University of St. Thomas
SYNOPTIC GOSPELS
THEO 3354-A
Fall 2016
Doherty Library 009

♦ Mission Statement

We are the University of St. Thomas, the Catholic university in the heart of Houston. We are committed to the Catholic intellectual tradition and the dialogue between faith and reason. By pursuing excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, we embody and instill in our students the core values of our founders, the Basilian Fathers: goodness, discipline, and knowledge.

We foster engagement in a diverse, collaborative community. As a comprehensive university grounded in the liberal arts, we educate students to think critically, communicate effectively, succeed professionally, and lead ethically.

♦ Course Details

• Instructor: Rev. Dempsey Rosales-Acosta S.S.L., S.T.D.

• Email: drosale@stthom.edu

• Office Hours: 8:30 am - 10:45 am, 2:00 - 5:15 pm on TTH; 9:00 am - 12:10 pm and 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm on MW., and by appointment (use the email).

• Office: Hughes House #201

• Weight/Times: 3 credits (3-0-0): Tuesday & Thursday from 5:30 to 6:45 pm

1. Course Description

This course studies the Gospels according to Mark, Matthew, and Luke in greater depth than could be accomplished in the introductory course on Holy Scriptures (THEO 1301). It will
examine the different perspectives of each of these Gospels, as well as the significant elements and themes they share in common. This exploration will involve the examinations of topics like the synoptic problem (why are these Gospels so similar yet so different?), source, form, redaction criticism, methods, and results of scholarly study of them. The course will be a practical exercise of synoptic reading or exegesis of the narratives of the Passion of the Lord and other selected texts.

This course welcomes students of all faith traditions and religious backgrounds or lack thereof (including those who were raised in non-religious contexts) as we explore together how these writings reflect the concerns of Jews and Christians and their cultural importance.

2. Learning Objectives (SLO)

Regarding the didactic objectives that I aim to attain in this course, I present them in three groups. The first one portrays the general goals that served as pattern in the designing of the course and its exposition in class. The second group of objectives highlights the skills that are not exclusive of the study of Scripture. This aspect of goals emphasizes that skills that can be used or applied to any field in Humanities and Sciences, namely, research, writing, use of primary and secondary sources. The third group is a final corollary that summarizes my main didactic goal in “verbs” that express actions that can be assessed and evaluated objectively in the exams or papers.

2.1 Learning Objectives: Content

This course has been designed to give students the following opportunities:

♦ To gain familiarity with the varied contents, canonical arrangements, and social/historical contexts of the Synoptic Gospels.

♦ To develop critical and academic skills for reading closely and interpreting biblical texts.

♦ To apply various scholarly approaches for understanding the theories or hypothesis that try to explain the Synoptic problem.

♦ Demonstrate Biblical literacy:
  
  • Identify structural features of the Synoptic texts.
  
  • Recount in chronological order the biblical narrative of the Synoptic Gospels.

♦ Identify factors that influence Biblical interpretation
  
  • Identify the impact of historical events on the writing and theology of the different Gospels.
• Identify the various authors of the Synoptic Gospels, their concerns and strategies (including genre), bias, dates, cultural and social context.

• Describe the various Biblical genres manifested in the Synoptic Gospels, providing examples.

• Explore presuppositions of our culture.

• Identify factors that influence reading strategies of the Synoptic Gospels.

2.2. Learning Objectives: Transferable Skills

• Write an effective argument using only primary sources (biblical text): research paper.

• Write an effective argument integrating research from secondary sources: research paper.

• Engage in professional and respectful discussion and behavior.

• Reflect on your own development as a student

2.3. Corollary: at the end of the semester the students will be able to:

• Explain how the Synoptic Gospels developed: Biblical Canon and the theories of composition.

• Describe the narrative structure, content, and theological themes of the Synoptic Gospels.

• Compare the multiple voices found in the Synoptic Gospels.

• Analyze how earlier texts and traditions are reconfigured by later texts in the Synoptic Gospels.

• Compose clear and coherent biblical interpretations.

3. Required Texts/Readings

a. A Bible (it is accepted in different languages and versions).

b. Primary Sources for the Synoptic Gospels:


It is not required to buy these Synoptic Editions of the Gospels, we can use photocopies of some selected pages.

c. Various photocopied articles and handouts provided by the professor will be posted on Blackboard.

d. Writing a research Paper. This book, consisting of handouts for writing the research papers, is not available in the book store but it will be posted on the Blackboard.


f. **Obligatory readings** of articles will be posted on BB. Those readings function as supplements of the exegetical material given during the classes.

**4. Approach and Assessment**

- The course will have three (3) main evaluations: each evaluation will have the following value:

  Exam 1 = 30 %
  
  Research Paper = 30 %
  
  Final Exam = 30 %
  
  Class attendance = 10 %

- **The tests are not cumulative.**

- Two evaluations will be written exams, including the final test. One evaluation will be a research paper because this course is designated as a “writing course.” The topic and specifications regarding the Research Paper will be posted as a separate article on Blackboard. Regarding the Pesach Project, the detailed information will be given during the semester.

