

Gospels and Acts

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Spring 2022

Class Information

Class Number: NT1313
Meeting Times: TTh 1:30-2:50
Meeting Location: Zoom

Instructor: Prof. Sung Soo Hong

Email Address: sshong@lpts.edu
Office Location: Schlegel 300
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course is part of a two-semester introduction to the New Testament. We will study the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in their political, cultural, and literary contexts. We will also explore scholarly methods and strategies of interpretation including historical-critical, literary, feminist, womanist, and gender studies. Through exegetical workshops within this course, you will become familiar with resources for exegesis and hone your exegetical skills. Further, we will discuss how to “translate” our academic study of the Gospels and Acts into ministry practice. Ultimately, you will learn how to read the Gospels and Acts in ways that are academically sound and ethically responsible.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will have read the Gospels and Acts with critical introductions, commentaries, and other pertinent resources. Moreover, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with the content, organization, and distinctive features of each of the Gospels and Acts.
- Analyze and exposit passages from the Gospels and Acts, taking into consideration their historical contexts.
- Competently use major tools for exegetical study of the Gospels and Acts, including print or digital concordances, lexicons, Bible dictionaries, a synopsis [parallel renderings] of the four Gospels, journal articles, monographs, and commentaries.
- Evaluate existing interpretations of the Gospels and Acts, especially those in ministry resources (e.g., bible study curriculums) and mass media (e.g., newspapers; YouTube videos).
- Produce your own interpretations that are academically sound and ethically responsible.

Relationship to Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

- “Students will gain knowledge and understanding of the Bible, and the ability to use critical skills and educated imagination to interpret it in contemporary social and cultural contexts” (MDiv Student Learning Outcome 1).
- “Students will be able to interpret Scripture critically and imaginatively” (MAR Student Learning Outcome 1).
- “Students will demonstrate the ability to reflect critically and self-critically on relationships between Christian faith and various forms of injustice” (MDiv Student Learning Outcome 4).

Zoom Meeting Information

- Join our Zoom meeting via the following link: <https://lpts-edu.zoom.us/j/88924888670?pwd=NEFNWW90cCtTVXBIMUEwaDRJdW9GQT09>

- Meeting ID: 889 2488 8670
- Passcode: LPTSGA22
- One tap mobile
+13126266799,,88924888670# US (Chicago)
+19292056099,,88924888670# US (New York)

Textbooks

The instructor's presentation files and all reading assignments will be made available on Canvas except the ones from the following required books:

- **“JANT”**: Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). ISBN: 978-0190461850. List price: \$39.95; Amazon: \$32.99. The Kindle edition (\$16.17) is okay.
- **“GP”**: Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., ed., *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*, 5th ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992). ISBN: 0840774842. List price: 39.99; Amazon: \$24.49. Do not buy the Kindle edition. Please bring GP to every class session in Units 2-5.

Recommended:

- Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds., *Women's Bible Commentary: Twentieth-Anniversary Edition*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012). [BS 491.3 .W66 2012 \(e-book\)](#)
- Frank J. Matera. *New Testament Christology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999). [BT 202 .M3783 1999](#) See Appendix B below.
- Luke Timothy Johnson, *Jesus and the Gospels* (Chantilly: The Great Courses. 2004). This is an audiobook with an accompanying PDF guide.

Course Requirements

• Attendance and Participation

- According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify me of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences may result in a low or failing grade in the course. Please plan to participate actively in the class. See “Attendance Policy” in Appendix C below for more information.

• Unit Quizzes

- There will be an open-book quiz on Canvas after each of the first five units of this course. There will be no quiz on Unit 6. The quizzes will cover all lectures, assigned readings, and class discussions within the units. See Canvas for details.

• History Assignment

- This exercise will help you think like a historian. Detailed instructions on Canvas will include a bibliography. Consulting scholarly resources in that bibliography, you will write a short paper (2 pages in length) on one of the following three topics: “The Son of Man”; “The Pharisees”; “Messiah.”

