COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The parables of Jesus are found in the three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and the Gospel of Thomas. We will be studying most of the parables found in these texts. In our examination of these stories, we'll consider their literary form and placement within each gospel and the ways scholars of the New Testament have analyzed these texts. Special attention will be given to recent literary analysis of the parables in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas. On the second part of the semester, this course will function as an advanced seminar and will allow for significant student involvement. Each student will be responsible for the presentation of and leading the discussion of a particular parable.

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Gain a greater understanding of the message of Jesus’ parables by examining and discussing the cultural context, the historical setting, and relevant sources that shed light upon the teachings of Jesus.
2. Explore various controversial points of interpretation and formulate tentative exegetical conclusions.
3. Apply the message of the parables to contemporary Christian living.

COURSE FORMAT AND EVALUATION:
1. This course will combine lecture and class discussion. Lecture/discussion will be based on assigned readings.
2. Assignments:
   a. Oral Midterm Exam
   b. Students are required to submit a two page summary ESSAY, double space (Times New Roman 12 pts font) on the below listed article answering the following questions:

      i. What is the author’s purpose in writing the article/chapter?
ii. What new information have you learned that has helped you to understand the biblical text better?

iii. Has the author’s contribution challenged, clarified or enhanced previous knowledge of the biblical text?

iv. Have you gained any spiritual insight into the understanding of God, his Word?


c. Jesus’ parables are rich in a variety of doctrinal, moral and pastoral content. As future deacons and catechist, one of our tasks is to awaken people’s consciousness to the Good News of the Gospel. The purpose of this assignment is to give students the opportunity to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experience. For this project consider the following scenario:

Your parish priest has asked you to awaken the community’s consciousness to the Gospel Message in one of the many Parish ministries (i.e., Youth Ministry and Confirmation, Adult Faith Formation, RCIA, Couple/Marriage Enrichment, Spiritual Enrichment and Prayer, Social Justice Committee, etc…) using Jesus’ parables. Considering the need/challenges of the community, how would you incorporate Jesus’ parable teachings to edify the community?

Students are required to present on the parables found numbers eight-twelve of the course outline.

The Project will be graded based:
- Creativity (Media, Visual Aids, Art, Music, PowerPoint, etc…)
- Doctrinal Content:
  - Your presentation must be based on sound Catholic principles; meaning you must research the parable(s) theological and historical background and actualize it for Christian living today.
- Presentation of Content
- Three page summary of your work not including bibliography.
• You must distribute an outline of your work to each student at the time of your presentation.

d. Two Quizzes
• Based on chapter 1 (Hultgren, Arland, *Parables of Jesus*).

3. All written assignments must be submitted electronically by 11:59 pm on the due date to “turnitin”. You must enroll on “turnitin” by accessing their web site at [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) and register for a new account. Your *ClassID* is 9304206 and the *Enrollment Password* is parable. You must use your UST email address. All papers must be submitted on “Word” format.

4. Late work will be accepted for a grade only if the professor grants an extension. Out of fairness to those who submit their work on time, late work will normally be graded down by one-half letter grade for each day it is late.

5. Students are required to attend class and be on time. Excessive tardiness or absences will affect the final grade.

6. The final course grade will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation and Summary</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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7. The letter grading scale is stipulated by the institutional catalogue and is summarized below:

   **Definition of Grades:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93-94</td>
<td>90-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>91-92</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>87-90</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>85-86</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>83-84</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-82</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>77-78</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>75-76</td>
<td>68-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-74</td>
<td>66-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-68</td>
<td>0-65</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**SPECIAL NEEDS:**  
Qualified students with documented disabilities who may need classroom accommodations should make an appointment with the Counseling and Disability Services. Appointments can be made by calling 713-525-2169 or 6953 or contact Jennifer Shannon, shannoj@stthom.edu. All student approved for special accommodations are required to take written exam at the Counseling and Testing Center.

**ETHICS OF AUTHORSHIP:**  
When writing your paper, you are welcome to use any form of scientific literature relevant for the subject of your study. However, you are absolutely obliged to give the exact references when you use somebody else’s thoughts and arguments.  
Plagiarisms (from the Latin word: *plagiare* – “kidnapping”: taking and using thoughts, writings and publications of another person as one’s own without naming the author or source) of any kind will not be tolerated. It will lead to nullification of your paper and bring down your overall course grade significantly.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**  

Saint Joseph Edition of the *New American Bible*: Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of all Ancient Sources.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**  
Class meets in Lecture Room 203 (Nold Bldg) on Tuesday from 7-9:45pm

1. **INTRODUCTION; PARABLE OF RECEPITIVITY BEFORE GOD**  
a. The Sower (Mt 1:9, 18-23; Mk 4:1-9, 14-20; Lk 8:4-15; H, pp. 181-199)  
   - Becoming Jesus’ Disciple (Lk 14:28-30).

2. **PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM**  
a. The Seed Growing Secretly (Mk 4:26-29; H, pp. 385-390)  
b. The Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19; H, pp. 392-402)  
c. The Leaven (Mt 13:33; Lk 13:20-21; H, pp. 403-408)  
d. The Treasure in the Field (Mt 13:44; H, pp. 409-416)  
e. The Pearl of Great Price (Mt 13:45-46; H, 416-422)

3. **PARABLES OF FINAL JUDGMENT**  
b. The Dragnet (Mt 13:47-50; H, pp. 303-308)  
c. The Final Judgment (Mt 25:31-36; H, pp. 309-327)
4. PARABLES OF FORGIVENESS
   a. The Two Debtors (Lk 7:36-50; H, pp. 212-217)
   b. The Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:21-35; H, pp. 21-32)

5. PARABLE OF MERCY OF ONE’S NEIGHBOR
   a. The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31; H, pp. 110-116)

6. PARABLES ON PRAYER
   a. The Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5-13; H, pp. 225-233)
   b. The Importunate Widow (Lk 18:1-8; H, pp. 252-260)

7. PARABLES ON HUMILITY
   a. The Places of Honor at a Banquet (Lk 14:7-11)
   b. The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk 18:10-14; H, pp. 118-127)

8. PARABLES ON GOD’S INVITATION (STUDENT PRESENTATIONS)
   a. The Great Supper (Lk 14:15-24; H, pp. 332-340)
   b. The Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1-14; H, pp. 341-349)
   c. The Wicked Tenants (Mt 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-18; H, pp. 351-378)

9. PARABLES ON REPENTANCE
   a. The Lost Sheep (Lk 18:12-14; Lk 15:3-7; H, pp. 46-62)
   b. The Lost Coin (Lk 15:8-10; H, pp. 63-69)
   c. The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32; H, pp. 70-87)
   d. The Barren Fig Tree (Lk 13:6-9; H, pp. 241-246)
   e. The Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32; H, pp. 218-225)

10. PARABLES ON THE PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE AND LIVING BEFORE GOD
    b. The Watchful Servants (Lk 12:35-40; Mk 13:34-37; H, pp. 262-270)

11. PARABLES ON RESPONSIBILITY AND GIFTS
    a. The Pounds (Lk 19:12-27; H, pp. 282-290)
    b. The Talents (Mt 25:14-30; H, pp. 271-280)

12. PARABLES OF WISDOM
    a. The Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1-9; H, pp. 146-154)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:


