

Gospels/ NT-5200

Fall Term, 2026

I. Details

- A. Time: Tuesdays, 1PM-5PM
- B. Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger
 - 1. Email: mkruger@rts.edu
 - 2. Office: Main Administrative building
 - 3. Office hours: Feel free to stop by or make an appointment.
 - 4. TA: Faith Key : fkey@rts.edu

II. Purpose

- A. To gain familiarity with the contents of the four Gospels.
- B. To gain acquaintance with the main theories of authorship, origin, and compositional relationship of the Gospels.
- C. To understand and evaluate discerningly the main lines of historical criticism of the Gospels in the modern period.
- D. To understand the main elements of the message of Jesus, revealed in word and deed, as reflected in the unified witness of the Gospels.
- E. To recognize the distinctive emphases of each of the four Gospels, and the implications of their diversity for interpretation and proclamation.
- F. To grow in personal responsiveness to the Gospel's message: faith, repentance, humility, obedience, joy, etc.

III. Course Requirements

- A. Faithful class attendance
 - Attendance is vital: to miss one day of class is to miss four lectures
 - Expect class participation when applicable
 - Feel free to ask questions during lecture
- B. Read the four Gospels through twice in English. To signify that you have completed this reading you must submit your own outline of each Gospel on the last day of class (**December 1**). *Each* outline must be **2-3 pages** in length, **1.5 spacing**. Outlines must use at least 3 levels of standard outlining format (Roman numerals (I, II, etc.) with indentations (A.B.C., 1.2.3., etc.) following), indicate chapter and verse for each point and subpoint, and not be copied from any other source. *They must be reflective of your own efforts to summarize* and order the contents of each Gospel. Submit your outlines on Canvas. Please submit 1 document **in PDF format** containing all four outlines.
- C. Research Paper
 - Serious paper approximately **15 typed pages (1.5 spaced)** in length (20 pages max) due on **December 4** (**to the front office to be time stamped, or on canvas in PDF format**).

- Standard *SBL* format, as outlined in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (SBL Press, 2014). (Book is available in the library, but you should own your own copy). The paper should have single-spaced footnotes (not endnotes) and resemble the articles found in the standard journals; e.g., *JBL*, *JTS*, *JETS*, *NTS*, etc.
- Research paper must contain citations of at least two journal articles.
- Paper must have a properly formatted bibliography at the end.
- Paper options:
 - 1) Exegesis of a Gospels text/pericope, highlighting its distinctive contribution to the Gospel's message, taking into account both its immediate and larger historical context.
 - 2) A biblical-theological study of any major or minor theme in the four gospels.
 - 3) A historical study of an aspect of the origins of one or all of the four gospels; e.g., the date of John, the authorship of Matthew, etc.
 - 4) A resolution of an apparent contradiction (or other problem) in the four Gospels.
- Additional Note: RTS Charlotte wants to promote the writing of good research papers among the students and wants to encourage students when they write good papers. One paper from this class could be chosen as the best paper of the class. The professor will notify the student that his/her paper has been chosen. The student will then submit that paper to the dean (janderson@rts.edu) preferably in the pdf format. The paper will then be posted on the RTS Charlotte website at *Pen and Parchment: An Archive of the Best Student Papers at RTS Charlotte*.
- D. Complete the required reading in preparation for class sessions and examinations.
- E. Exams: Midterm Exam to be taken out of class anytime **between October 15 and October 24**, covering both lectures and readings through October 14, and a Final Exam covering the remaining lectures and readings (Final exams are **December 4-9**).

IV. Grading

- A. Gospel readings and outlines—10%
- B. Research Paper—30%
- C. 2 Exams—60% (30% each)

V. Textbooks

- A. Michael J. Kruger, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016).
- B. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).
- C. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, third edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
- D. Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, second edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007).
- E. Robert B. Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995).

Extensions Policy for Assignments: In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.

VI. Schedule and Required Reading Assignments

<u>Class 1—Aug 25</u> NO CLASS <u>Class 2—Sept 1</u> *Read before class Strimple, 15-126 <u>Class 3—Sept 8</u> Kruger, 581-591 Blomberg, 24-103 <u>Class 4—Sept 15</u> Ferguson, 396-440 Blomberg, 152-195 <u>Class 5—Sept 22</u> Ferguson, 440-501 Blomberg, 241-295 <u>Class 6—Sept 29</u> NO CLASS <u>Class 7—Oct 6</u> No Class – Fall Break <u>Class 8—Oct 13</u> Ferguson, 501-582 Kruger, 29-60 Ladd 31-88	<u>Class 9—Oct 20</u> NO CLASS Kruger, 61-91 Ladd, 89-132 <u>Class 10—Oct 27</u> Ladd, 133-169 <u>Class 11—Nov 3</u> NO CLASS Kruger, 93-113 Ladd, 170-211 <u>Class 12—Nov 10</u> Ladd, 249-305 <u>Class 13—Nov 17</u> <u>Class 14—Nov 24</u> Kruger, 115-135 Blomberg, 196-240 <u>Class 15—Dec 1</u> Ladd, 306-344 *Gospel Outlines due
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VII. Brief Course Overview

Part One: Gospel Criticism

- I. Old Quest
- II. No Quest
- III. New Quest
- IV. Third Quest

Part Two: Gospel Origins

- I. Intro
- II. What is a Gospel?—The Question of Genre
- III. Stage of Oral Tradition: Form Criticism
- IV. Stage of Written Sources: Source Criticism
- V. Stage of Final Composition: Redaction Criticism
- VI. Stage of Scribal Transmission: Textual Criticism
- VII. Stage of Church History: Canonical Criticism

Part Three: Gospel Interpretation (longest section of course)

- I. Aids to Interpretation
 - A. Perspective on the Text: Biblical Theology vs. Systematic Theology
 - B. Context of the Text: Understanding the Background
 - C. Meaning of the Text: Historical, Modern, and Typological
 - D. Historicity of the Text: What about Contradictions?
- II. Overview and Analysis of the Four Gospels
 - A. Matthew
 - B. Mark
 - C. Luke
 - D. John

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT5200 Gospels
 Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Fall 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<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>		➤ 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	- Theology of Gospels - Historical background of Gospels - Significant paper on the Gospels
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	- Focus on exegesis and understanding the text - Use of original languages - Application to modern circumstances
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	- Discuss aspects of Reformed theology in these books, such as eschatology, kingdom of God, and structure of the covenants
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	- Texts of Gospels applied to the lives of the students
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.	Moderate	- Content of Gospels applied to various aspects of life (e.g., church, work, society, etc.)
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit)	Moderate	- Survey of critical scholarship and its relevance/application for

	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.)		evangelicals; students are taught good aspects and bad aspects of critical thinking. - Other theological approaches are surveyed and critiqued in a respectful manner.
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.	Moderate	- Preaching applications are made regularly from Gospels texts. - Content in the course leads students to worship, encourages them to consider their shepherding role, and includes some application to broader cultural issues, - Growth in spiritual maturity and an increased concern for non-Christians goals for the course

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Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
 - a. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 - b. Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 - c. If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
2. The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
3. The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
4. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a. Sign in with the proctor.
 - b. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c. Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d. Log in to your Canvas account.
 - e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
 - f. The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g. The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h. The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i. Sign out with the proctor.
5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.