

# 'Gospels' (4NT5200) – 3 hours Fall 2023

## 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 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** 6-9pm

OFFICE HOURS: Office Hours: **Monday**, 5-6pm; **Tuesday** 4-6pm. Please email or text for appointment time.

CONTACT DETAILS: [blowe@rts.edu](mailto: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* (B&H Academic; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2022)  
ISBN 978-1087753140

Kurt Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (American Bible Soc., 2010 [**or older okay!**])  
ISBN 978-1585169429 [or 978-1598561777 for Greek/English version if  
you wish]

David Rhoads *et al*, *Mark as Story* (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 below<sup>1</sup>
- 2 x 10%** Two-page Critical Book Reviews of Rhoads & Strimple; **due date**, see below<sup>2</sup>
- 30%** Assignment/Paper (**due date**, see below).<sup>3</sup>
- 30%** Final Exam – in class (see below).

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<sup>1</sup> 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%.**

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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).**

WHEN IS THE COURSE BEING RUN?

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August to Monday <sup>th</sup> December; 6pm to 9pm

## General Outline

Week	Date	Assessment/HW Due	Class Lectures
1 A 1 B 1 C	A21		Window/Mirror/Picture/Dialogue Interpreting a Painting (Part 1) Interpreting a Painting (Part 2)
2 A 2 B 2 C	A28	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. 4 <sup>th</sup> ) No Class			
3 A 3 B 3 C	S11	10% Review of <i>Rhoads</i> HW Read Mark1-6 (3x)	Considering the Critical Approach (Part 3) Mark (Part 1: <i>Purpose &amp; Chs1 &amp;16</i> ) Mark (Part 2: <i>1.21-34</i> )
4 A 4 B 4 C	S18	HW Read Zech 14 (3x)	Mark (Part 3: <i>Ch4</i> ) Mark (Part 4: <i>Ch8</i> ) Mark (Part 5: <i>11.20-25</i> )
5 A 5 B 5 C	S25	5% "Big idea"	Mark (Part 6: <i>13.32-37&amp;14.32-42</i> ) Mark (Part 7: <i>Chs14-16</i> ) Matthew (Part 1)
6 A 6 B 6 C	O2	HW Read Matthew	Matthew (Part 2) Matthew (Part 3) Matthew (Part 4)
Mid-term Break October 9-13			
7 A 7 B 7 C	O16	5% 'Big Idea'	Matthew (Part 5) Matthew (Part 6) Matthew (Part 7)
8 A 8 B 8 C	O23	HW Read John	John (Part 1) John (Part 2) John (Part 3)
9 A 9 B 9 C	O30	10% Review of <i>Strimple</i>	John (Part 4) John (Part 5) John (Part 6)
10A 10B 10C	N6	5% 'Big Idea'	John (Part 7) Luke (Part 1) Luke (Part 2)
11A 11B	N13	HW Read Luke	Luke (Part 3) Luke (Part 4)

11C			Luke (Part 5)
12A	N20	5% 'Big Idea'	Luke (Part 6)
12B			Luke (Part 7)
12C			Luke (Part 8)
13A	N27	30% Assignment / Paper due	Beyond the Gospels (Part 1)
13B			Beyond the Gospels (Part 2)
13C			Course Summary
	D4	30% Final exam due	

### Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<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"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	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>Scripture</b>	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>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.		
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.		
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.		
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	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>Pastoral Ministry</b>	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.		

## **Extension & Zoom Policies**

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 Catalog p. 42 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 p. 42)

*Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.*