• Gospel Parallels Assignment

- This is an open-book exercise, designed to familiarize you with GP. Although it is in the form of a quiz on Canvas, you can take it up to 5 times, and only the highest score will count. Detailed instructions on Canvas will include a video that explains how to use GP.
- **Exercise in Redaction Criticism**
 - Learning to do redaction criticism will help you read the Gospels in more nuanced ways. Redaction criticism examines how the authors of the Gospels edited their sources during their writing process. The word “redaction” means “editing.” In this assignment, you will write an analysis (2 pages in length, not counting bibliography) of the healing of the paralytic pericope (Mark 2:1-12 | Matt 9:1-8 | Luke 5:17-26; §52 in Throckmorton’s *Gospel Parallels*) consulting scholarly resources in the bibliography within the instructions on Canvas.
- **Christology Papers**
 - Writing two Christology papers will help you think like an exegete. Each paper should be 3 pages in length, not counting bibliography. The term “Christology” refers to a thought about Christ—the identity, mission, words, or deeds of Christ. For your first paper, choose one of the following three Gospels: Mark, Matthew, and Luke. You will examine its Christology, consulting scholarly resources in the bibliography within the instructions on Canvas. The second paper will discuss the Christology in the Gospel of John.
- **Exegesis Paper in Two Phases**
 - You will develop an exegetical paper in two phases. The first phase is your preliminary survey and plan: you will select your biblical passage, identify key questions you want to pursue or words that you want to study in more depth, and prepare a bibliography that includes at least five scholarly items. In the second and final phase, you will write the full paper, building on the foundation you already laid. The final paper should be about five pages in length, not counting bibliography. See Canvas for details.

Grade Breakdown

• Attendance and Participation	10%
• Unit Quizzes	35% (7% x 5)
• History Assignment	6%
• Gospel Parallels Assignment	5%
• Exercise in Redaction Criticism	8%
• Christology Paper 1 (one of the Synoptic Gospels)	10%
• Christology Paper 2 (the Gospel of John)	10%
• Exegesis Paper (Phase 1)	3%
• Exegesis Paper (Phase 2)	13%

All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Note: the content of this syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class and/or instructor.

Course Schedule

Unit 1. Exploring Jewish History

- 2/3 Course Introduction
 • Recommended: Garrett, “Introduction: Reading the New Testament”
- 2/8 Jewish History of the First Century CE
 • Required: JANT 580-99 (focus on 583-90)
- 2/10 The Historical Jesus
 • Required: JANT 628-33 (“The Historical Jesus”); Moore, “On the Face and Physique of the Historical Jesus”
 • Recommended: Heschel, “Reading Jesus as a Nazi”
 ▪ *Complete Quiz 1 by Feb 13 at 11:59 pm*

Unit 2. The Gospel of Mark

- 2/15 Mark (1)
 • Required: Mark 1-3; Garrett, “Introduction to the Study of the Gospels”
- 2/17 Mark (2)
 • Required: Mark 4-8; JANT 707-10 (“Midrash and Parables”)
- 2/22 Mark (3)
 • Required: Mark 9-16; JANT 622-28 (“Messianic Movements”)
 • Recommended: Donahue, “Crucifixion”
 ▪ *Submit History Assignment by Feb 23 at 11:59 pm.*
- 2/24 **Exegesis Workshop (1) Goals and Starting Points**
 • Required: Gorman, “Detailed Analysis of the Text”
 ▪ *Complete Quiz 2 by Feb 27 at 11:59 pm.*

Unit 3. The Gospel of Matthew

- 3/1 The Synoptic Problem
 • Required: Walters, “The Synoptic Problem”
- 3/3 Matthew (1)
 • Required: Matt 1-7; Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 1-26
 • Recommended: JANT 727-30 (“Scripture Fulfillment”)
- 3/8 Matthew (2) + Exercise in Redaction Criticism (1)
 • Required: Matt 8-18; Law, “Redaction Criticism,” 181-98
 ▪ **Submit Gospel Parallels Assignment by Mar 9 at 11:59 pm.**
- 3/10 Matthew (3) + Exercise in Redaction Criticism (2)
 • Required: Matt 19-28; Law, “Redaction Criticism,” 202-15.
 ▪ **Complete Quiz 3 by Mar 14 at 11:59 pm.**

3/15 No class (Research and Study)

3/17 No class (Research and Study)

