Course Description
The four Gospels are key books of the Bible, since they narrate the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Each Gospel has a unique perspective and a unique purpose. This course explains the background, the structure, the main contents, and the major themes of each Gospel.

Objective
In this course, we would like to accomplish the following:
1. We hope you will learn the key information about the background, the contents, and the major themes of each of the Gospels.
2. We hope you grow in your desire to know Jesus better and follow Him more faithfully, as you study the Gospels.
3. We hope that you will apply to your own life the lessons learned as you study the four Gospels, especially that you come to know Jesus better and follow Him more faithfully.

Class Dates: Tuesdays March 13, 20, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1, 8

Class Time: 7:00 pm - 9:45pm
*Attendance is required at all classes. All absences must be approved by the instructor.

Course Grading
Your grade will be determined as follows:
- Midterm Exam: 40%
- Final Exam: 50%
- Class Presentations and Participation: 10%

Format of Presentations
The format of the class will be lectures, discussion of assigned scriptural passages and readings.

Format of Examinations
There will be a mid-term examination (date to be announced) and final examination on Tuesday, May 8, 2018.

Required Textbooks
- New American Bible will work, but access to a NRSV will aid your study of the Gospels.

Class One: Introduction to the Gospels
Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Reading Assignment:
Pre-reading assignment before the start of the Class One.

Chapters 1 through 5, Brown
- The Nature and Origin of the New Testament
- How to Read the New Testament?
- The Text of the New Testament
- The Political and Social World of New Testament Times
- The Religions and Philosophical World of New Testament Times
Class Two: The Synoptic Problem  
**Reading Assignment:**  
Read Chapter 6, Brown  
- The Literary Interdependence of the Synoptic Gospels  
- The Priority of Mark  
- The Existence of Q  
- The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark

Class Three: The Gospel of Mark  
**Reading Assignment:**  
Read Chapter 7, Brown  
Read Gospel of Mark before class and focus on the following:  
- 4: What is unique about this chapter?  
- 6:30-51 and 8:1-10: What do you make of the two multiplications of the loaves?  
- 8-9: Can you find the true “dual” center (and central question) of this gospel?  
- 8:27-33, 9:30-37; 10:32-45: Look at the following context of these passion predictions and what does this tell us about the Markan portrait of the disciples?  
- 12:38-13:2: What additional information does placing the story of the widow’s mite in its wider context tell us?  
- 14:17-15:47: What mysterious reversal is happening here?  
- 16:1-8: Why might the original text of Mk 16 have ended on verse 8?

Class Four: The Gospel of Matthew  
**Reading Assignment:**  
Read Chapter 8, Brown  
Read the following from the Gospel of Matthew:  
- Chapters 1-2 (Matthew’s Infancy Narrative)  
- 5-7: Sermon on the Mount, teaching on prayer, antitheses; call to perfection/greater righteousness.  
- 10-11: Mission and Discipleship  
- 16-18: Peter and the Church (ekklesia)  
- 23: Pharisees and who has the legitimate authority/ Matthew 25:31-46: Matthew’s eschatology and his teaching comes full circle  
- 28:1-20: The risen Jesus and the Great Commission

**Reading Assignment:**  
Read Chapter 9, Brown  
Read the following sections from the Gospel of Luke  
- 4: 16-30: Inaugural Proclamation that is programmatic of Jesus’ Ministry in Galilee  
- 9: Sending out of disciples and journey to Jerusalem  
- 10:25-42; 16:19-31; 18:9-14; 19: Parables and Table Fellowship  
- 22-23: Compare how the Last Supper, Passion and Death in Luke differs from Mark and Matthew  
Class Six: The Gospel of John

Reading Assignments:  
Read Chapter 10, Brown

Read the following from the Gospel of John

- 1:1-18: Magnificent Prologue to the Word Made Flesh
- 2:1-25; 3-4: The Book of Signs, Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman
- 5-6: From “Signs” to authentic Faith
- 9: From blindness to sight (Unbelief to Faith)
- 10:7-10: Jesus as Good Shepherd
- 11: The raising of Lazarus/ Jesus as “The Resurrection and the Life”
- 12:20-50: Transition from public ministry to more intimate revelation (The Book of Glory)
- 13-14: The Footwashing (what can it mean?) and revelation of Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- 15: Jesus as the true vine. What is the one commandment of Jesus?
- 17 and 18:4-11, 36-37: Jesus’ abiding union with the Father (and us)/ Jesus’ Prayer and the Paraclete.
- 19:11, 25-30: Compare with the Arrest, Passion and Death in Mt, Mk, and Lk (see handout) - Jesus as the Supreme Revealer of God

Class Seven: Major Distinctions between John and the Synoptic Gospels

Reading Assignment:
Handout to distributed at the April 24 session

Class Eight: Review/Questions & Answer/Final Examination

May 8, 2018