

**GOSPELS NT 5200**  
**Fall 2022: RTS Houston**

**Note:** This syllabus is the “mini-syllabus” and is not to be confused w/ the large syllabus that contains all the class-lecture notes, biblio, various articles, etc. This large syllabus will be posted later on Canvas and is needed for all the class lectures. For the first class, the student should be prepared w/ either a hard-copy of the large syllabus or have it downloaded to one’s laptop.

**PROFESSOR**

\* Dr. Bob Cara (technically, Robert J. Cara, Ph.D.)

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

\* Kruger, Michael, ed. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. Crossway, 2016. Pages 29–135 (Matt, Mark, Luke, John); 581–91 (Synoptic Problem); 593–602 (Use of OT in NT).

\* Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the NT*. Rev. ed. Eerdmans, 1993. Pages 31–245 (Synoptic Gospels); 249–344 (Fourth Gospel).

\* Cara, Robert J. *Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul: Covenantal Nomism Versus Reformed Covenantal Theology* (Christian Focus / Mentor, 2017). Pages 207–72 (Overview of Judaism’s Literary Sources).

\* Williams, Peter J. *Can We Trust the Gospels?* Crossway, 2018.

\* *Trinity Psalter: Words Only Edition*. Crown & Covenant, 1994. (Used for devotions and singing in class.)

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

\* Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Eerdmans, 2003.

\* Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. 2d ed. IVP Academic, 2007.

**PURPOSE OF COURSE**

\* The over arching aim is to provide *tools* to the student in order that one might better interpret / apply the Gospels to one's self, their church and their world. (See below for relationship of a variety of course objectives related to the MDiv student learning outcomes.)

\* Learn narrative content of Gospels.

\* Learn major biblical theological categories in the Gospels along with methodology to do further biblical theological interpretation.

\* Learn best of Reformed / evangelical scholarship concerning interpretation /

application of Gospels (e.g., parable theory).

\* Learn enough about critical views to:

- 1) Utilize common grace insights in critical commentaries.
- 2) Provide an intelligent global critique of critical theories.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Reading

- \* Kruger, ed., *A Biblical Theological Introduction to the NT*, 29–135, 581–602.
- \* Ladd, *A Theology of the NT*, rev. ed., 31–348.
- \* Cara, *Cracking the Foundation*, 207–72.
- \* Williams, *Can We Trust the Gospels?*, 15–140.
- \* Gospels (read twice)

### 2. Reading Questions (RQ) (Kruger, Ladd, Cara, Williams)

- \* Do not hand in but will be on tests.
- \* Kruger RQ's as appropriate w/ lectures.
- \* Ladd RQ's as appropriate w/ lectures.
- \* Cara and Williams RQ's in mega-syllabus.
- \* Cara will not answer these questions directly until *after* the appropriate test. You may / should enquire of fellow students *in this class*.

### 3. Lecture Review Questions (LRQ)

- \* Located at beginning of each lecture.
- \* Do not hand in but will be on tests.
- \* Cara will not answer these questions directly (except as part of lecture) until *after* the appropriate test. You may / should enquire of fellow students *in this class*.

### 4. Daily Quizzes on outlines and chap identification

- \* Possible quiz questions given in advance
- \* Covers Bible content
- \* Quizzes are cumulative.
- \* Drop one quiz, no make-ups.

### 5. Paper

- \* This should be a serious research paper of at least several serious commentaries (both conservative and critical) and a few BTs. Must also footnote at least one serious journal article. Note helpful annotated biblio at end of Cara mega-syllabus.
- \* 10-15 typed pages
- \* Format: as if appearing (*not* submitting to) in a scholarly journal. Use *SBL* standards; included in *SBL Handbook of Style* (2d ed), the key section is 6.2–3. See “Real Paper Comments” following Lec 1.

- \* Three options
  - 1) Study of any major or minor theme in one of the gospels. Cannot use a theme Cara has covered.
  - 2) Exegesis of a pericope highlighting its relationship to the rest of that Gospel.
  - 3) Comparison of synoptic triple tradition. Must be done w/ knowledge of Greek.
- \* Use secondary sources, but primarily it is *your* study. Please “theologize” and have a “point” (i.e., thesis) to your paper.
- \* Due on ???, severe penalty for lateness (32.2 f/s/s).

#### 6. Psalter

- \* Lose points if don’t bring and sing.

### GRADES

1. Two Tests–50% of grade (mid-term is 25%; final is 25%).
  - \* 85% of tests will be *verbatim* questions from the RQ's and LRQ's. The remaining 15% will be miscellaneous questions from lectures, readings, and cumulative quizzes.
  - \* Kruger and Ladd RQ's will match lectures. Approximately, half will be on mid-term and half on final.
  - \* Cara RQ's will be on mid-term.
  - \* Williams RQ's will be on final.
  - \* Tests are not cumulative (except for any questions related to quizzes).
2. Paper–35%.
  - \* Due on ???.
3. Daily Quizzes–10% of grade.
  - \* Quizzes are cumulative.
4. Reading of Gospels Twice–5% of grade.
  - \* On test, student will report concerning his reading of the Gospels.
  - \* Must have read 100% to get any credit.
  - \* 2.5% on mid-term and 2.5% on final.
5. Psalter.
  - \* Lose points if don’t bring and sing.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes

**Course: Gospels**  
**Professor: Cara**  
**Campus: Houston**  
**Date: Fall 2022**

<b>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</b> <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> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<b>Rubric</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong</li> <li>• Moderate</li> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<b>Mini-Justification</b>
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.	<b>Strong</b>	Theology of Gospels. Explanation and response to critical/liberal views in lectures and readings of Cara and Williams. Significant academic paper.
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.)	<b>Strong</b>	Major part of class is exegeting gospels texts. Original languages used in class and encouraged in academic paper. It's a BIBLE class!
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	<b>Moderate</b>	Traditional Reformed categories are used, e.g., Sermon on the Mount, three uses of the law. Some references to creeds.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	<b>Moderate</b>	Psalm singing in class. Personal application is made in class to many gospels texts.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	<b>Minimal</b>	Critical views are analyzed from a Reformed view.
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.)	<b>Strong</b>	Common grace use of critical scholars is discussed in class and required on paper. <i>Cracking Foundation</i> is hopefully a guide to winsome polemics.
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 spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	<b>Minimal</b>	Course is designed to aid preaching of many texts, although other aspects of pastoral ministry are only tangentially included.