

WESTERN SEMINARY
Portland, Oregon 97215

LIFE OF CHRIST
BLS 535/635

Fall 2010
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Course Description

The life of Jesus Christ is the very foundation of biblical Christianity. This course is devoted to the study of the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. We will focus on the major events and turning points in His ministry and provide an interpretation of His parables and discourses. The historical, cultural and geographical setting will provide a context for our interpretation and understanding of Jesus' ministry. Two hours credit.

Course Objectives

1. You will have a meaningful experience and grow spiritual through your study of the life of Christ.
2. You will gain an understanding and appreciation of the historical, cultural and geographical setting as a context for interpretation.
3. You will be able to identify and correctly interpret the major events and discourses in the life of Christ.
4. You will gain a basic understanding of the chronological issues and problems in the life of Christ.
5. You will gain insight into the major interpretive problems in the life of Christ.
6. You will be able to explain the teachings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God.

Course Texts

Federal law now requires institutions to provide ISBN numbers and retail prices for all required books. Western Seminary encourages students to visit our campus bookstore, Windows Booksellers, in order to obtain these titles at a reduced rate.

Required:

R. Thomas & S. Gundry, The NIV Harmony of the Gospels (ISBN 0-06-063523-1) \$ 23.99
Driscoll and Breshears, Vintage Jesus (ISBN 978-1-58134-975-7) \$19.99

Spangler & Tverberg, Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus (ISBN 978-0-310-28422-2) \$21.99

Course Requirements

1. Be prompt and regular in class attendance, and be an active participant in class discussions.
2. Complete all required class reading and submit your reading report on the last day of class, Thursday, **December 2nd**. Reading includes A Harmony of the Gospels and Vintage Jesus, and Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus.
3. Instead of a final exam, students are to construct their own chronology of events of Christ's life on earth. Record the date, the event, and a comment (a short paragraph) on the significance of the event for understanding the life of Christ. Be selective in your choice of the events. Rather than listing each and every event, choose 12-15 major events and important developments. **Due November 11th**.
4. SOAP Project. Instead of the traditional term paper, students are asked to prepare a weekly SOAP assignment for every class period. This weekly assignment includes four parts. "S" stands for Scripture. Select a Scripture text (several verses) that you want to reflect on for the week. "O" stands for observation. Make observations about the text. These may be exegetical or theological. "A" stands for application. On the basis of your observation about the text, make personal application. This includes identifying a principle or abiding truth and discussing how this biblical truth relates to your personal life. "P" stands for prayer. Conclude your study with a written prayer that expresses your desire to grow spiritually through your understanding and application of this truth. In keeping with Western's focus on Gospel-centered transformation, I encourage you to keep this theme in mind as you work on your weekly SOAP assignment. Each weekly assignment of approximately two pages each should take about 2 hours. **There are 6 SOAP assignments earning 8 pts. each.**
5. Th.M. students taking the class are required to read and respond to six of N.T. Wright's articles on Jesus from the unofficial N.T. Wright web site, NTWrightPage.com Then write a 8 to 10 page review and evaluation of his interpretation of the life of Jesus. Book reviews of Wright's writings may be used to make your assessment. This paper should include more research from the resources and must follow proper thesis form and style. This project will be weighted at 30% of the Th.M. semester grade.
Due: December 9th

Course Evaluation

Reading	26 points	Chronology	26 points
SOAP	48 points	Th.M. Project	For Th.M. credit
A = 100-93	B = 92-86	C = 85-79	D = 78-70

Course Outline

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
September 2	His birth and early years	(1-19)
	Baptism, Temptation and First Miracles	(20-33)
September 16	Journey to Galilee and Calling the Twelve	(34-52)
	Sermon on the Mount	(53-63)
September 30	Teaching Through Parables	(64-71)
	Promise of the Church and Transfiguration	(72-89)
October 14	To Jerusalem for Tabernacles	(90-101)
	Lessons Recorded by Luke	(102-117)
October 28	Journeys to Jerusalem	(118-127)
	Royal Entry and Challenge	(128-138)
November 11	Olivet Discourse	(139-148)
	Upper Room Teaching and Betrayal	(149-151)
	Chronology Due	
December 2	Trial, Crucifixion and Burial of Jesus	(152-167)
	Reading Report Due	
	Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus	(168-184)
December 9	Th.M. Project Due	

Resources

F. F. Bruce, The Hard Sayings of Jesus

_____, New Testament History

_____, The Work of Jesus

Driscoll and Breshears, Vintage Jesus

Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah

David Flusser, Jesus

Harold Hoehner, Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ
Herod Antipas
Michael Grant, An Historian's Review of the Gospels
Michael Griffiths, The Example of Jesus
Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus
A. H. M. Jones, The Herods of Judea
James Kallas, The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles
Scot McKnight, A New Vision For Israel
J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ
Mark Allan Powell, Jesus as a Figure in History
W. Graham Scroggie, A Guide to the Gospels
J. W. Shepard, The Christ of the Gospels
Emil Schurer, A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus
R. L. Thomas & Stanley N. Gundry, A Harmony of the Gospels
Brad H. Young, Jesus the Jewish Theologian

READING REPORT
Due December 2, 2010

A Harmony of the Gospels

Completed: Percentage Completed:

Vintage Jesus

Completed: Percentage Completed:

Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus

Completed: Percentage Completed: