

# NT 501 - THE GOSPELS

Spring, 2008

Bethel Seminary San Diego  
Thursdays, 7:15–10:00 pm, April 3–June 12  
Instructor: Mark L. Strauss, Ph.D.  
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## I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

An introduction to the four New Testament Gospels and the life of Jesus Christ. The course will examine methodologies for the study of the Gospels (historical-critical and literary approaches), historical and cultural setting of the Gospels, the unique portrait of Jesus provided by each of the Gospel writers, and an introduction to the study of the historical Jesus.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

- A. To provide the student with a basic understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the four canonical Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- B. To introduce the student to key aspects of the interpretation of the Gospels, including literary genre, historical and literary backgrounds, exegetical methodology, composition, authorship, and distinctives of each book.
- C. To introduce the student to the individual contributions and theological perspectives of each of the Gospel writers.
- D. To provide the student with the skills to properly interpret, teach and preach the Gospels.
- E. To examine issues related to the historical Jesus, including the various quests for Jesus, the historical reliability of the Gospels, and a survey of the life and teachings of Jesus.
- F. To provide the student with the opportunity to grow more like their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through a better understanding of his words and works.

## III. TEXTBOOKS

### *Required*

- New Testament
- Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus. In Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels.* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2007)
- Gerd Theissen, *The Shadow of the Galilean: The Quest of the Historical Jesus in Narrative Form* (Fortress Press 1987). ISBN: 0800620577

**Recommended** (see also bibliographies in text)

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992).

*A Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (ed. Kurt Aland; United Bible Societies).

Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, eds., *Jesus Under Fire* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1987).

Mark Alan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

Robert Stein, *The Synoptic Problem. An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987)

## IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. Reading Assignments from Textbooks

Sections of the textbook, *Four Portraits, One Jesus* will be read in conjunction with the course lectures (see course schedule).

### B. Reading the Gospels / Overview Projects

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are to be read thoroughly, and overview worksheets will be completed on Mark and John. These worksheets are intended to point you to key themes and to follow the progress of the narrative. Late worksheets will be marked down 5% per day late.

### B. Quizzes

Weekly quizzes will be given **from the textbook readings**. See the course syllabus for the dates of these quizzes and material to be covered each week. One quiz may be made up. One quiz will be dropped in averaging your score.

### C. Book Review

You will write a short double-spaced (3-5 page) book review on Gerd Theissen's *Shadow of the Galilean*. A book review should include a brief summary of the book's contents, and a critique of its strengths and weaknesses.

### D. Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and will count as 10% of your grade.

## V. GRADING

	<b>Percentage</b>
Quizzes	50%
Overview Projects	20%
Book Review	10%
Additional Reading report	10%
Attendance	10%

**Grade Scale**

96-100	A	77-79	C+	60-62	D-
92-95	A-	73-76	C	below 60	F
88-91	B+	70-72	C-		
84-87	B	67-69	D+		
80-83	B-	63-66	D		

**EXTENSIONS:** There will be no extensions in this class except for extenuating family emergencies or medical reasons. An Incomplete Contract must be drawn up, dated, processed, and then approved by the professor and submitted to the Associate Registrar before the last day of class.

**DISABILITIES:** Any student who because of a disability may require some special arrangements to meet course requirements should contact the instructor or the Access Coordinator for the Bethel Office of Disability Services by the second week of class to discuss reasonable accommodations. Please see Student Handbook, pg 22.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Written material submitted must be the original work of the student. Academic dishonesty constitutes a serious violation of scholarship standards at Bethel and can result in denial of credit and possible dismissal from the school. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on assignments or exams, plagiarism, fabrication of research, multiple submissions of work in different courses, misrepresentation of academic records, the facilitation of academic dishonesty, and depriving others of necessary academic resources.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>Week/Date</i>	<i>Lecture Topic</i>	<i>Reading Assignments and Projects</i>
1/April 3	<i>Introduction to the Course What is a Gospel?</i>	
2/ April 10	<i>Historical Criticism</i>	<b>Quiz 1:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapters 1-2 <b>Worksheets on Synoptic Problem</b>
3/April 17	<i>Literary Criticism Historical Setting</i>	<b>Quiz 2:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapters 3-4
4/April 24	<i>Religious and Social Setting</i>	<b>Quiz 3:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapters 5-6
5/May 1	<i>The Gospel according to Mark</i>	<b>Quiz 4:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapter 7 <i>Read Mark and fill out Worksheet on Mark</i>
May 8	SPRING INTENSIVES	Begin reading Theissen, <i>Shadow of the Galilean</i>
6/ May 15	<i>The Gospel according to Luke</i>	<b>Quiz 5:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapter 9 <i>Read Luke.</i>
7/May 22	<i>The Gospel according to John</i>	<b>Quiz 6:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapter 10 <i>Read John and fill out Worksheet on John</i>
8/May 29	<i>Historical Jesus: Quests, Reliability, Contours and Chronology</i>	<b>Quiz 7:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapters 11-12
9/ June 5	<i>Historical Jesus: Birth, Message and Miracles</i>	<b>Quiz 8:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapters 13-16
10/June 12	<i>Historical Jesus: Messianic words and deeds, death and resurrection</i>	<b>Quiz 9:</b> <i>Four Portraits</i> , Chapters 17-20 <b>Book review on Theissen due</b>

All dates and assignments are tentative and may be changed at the discretion of the professor, according to the development of the course material. Be alert in class for any announcements of changes.

**Revised 3/2/08**