
WYB 1501 H F
FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE GOSPELS

Instructors

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Description

An introduction to the four Gospels in their social, historical and canonical setting. Using “socio-literary” and canonical approaches, we will study the Gospels within a three-dimensional framework centred on what the early Christians called the “gospel” of Jesus Christ. One dimension has to do with social history—the origin of the Gospels in Jesus’ ministry and the women’s Easter experience, the setting of the Gospels in early Judaism under the thumb of the Roman Empire, and the emergence of the Gospels as a rich and many-faceted proclamation of Jesus Christ. The second dimension has to do with canon: the Gospels as inter-related and mutually illuminating scriptural narratives of the faith. We will consider the process by which the Gospels came to be written and their relationship to each other, their literary form and texture, and their character as biblically-rooted narratives of the “gospel.” Thirdly, we will ask both historical and canonical questions to a Christological end: what do the four Gospels say about Jesus?

Text

The primary text, of course, is the New Testament itself; students should bring a copy of the NT to each class. While most modern versions are acceptable, lectures will be based primarily on the NRSV. Students should also purchase Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green and Marianne Meye Thompson (eds.), *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). This book will not only provide historical background and a second opinion on things (in addition to the class lecture notes), it also serves as a required text for the second introductory course in the New Testament that many of you will take in the winter term (“Who Is Jesus?”). In addition, a version of the Parallel Gospels will be of interest to most students; it arranges the first three Gospels in parallel columns for handy comparison. One of these is Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr. (ed.), *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels* (Nashville ; Vancouver, BC : T. Nelson, c1992).

An alternative is Zeba A. Crook, *Parallel Gospels: A Synopsis of Early Christian Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), which seeks to give the student a sense of the Greek text in English translation. Both books are available at the Crux Theological Bookstore, Wycliffe College. They will also be available on the reserve shelf at the Graham Library. Finally, lecture notes by Prof. Terry Donaldson and Prof. Catherine Hamilton will be available on Blackboard after each class.

Website

As with all Wycliffe courses, this course has a Blackboard website that is accessible through the “Portal” on the University of Toronto home page (<http://www.utoronto.ca>) or directly at <http://portal.utoronto.ca>. One important function of the website is to provide you with the lecture notes (see below). It will also serve as a forum for tutorial discussion, and will contain the syllabus, course assignments, notices from time to time, and various other pieces of information.

Content and outline

The content of the course will be treated in accordance with the following outline:

1. SETTING DIRECTIONS: ASSUMPTIONS AND METHOD OF APPROACH

- 1.1 Introduction Lecture 1 / Sep 15
 - i. Questions of Approach Read: ITNT 1-13
 - ii. Socio-Historical; Literary; Canonical Reading

2. CHRISTIAN ORIGINS: THE GOSPEL AND ITS SETTING

- 2.1 Starting Point: The “Easter” Experience Lecture 2 / Sep 22
 - Read: Matt 28:1-10/Mark 16:1-8/ Luke 24:1-12/John 20:1-18
 - i. The Easter Message: The “Gospel”
 - ii. Easter as a “Crisis Experience”
 - iii. The Easter Experience
 - iv. The Easter Experience in Context of Early Judaism Read: ITNT 26-37

3. FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE GOSPELS

- 3.1 Gospel Beginnings Lecture 3 / Sep 29
 - i. Why Four Gospels? Read: Matt 1:1-17/Mark 1:1-8/Luke 1:1-25/John 1:1-18
 - ii. The Gospel of Mark Mark 1-8 /ITNT 123-135
- 3.2 The Gospel of Mark Lecture 4 / Oct 6
 - i. The Gospel of Mark Mark 9-16 / ITNT 135-146
 - ii. Canon, text, translation: Textual questions

Format and procedure

The skeleton of the course is provided by our week-to-week classes and tutorials (Thurs 9-12). Most of the **class time** will be devoted to the lecture for the week, including an introduction to the written lecture as a whole and an oral lecture dealing with some part of it. For the most part, we will follow an “interactive-lecture” format; discussion pertaining to the course material is invited and will be welcomed.

The **tutorials** will provide several opportunities for engagement with the course material in a smaller, more informal, face-to-face setting. The primary focus most weeks will be on an in-depth look at the Gospel under discussion, from the perspective of that week's lecture. Each student will have an opportunity to present an analysis of the question of the week to

get the discussion started. At least one of the tutorial sessions, however, will be used for an activity involving the whole class.

The flesh on the skeleton will be provided by all of us, as we work together (students, TAs, instructor) at the various assignments for the course.

Requirements and evaluation

Preparation, presence, participation (20%)

This will be based on attendance and participation at the lectures and tutorials and weekly postings on the course website (10%), and weekly quizzes on biblical content (10%).

