

'Gospels' (4NT5200S) – 3 hours Fall 2020

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR

Dr Bruce Lowe received his first doctorate in Analytical Chemistry and taught, consulted and researched in a university setting over several years in both Chemistry and Chemical Engineering departments. He then completed his MDiv at RTS Orlando, becoming an ordained Presbyterian minister and working in university ministry, as a youth pastor and in church revitalization. He recently completed a doctorate in New Testament Studies, where his thesis has focused on the cultural backdrop to Romans. Bruce has a special interest in hermeneutics (the process of interpretation), and is keen to not simply teach the contents of the gospels, but equip students for a lifetime of fruitful learning & growth. Part of this involves learning how to teach the gospels, a major focus of this course.

SUBJECT TIME: **Monday** 1-4pm

OFFICE HOURS: **Monday**, 11-1pm & 4-5pm; **Tuesday** 12-2pm. Please email or text for appointment time.

CONTACT DETAILS: blowe@rts.edu; 678 447 3526 (cell).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Knowing the real Jesus has been the quest of many people over the centuries, and though often poorly conceived, it is rightly the quest of every Christian today. This course will examine the four accounts of Jesus' life, in order to gain a four dimensional picture of our Lord. More than this though, by developing sensitivity to how each account was crafted, we will gain a better sense of how to apply each gospel today. Students will thus be helped in both their knowledge of the gospels, and in tools for understanding them better.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. That students will come to a clearer personal understanding of Jesus.
2. That students will understand the unique contributions of Mark, Matthew, Luke & John.
3. That students will be in a position to teach from any of the four gospels with confidence.

READING

Craig Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (IVP, 2009) ISBN 9780805444827

Kurt Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (American Bible Soc., 1982) ISBN 9780826705006 [or 9781598561777 for Greek/English version if you wish]

David Rhoads *et al*, *Mark as Story* (3rd ed., Fortress, 2012) ISBN 9780800699093

Robert Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus* (P&R, 1995)
ISBN 9780875524559

ASSESSMENT

- 4 x 5%** “Big Ideas” (on selected passages from each gospels); **due dates**, see below¹
- 2 x 10%** Two-page Critical Book Reviews of Rhoads & Strimple; **due date**, see below²
- 30%** Assignment/Paper (**due date**, see below).³
- 30%** Final Exam – in class (**see below**).

WHEN IS THE COURSE BEING RUN?

Monday **24th August** to Monday **7th December**; **1pm to 4pm**

¹ This involves producing a sentence, which summarizes the purpose of the selected passage, which must be posted on Canvas by **SATURDAY NIGHT** prior to class. You must also then interact with two other people’s ideas on Canvas. **A letter grade will be allocated for each big idea, and these will be averaged at the end to give you a final grade out of 20%.**

² A good critical book review should include 4 sections: 1) A summary of what the book covers (no more than half a page, often less); 2) Things you agree with and why; 3) Things you disagreed with and why; 4) A brief overall comment on the value of this book. Remember that the goal of a book review is to prove to me that you have read the book properly. So you will want to do things that help. This may include quoting actual things that you agree with and things that you did not. Detailed interaction at points as well as broad sweeping ideas will help convince me that you have read the book well.

³ I will be suggesting some topics, but I am also open (and glad!) to approving a topic of your choice. Because of it being almost a third of the course assessment, I will be expecting this to be a genuine research assignment interacting with the opinions of others in both commentaries and journal articles. A good critical essay should 1) have a clear structure, reflecting the question being addressed (SUCH AS...); 2) begin with a general overview of the subject and others opinions (INTRODUCTION/GENERAL STEP); 3) focus more closely on a text or opinion for critical review (REFINING STEP); 4) draw a conclusion as to how the question has been answered in light of this essay (CONCLUSION). You should look at having at least 10 good references in your essay. **THIS ASSIGNMENT SHOULD BE BETWEEN 10 AND 15 PAGES single spaced (slightly longer allowable).**