- The grading scale is the usual one at UST: 90, 80,70,60. In detail:

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• Attendance IS REQUIRED. Be prompt. After every week’s worth of absences (2 for TTH courses, 3 for MWF), a next absence will lower your final grade one step (B to B-, etc.). Please be punctual for class, to be present for the roll. It is your responsibility, if you are tardy, to remove an absence at the end of class that same day. Removal of an absence thereafter will require a written excuse on a medical agency’s Letterhead.

• After every week’s worth of absences (2 for TTH courses, 3 for MWF), a next absence will lower your final grade one step (B to B-, etc.).

• Tests must be taken at the times they are scheduled.

• It is a UST requirement that no paper be submitted to more than one instructor without prior written agreement.

• MLA students or Graduate students will write one research paper and two take home exams in order to fulfill the writing level required for a graduate level.

• If opportunities to extra-credit will be given, the extra-credit won't surpass the total value of 4% of the class grade. The extra-credits DO NOT substitute the main evaluations of the semester. The maximum value of an extra-credit is 2.5 points.

5. Code of Honor

The Students in this course are expected to be familiar with and follow this basic Academic Honor Code. According to this code, the students of the University of St. Thomas are expected to:

• Refrain from cheating, including plagiarism.

• Refrain from lying.

• Express opinions with civility and with consideration for the opinions of others.

• Respect shared intellectual property and resources.

• Promote the importance of the honor code in all their interactions for the benefit of the learning community.

• Refrain from doing anything that will embarrass yourselves and your families.

• Everything that you do, must be for the major glory of God: Ad maiorem Dei gloriam.

Academic honesty and integrity is essential to the academic enterprise and the College community. All written work submitted must be your own. Guidelines for Research Writing defines plagiarism as the failure to give credit where credit is due: “To plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written something original which in fact you have borrowed from
another without acknowledging that other person's work” (Guidelines for Research Writing, 2002, p. 5). If you borrow ideas or distinctive phrases, or include direct quotations in your written assignments, you must acknowledge your source(s) properly by in-text citation or footnote. It is also wrong to copy another person’s work or to submit an assignment previously handed in for credit in another course. Students guilty of plagiarism will receive a grade of zero for the assignment and will be brought to the attention of the College’s Discipline Committee.

Syllabus: Fall 2016

August 2016


30 T Synoptic Problem: statistics, terminology, theories, Quelle. Readings: Perkins, Introduction, 54-95

September 2016

1 TH Mark’s Gospel: authorship; relation to Paul and Peter; date and audience; Genre; narrative shape of the Gospel. Discipleship; Jesus in Mark’s Gospel; the community implied. Readings: Perkins, Introduction, 126-163

6 T  Mark’s Gospel: continuation

8 TH Mark’s Gospel: continuation


15 TH Matthew’s narrative shape; literary features; characters in the Gospel; Jesus in the Gospel and the community implied.

20 T Matthew’s Gospel: continuation


29 TH  **1st Exam**


**October 2016**


6 TH  The passion narrative in the Synoptic Gospels: introduction and orientation of each Gospel toward the passion of the Lord. Synoptic methodology of reading

**10-11 FALL BREAK**

13 TH  Introduction to the passion narrative: Mt 26,1-5/Mk 14,1-2/Lk 22,1-2. The anointing at Bethany Mt 26,6-13/ Mk 14,3-9

15 W  The anointing at Bethany Mt 26,6-13/ Mk 14,3-9: continuation

18 T  Judas’ betrayal: Mt 26,14-16/Mk 14,10-11; Lk 22,3-6.

20 TH  Preparation for the Passover: Mt 26,17-19/ Mk 14,12-16/ Lk 22,7-13.

25 T  The Passover supper and the foretelling of Judas’ betrayal: Mt 26,20-25; Mk 14,17- 21; Lk 22,21-23.

27 TH  The Institution of the Eucharist: Mt 26,26-29/Mk 14,22-25/Lk 22,19-20.

**November 2016**

1 T  The Institution of the Eucharist: continuation


8 T  Jesus and his Disciples at the Gethsemane: Mt 26,36-46/Mk 14,32-42/Lk 22,39-46

10 TH  Gethsemane: continuation.

15 T  The arrest of Jesus: Mt 26,47-56/Mk 14,43-52/Lk 22,47-53.

  **Research paper due**

17 TH  Peter’s Denial: Mt 26,69-75/ Mk 14,66-72/ Lk 22,55-62

22 T  The Crucifixion: Mt 27,32- 38/ Mk 15,20b-27/ Lk 23,26-35a.

  **23-27 THANKSGIVING BREAK**

29 T  Jesus’ Death: Mt 27,45-56/ Mk 15,33-41 /Lk 23,35-43. The burial of Jesus: Mt 27,57-61 / Mk 15,42-47 / Lk 23,50-56.
December 2016

1 TH Jesus’ Death (continuation) and Review.

**Final Exam:** Dec 8 (of 2016) 4:30-7:00 PM

**Classroom:** Doherty Library 009