Each week students are required to do the following: (1) to read the assigned readings (assigned portions of the Gospel, ITNT, occasional hand-outs); (2) to give some consideration to the passage for the week, making one post about your reflections on the discussion board. In general terms, the purpose of the passage for the week and reflection post is to gain insights into the passage from the perspective developed in the lecture, and to gain insights into the lecture material from an examination of the passage. Posts may take the form of an observation, reflection, question, analytical comment....The best posts will be those that reflect an awareness of the lecture as a whole, that make some attempt to connect the lecture with the passage, and that have the potential to stimulate discussion among fellow students. The postings should be concise and focused; don't attempt to provide a full analysis of the passage.

The determination of the grade will begin with a base-line, consisting of the unweighted average of the grades for the four pieces of written work (three assignments and final exam), which will then be shaded up or down on the basis of a student's performance in this area. (Some allowance will be made for the weakness of the flesh and the vicissitudes of life.)

Term assignments (3 x 15%)

There are three written assignments to be submitted during the term. One of these is the written form of your tutorial presentation. Each will be worth 15% of the final grade. While further information will be made available in the course, the titles and due dates are as follows:

Gospel Study I:	Oct 13
Gospel Study II: Tutorial Presentation	due on the date of your presentation
Jesus and Judaism:	Nov 17

Assignments may be submitted electronically (Word or pdf format—due before the beginning of class on the due date) or by hard copy in class.

Final examination (35%)

The final examination will consist of two parts: a Gospel-passage identification section, and a short-answer essay section. The questions for the essay section will be based on the lecture notes and the weekly tutorial discussions; active involvement in the tutorials will help you prepare for the exam.

Basic Biblical Knowledge

One of the intended outcomes for each of the basic degree programs at Wycliffe College is that students demonstrate an appropriate level of basic Biblical knowledge. The means by which this will be demonstrated is still under discussion, but we will give some attention to the issue in this course. We will read each of the Gospels in full and spend some time in close reading of particular passages. The final exam will require familiarity with the content of the Gospels.

Learning outcomes

Wycliffe College has developed detailed statements of “learning outcomes” for the MDiv and MTS programs. They are available on the College website. “Learning outcomes” have to do in part with the level of knowledge and skill that will be characteristic of a typical graduate of the program. In accordance with this overall statement, instructors are required to develop a statement of learning outcomes for each course. These outcomes will provide one of the benchmarks for evaluation and grading.

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe’s statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
• will have increased their familiarity with the content of the four Gospels;	Course as a whole; lectures 3-4; 6-12; weekly reading; tutorials; assignments 1 and 2, final exam.	MTS: 1.1 MDiv: 1.1
• will have developed a greater awareness of the historical and cultural context in which the Christian movement emerged and in which the writings of the New Testament were produced;	lectures 1, 2, 3; secondary readings, assignment 3; tutorials, final exam	MTS: 1.1 MDiv: 1.1
• will be able to recognize and reflect on issues pertaining to the formative period of early Christianity, especially those having to do with unity/diversity and continuity/development;	course as a whole; lectures 2, 5, 7-12; secondary readings, assignment 3; tutorials	MTS: 1.3; 1.4 MDiv: 1.3; 1.4

• will have become aware of the importance of method in NT interpretation, and will have begun to develop an appropriate method of interpretation for themselves;	lectures 1, 3, 4, 6; weekly analysis of passages; assignments 1, 2; tutorials	MTS: 1.2 MDiv: 1.2
• will have an increased ability to consider different viewpoints and to relate in a mature and collegial manner with those who hold them	tutorial groups; online discussions	MTS: 1.5; 2.1; 3.1 MDiv: 1.5; 2.1; 3.3
• will have an increased and more mature confidence in the NT as a source and ground for faith;	course as a whole; homiletical reflection at the end of some lectures; weekly analysis of passages, assignments 1 and 2, tutorials	MTS: 1.3 MDiv: 1.3

Course evaluation

At the end of the course students are expected to complete a course evaluation. The evaluation is done online and instructions will be contained in an e-mail message that will be sent out by the Wycliffe College registrar.

College policy on assignment extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may be granted an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed-upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be arranged before the completion of the term in which the course is taken; at a point no later than the last day of exam week, students need either to have submitted all required work for the course or to have made a formal request for an extension. The extension request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office. **One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.**

Academic integrity

All TST students are subject to U of T’s “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.” Copies of the code are available at www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm.

Please take special note of the section on plagiarism. For a helpful set of guidelines on

how to avoid plagiarism, see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>. This is part of a more general—and equally helpful—website that provides advice on academic writing (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>).