



**ERSKINE** | For Christ and His Church  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**NT 733CO**  
**The Synoptic Gospels**  
**Fall Term, 2011**  
**Mondays, 1-4 P.M.**  
**Columbia Campus**  
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**I. Course Description:** This course focuses on the words and ministry of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Synoptic gospels. It examines the common features of genre and possible literary relationships shared between Mark, Matthew, and Luke, while giving special attention to each Gospel's individual characteristics with regard to style, content, organization and theological message. Particular emphasis will be placed upon discovering the unique tendencies found in each author's account, and their implications for the church and her ministries. *Elective. Three hours. A note regarding exegesis papers:* In order to receive exegesis credit for this course, students must have successfully completed BI 502 Principles of Exegesis prior to taking this class. Please see Course Requirements below.

**II. Course Objectives:** The mission statement of Erskine Seminary indicates that its purpose is to educate its students "for service in the Christian Church", in particular, the study of the Bible "in its own literary, historical and theological settings", so that the student may "interpret it with relevance and meaning applicable for today." The Synoptics contain the fundamental information regarding the life and teaching of Christ, and are the indispensable source for articulating the Gospel. This course aims to communicate this information in the following manner:

To analyse the Synoptic accounts in terms of genre, style and leitmotifs.

To identify distinguishing aspects of each Gospel account.

To undertake in-depth analysis of pericopae unique to each account.

To explore the distinct messages of the Synoptics in terms of their relevance to church practice and Christology.

To encourage students to actively teach and preach from the Synoptics in a manner that is true to the intent of the author.

### III. Required Textbooks:

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

Aland, Kurt, ed. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. New York: International Bible Society, 2010. ISBN # 1585169420.

Green, J., McKnight, S. and Marshall, I.H., eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1992. ISBN # 0-8308-1777-8.

In addition, there will be small reading assignments and/or handouts throughout the course to help the student organize and understand the relatively large and diverse amount of material to be learned.

### IV. Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend every class meeting. If a student must be absent due to an emergency or illness for all or part of a session, the student is responsible for all work done and due for that session. *No more than three sessions may be missed*. Due to the nature of the course, missing classroom discussion will almost certainly adversely affect the student's performance on the scheduled exams.

Students are expected to be adequately prepared for each class session, particularly the Biblical translation assignments due. Classroom discussion will constitute an important element of our learning together, and will be adversely affected by poor preparation.

**One exam** will be administered, related to the introductory background material covered. See class schedule for exam date.

Each student will be required to present the results of **an exegetical exercise** based on a portion of text (pericope) from the Synoptic Gospels. This text will be discrete from the passage selected for the exegesis paper. A guide sheet will be provided for the preparation and presentation of this exercise.

Each student will be responsible for writing **two reflection papers** on issues related to the content of the Synoptic Gospels. The professor will provide a list of possible topics, as well as guide sheets for this exercise. A student may suggest a relevant topic which is not included in the list, as well. Due dates for these papers are delineated below in the class schedule.

Students interested in acquiring exegesis credit for this course will research a Synoptic text as the basis for a thorough **exegesis paper**. Please consult the professor for details and exegesis guidelines.

- V. Evaluation:** The Seminary grade scale will be used in determining a letter grade. The student's final grade will be calculated as follows:

Test = 25%

Exegesis Exercise = 25%

Reflection Papers = 50% (2 @ 25%)

Note: Completed and graded tests and papers will be returned to the student in a subsequent class period. Papers and tests tendered at the end of the semester (where impossible to return in class) will be held by the professor for pick-up by the student. Alternately, if the student wishes, the paper/test may be placed in the student's campus mailbox, or mailed to the student. In such cases, the student should indicate the mailbox number on the paper/test, or, when mailed, supply a SASE.

- VI. Class Meeting Dates:** This course will meet on Thursday mornings, from 8-11 A.M., in Due West. Class room TBA.

- VII. Seminary Policies:** Click this link to view your syllabus contract with Erskine Seminary. [http://seminary.erskine.edu/content\\_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSstudents.pdf](http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSstudents.pdf)

## Course Outline

### **Weeks 1-4, August 29, September 5, 12 and 19:**

**Introduction/Lectures:** The Synoptics as Genre and other 'gospels'

Individual Gospel Accounts vs. *Diatessaron*

John and the Synoptics

The Synoptic Problem

The Historical Jesus in Research

Palestinian Backgrounds of the Second Temple Era

The Gospel of Mark : Author, Date and Style

Important Themes : Secrecy, Spiritual Blindness, the Cross and Discipleship, Isolation of the Messiah

Exegetical Text/Exercises for Mark: 1:23-28; 2:1-12; 3:19b-21; 4:26-29; 4:35-41; 5:1-20; 5:21-43; 6:17-29; 8:22-26; 9:14-29; 10:46-52; 16:9-20.

### **Weeks 5-8, September 26, October 3, 10, and 17:**

**Lectures:** The Gospel of Matthew : Author, Date and Style

Important Themes : OT Fulfillment, The Messiah as King, Prophecy, the Five Cycles of the New Torah

Exegetical Text/Exercises for Matthew: 2:13-21; 5:3-12, 17-20, 33-37; 6:1-18; 7:8; 11:28-30; 13:24-30, 36-43, 44-46, 47-50, 51-52; 17:24-27; 18:15-18, 23-35; 20 :1-16; 21:28-32; 23:1-36; 25:1-13, 31-46; 27:3-10, 62-66.

**Work Due** : Reflection paper # 1 is due on **October 17**.

**Test # 1:** Weeks 1-4 will be evaluated by means of an objective test on **September 26**. This test will focus on the historical background material covered in class.

**Weeks 9-12, October 24 and 31; November 7 and 14 (Note that Thanksgiving Holiday extends from November 19-27; there will be no class on November 21):**

**Lectures** : The Gospel of Luke : Author, Date and Style

Important Themes : Jesus as Universal Savior, the God of the Poor and the Unseen, the Call to the Lost, Prayer, Prophecy, the Holy Spirit

Excursis : The Use of Parables

Exegetical Text/Exercises for Luke: 1:5-80; 2:21-38, 41-52 ; 3:10-14; 4:16-30; 6:24-26 ; 7:11-17, 40-47; 8:1-3;10:29-37; 11:5-8 ; 12:13-15, 16-21; 13:10-17, 31-33; 15:1-32; 16:19-31 ; 17:7-10, 11-19; 18:1-8, 9-14; 19:1-10, 41-44; 22:35-38; 23:6-12, 27-31; 24:13-35, 44-53.

**Work Due** : Student Pericope Presentations begin, reflection paper #2 due on **November 14**.

**Week 13: November 28: Final Class Session**

In our final class session, we will hear any outstanding student presentations, and, *DV*, finish any untreated material.

**Work due:** The exegesis paper, in hard copy, will be due on **December 5** (for those taking the course for exegesis credit only. The date may be negotiable, see prof.).