General Outline

Week	Date	Assessment/HW Due	Class Lectures
1 A 1 B 1 C	A24		Window/Mirror/Picture/Dialogue Interpreting a Painting (Part 1) Interpreting a Painting (Part 2)
2 A 2 B 2 C	A31	0% "Big idea" (test run)	"The Demoniac(s)" Exercise Considering the Critical Approach (Part 1) Considering the Critical Approach (Part 2)
Labor Day Holiday (Sept. 7 th) No Class			
3 A 3 B 3 C	S14	10% Review of <i>Rhoads</i> HW Read Mark 1-6 (3x)	Considering the Critical Approach (Part 3) Mark (Part 1: <i>Purpose & Chs 1 & 16</i>) Mark (Part 2: <i>1.21-34</i>)
4 A 4 B 4 C	S21	HW Read Zech 14 (3x)	Mark (Part 3: <i>Ch 4</i>) Mark (Part 4: <i>Ch 8</i>) Mark (Part 5: <i>11.20-25</i>)
5 A 5 B 5 C	S28	5% "Big idea"	Mark (Part 6: <i>13.32-37 & 14.32-42</i>) Mark (Part 7: <i>Chs 14-16</i>) Matthew (Part 1)
6 A 6 B 6 C	O5	HW Read Matthew	Matthew (Part 2) Matthew (Part 3) Matthew (Part 4)
Mid-term Break October 12-16			
7 A 7 B 7 C	O19	5% 'Big Idea'	Matthew (Part 5) Matthew (Part 6) Matthew (Part 7)
8 A 8 B 8 C	O26	HW Read John	John (Part 1) John (Part 2) John (Part 3)
9 A 9 B 9 C	N2	10% Review of <i>Strimple</i>	John (Part 4) John (Part 5) John (Part 6)
10A 10B 10C	N9	5% 'Big Idea'	John (Part 7) Luke (Part 1) Luke (Part 2)
11A 11B 11C	N16	HW Read Luke	Luke (Part 3) Luke (Part 4) Luke (Part 5)
12A 12B 12C	N23	5% 'Big Idea'	Luke (Part 6) Luke (Part 7) Luke (Part 8)
13A			Beyond the Gospels (Part 1)

13B 13C	N30	30% Assignment / Paper due	Beyond the Gospels (Part 2) Course Summary
	D7	30% Final exam (in class)	

**Addendum to course syllabus for “sync” students
who will take the course live on Zoom**

1. Reading Requirements

The reading requirements for the course will remain the same no matter whether the student is live on Zoom or live in the classroom.

2. Discussions

Sync students will be required to complete 7 student-to-professor interactions and 5 student-to-student interactions for the course. The student-to-student interaction will be the “Big Idea” assignments (see above). The only difference for sync students will be that the “0% Big Idea” assignment will be mandatory and factored into the overall grade for “Big Ideas”.

a) **Student-to-Professor Interactions. Due date: December 7 by 11:59pm.**

b) **Student-to-Student Interactions (5x “Big Idea”). Dates as above.**

2. Assessment (for sync students only)

5 x 5% “Big Ideas” (on selected passages from each gospels); **due dates, see above**

5% **7 Student to Professor interactions.**

2 x 5% Two-page Critical Book Reviews of Rhoads & Strimple; **due date, see above**

30% Assignment/Paper (**due date, see above**).

30% Final Exam – in class (**see below**).

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lengthy exegetical essay. 2. Informal class presentations of outcomes to group discussion
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close interaction with Gospels. 2. Instructor to address key elements of key Greek words. 3. Cultural background to the books covered in detail.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reformed doctrine is highlighted in dialogue with current alternative perspectives.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Singing worship song in class. 2. Group discussion of how text applies to life at various points.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The very study of Jesus' life and work is intrinsically world-view forming.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on evangelism and also (in Matthew 5) on some challenging elements to Reformed tradition.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading, and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in	Moderate/ Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course is heavily orientated towards preaching with several assignments requiring initial sermon preparation.

	spiritual maturity, concern for non-Xns.		<p>2. Some worship songs of ancient origin will be sung together.</p> <p>3. Practical illustrations of instructor's experience.</p> <p>4. A strong emphasis will be preaching the Gospels within the church and the world.</p>
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Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalogue [2017-19], p. 52-60; and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook, p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog pp. 52-60)