark Goodacre, “Supplementary Materials (Introductory)” in “The Case Against Q” (<http://www.markgoodacre.org/Q/>). How do ancient biographies (“lives”) and modern biographies differ? What are some of the obvious examples of Jewish influence on the literary conventions of the gospels? What are basic distinctions between the Gospel of John and the so-called Synoptic gospels? Distinguish the Two-Source hypothesis from the Two-Gospel Hypothesis. What are some of the limitations of the Q hypothesis? What are some of the typical forms found in Gospel material?

4. The Tools and Practice of Exegesis: Week 1

Readings: Smith’s handouts

5. The Gospel of Mark (1st Session): Week 2

Reading: All of the Gospel of Mark, if possible in one sitting; and Smith, *Mark: An Introduction and Study Guide*.

6. The Gospel of Mark (2nd Session): Week 2

Readings: Powell, 141-159. How is Mark both a work of good news and a paradox? What is the purpose of intercalation, a type of Markan compositional technique? Why are the disciples portrayed as dense in Mark’s gospel? Who are the so-called “little” people in Mark’s gospel? What is their narrative role? What are the functions of the two extended parables in Mark’s gospel (the *Sower* and the *Tenants*)? What is Mark’s “Little Apocalypse? What is the rhetorical effect of Mark’s gospel if it ends at 16:8? What is the setting of Mark’s gospel?

7. The Gospel of Matthew: Week 2

Reading: All of the Gospel of Matthew, if possible in one sitting; and Wainwright, *Matthew: An Introduction and Study Guide*.

8. The Gospel of Matthew: Week 2

Readings: Powell, 119-139. How does the Gospel of Matthew present a more exalted portrait of Jesus than does the Gospel of Mark? How does Matthew rehabilitate the image of the disciples as found in Mark? How does Matthew redact the theme of authority as found in Mark's gospel? What is Matthew's *doubling* motif? What is Matthew's attitude toward the Law? What are some of the hypotheses about the narrative sequencing of Matthew's gospel? What is the purpose of the "withdraw" diction in Matthew's gospel? What is the role of Peter in the Gospel of Matthew? Why was Matthew written?

9. The Gospel of Luke: Week 2

Reading: All of the Gospel of Luke, if possible in one sitting.

10. The Gospel of Luke: Week 3

Readings: Powell, 161-182. How does the Gospel of Luke present a more exalted portrait of Jesus than does the Gospel of Mark? How does Luke rehabilitate the image of the disciples as found in Mark? What is the *big omission*? What is the *little omission*? What is the *big interpolation*? What is the *little interpolation*? What is the so-called Lukan travelogue? How does Luke rehabilitate the image of the disciples as found in Mark? What is a synkrisis and how does Luke use synkrisis to develop the theme of God's hospitality? How does Luke's portrayal of Jesus' visit to the synagogue foreshadow the nature of Jesus' ministry throughout the Gospel of Luke? What are the problems of Conzelmann's redaction critical approach to the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts? How do the parables of Luke 15 function with respect to the entire narrative? What is the setting for the Gospel of Luke?

11. The Gospel of John: Week 3

Reading: All of the Gospel of John, if possible in one sitting; and Lozada's *John: An Introduction*.

12. The Gospel of John: Week 3

Readings: Powell, 183-203. How does the Gospel of John differ from the Synoptics in form and content? Discuss the source critical problems of the Gospel of John. What is the relationship between the Logos in John's prologue and the Sophia (personified Wisdom) traditions? What are

the various meanings of the term “the Jews” in John’s gospel? What is the function of John’s realized eschatology? How is the Gospel of John structured? What is the setting for the Gospel of John? How does the papyrus fragment known as p52 help in the determination of the dating of the Gospel of John?

13. The Historical Jesus: *Week 3 (2 class sessions)*

Reading: Powell, 77-93; “From Jesus to Christ series;” see PBS Frontline website <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/> What are the sources (Jewish, non-canonical Roman and non-canonical Christian) and methods used in the various quests for the historical Jesus? Describe the prominent features in each of the three major quests for the historical Jesus. What is the importance of the Gospel of Thomas for historical Jesus research?

Perkins regulations regarding Incompletes:

The grade of Incomplete is granted only in rare cases when a student is prevented by extraordinary circumstances of illness or other severe hardship, from completing some major portion of the required course work before the deadline for submission of grades for the term. Requests must be made to the instructor.

Academic dishonesty at Perkins:

Plagiarism and other academic offenses are taken very seriously at Perkins. Please be careful and honest in your papers for all your classes.

The SMU Libraries:

Bridwell Library (<http://www.smu.edu/libraries>) offers incredible resources. The books, journals, special collections, and internet resources are phenomenal.