Unit 4. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles

- 3/22 Luke (1) + Exercise in Redaction Criticism (3)
 • Required: Luke 1:1-19:27
- 3/24 Luke (2)
 • Required: Luke 19:28-24:53
 ▪ **Submit Exercise in Redaction Criticism assignment by Mar 27 at 11:59 pm.**
- 3/29 **Exegesis Workshop (2) Word Study**
 • Required: Balch, “Mary’s Magnificat (Luke 1:46b-55) and the Price of Corn in Mexico.”
 • Activities: learn to use Bible apps, websites, concordances, lexicons, and more; study the poor and the rich in Luke(-Acts).
- 3/31 Acts (1)
 • Required: Acts 1-12
 ▪ **Submit Christology Paper 1 by Apr 3 at 11:59 pm.**
- 4/5 Acts (2)
 • Required: Acts 13-28; D’Angelo, “Women in Luke-Acts”

Unit 5. The Gospel of John

- 4/7 John (1)
 • Required: John 1-12; JANT 688-91 (“Logos, a Jewish Word: John’s Prologue as Midrash”)
 ▪ *Complete Quiz 4 by Apr 10 at 11:59 pm.*
- 4/12 John (2)
 • Required: John 13-21; JANT 596-99 (“Ioudaios”)
- 4/14 No class (Easter Recess)
- 4/19 **Exegesis Workshop (3) Theological Ideas**
 • Required: Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel*, 37-70
 • Class activities: learn to examine Christological ideas through word study
 ▪ *Complete Quiz 5 by Apr 20 at 11:59 pm.*
- 4/21 **Exegesis Workshop (4) Crafting an Exegetical Argument**
 • Required: Graff and Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 19-51.
 ▪ *Submit Christology Paper 2 by Apr 24 at 11:59 pm.*

Unit 6. Critical Theory

- 4/26 Literary Studies of the Gospels
 • Required: Malbon, “Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?”
- 4/28 Feminist Studies of the Gospels
 ▪ *Submit Exegesis Paper (Phase 1) by Apr 30 at 11:59 pm.*
- 5/3 African American and Womanist Studies of the Gospels
 • Required: M. Smith, “Race, Gender, and the Politics of ‘Saas’: Reading Mark 7:24-30 through a Womanist Lens of Intersectionality and Inter(con)textuality”; Blount and Charles, *Preaching Mark in Two Voices*, 1-18, 41-59.
 • Required: Seim, “Feminist Criticism”

- 5/5 Masculinity Studies of the Gospels
- Required: Anderson and Moore, “Matthew and Masculinity”; Conway, “Behold the Man!’ Masculine Christology and the Fourth Gospel”
 - *Submit Exegesis Paper (Phase 2) by May 10 at 11:59 pm.*

Appendix A: Bibliography of Assigned Readings

- Allison, Dale C. “Interpreting the Sermon on the Mount.” Pages 1-26 in *The Sermon on the Mount: Inspiring the Moral Imagination*. New York: Crossroad Pub, 1999.
- Anderson, Janice Capel, and Stephen D. Moore. “Matthew and Masculinity.” Pages 67-92 in *New Testament Masculinities*. Edited by Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Balch, David L. “Mary’s Magnificat (Luke 1:46b-55) and the Price of Corn in Mexico.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136 (2017): 651-65.
- Blount, Brian K., and Gary W. Charles. “Introduction” and “A ‘Real’ Family Reunion (Mark 3:7-35).” Pages 1-18 and 41-59 in *Preaching Mark in Two Voices*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Conway, Colleen M. “Behold the Man!’ Masculine Christology and the Fourth Gospel.” Pages 67-92 in *New Testament Masculinities*. Edited by Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- D’Angelo, Mary Rose. “Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 441-61.
- Donahue, John R. “Crucifixion.” Pages 298-99 in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Garrett, Susan R. “Introduction: Reading the New Testament.” Unpublished manuscript.
- _____. “Introduction to the Study of the Gospels.” Unpublished manuscript.
- Gorman, Michael J. “Detailed Analysis of the Text” Pages 101-25 in *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020.

- Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. "They Say." Pages 19-52 in *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing with Readings*. 4th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.
- Heschel, Susannah. "Reading Jesus as a Nazi." Pages 27-41 in *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust*. Edited by Tod Linafelt. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Kysar, Robert. "The Father's Son—Johannine Christology." Pages 37-70 in *John, the Maverick Gospel*. 3rd ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.
- Law, David R. "Redaction Criticism." Pages 181-215 in *The Historical Critical Method: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: T&T Clark International, 2012.
- Malbon, Elizabeth S. "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?" Pages 29-57 in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. Edited by Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
- Seim, Turid Karlsen. "Feminist Criticism." Pages 42-73 in *Methods for Luke*. Edited by Joel B. Green. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Smith, Mitzi J. "Race, Gender, and the Politics of 'Sass': Reading Mark 7:24-30 through a Womanist Lens of Intersectionality and Inter(con)textuality." Pages 95-112 in *Womanist Interpretations of the Bible: Expanding the Discourse*. Edited by Byron, Gay L., and Vanessa Lovelace. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.
- Stephen D. Moore, "On the Face and Physique of the Historical Jesus." Pages 90-132 in *God's Beauty Parlor: and Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Walters, Patricia. "The Synoptic Problem." Pages 236-53 in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament*. Edited by David E. Aune. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010.

Appendix B: Recommended Readings for Christological and Exegesis Papers

(Reserved Resources)

- Burkett, Delbert. *The Blackwell Companion to Jesus*. Chichester, UK: Blackwell, 2011. ([ebook](#))
 Part I "Jesus in the New Testament" includes essays on Christologies in the NT writings; Part V "Modern Manifestations of Jesus" includes essays entitled, "Christology in Africa, Asia, and Latin America"; "Jesus in American Culture"; "The Black Jesus"; "Feminist Christologies"; "The 'Gay' Jesus" and more. I highly recommend Stephen Finlan, "Jesus in Atonement Theories" (pp. 193-212), which offers a succinct overview of the theories of atonement in the NT and in history. Finlan had written two books on the subject: *Problems with Atonement: The Origins of, and Controversy about, the Atonement*

- Doctrine* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005); *Options on Atonement in Christian Thought*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007).
- Houlden, Leslie, ed. *Jesus in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia*. 2 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003. (Ref. BT 199.5 .J47 2003; Ref. BT 199.5 .J47 2003)
As the title of the book indicates, it includes a number of essays on Jesus in history, thought, and culture.
- Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *Jesus Christ in Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1981. (BT 198 .K54)
Relatively dated than Burkett (above) or Matera (below), but still useful; there are four chapters (Q, Mark, Matthew, and Luke); each chapter has the following sections: “The Accomplishment of Mark (or Matt or Luke)”; “The Figure of Jesus”; “The Mission of Jesus”; “Discipleship”; “Soteriology.”
- Matera, Frank J. *New Testament Christology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999. (BT 202 .M3783 1999)
Explains the Christologies in NT writings; whereas the essays in Part I of *The Blackwell Companion to Jesus* (see above) tend to focus on the history of scholarship, Matera examines each NT book section by section. Highly recommended.

Appendix C: Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all sessions, and roll will be taken. You should be ready to begin class at 1:30 p.m. To earn full credit for “attendance and participation,” you will need to demonstrate through your participation that you have done the work of preparation for the session. **Please note:** If your personal circumstances change (for example, if you or someone in your family contracts Covid 19), please reach out to me so that we can discuss any special arrangements that may be necessary to accommodate your situation.

Items Relating to Instruction, Learning, and Technology at LPTS

1. To access the library and its resources, visit: <https://lpts.edu/library/>
2. To request a library laptop loan, contact library@lpts.edu
3. For a summary of information related to accessing Outlook, Canvas, CAMS, and the Intranet, see: [Accessing LPTS Resources](#)
4. For general help with campus network access, Outlook (email), contact support@lpts.edu
5. For information on Student Assistance Funds to help with costs associated with learning technology and access (\$300 maximum), contact Gina Kuzuoka at gkuzuoka@lpts.edu
6. For help with Canvas credentials, contact Carolyn Cardwell at ccardwell@lpts.edu.

Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you

are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 7th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2020.
- Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 17th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

See also the library's citation help page: <https://lpts.libguides.com/digitalresources/citingsources>

Policy on Pass/Fail Option

Students taking the course pass/fail must complete *all* assignments and earn an average score of 75 or above.