WESTERN SEMINARY - SACRAMENTO

Interpreting New Testament I: Gospels
BLS 502YM: 2 credit hours

David Nystrom, Ph.D.
(916) 704-0206

Syllabus - Spring 2010

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan. 11, 25; Feb. 8, 22; Mar. 8, 22; Apr. 5 (Alternate Mondays, 5:55pm – 10:00pm)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Interpreting the Gospels. This course concerns the canonical Gospels as well as the life and teaching of Jesus.

COURSE CONTRIBUTION TO STATED DEGREE OUTCOMES

The objectives of this course are tied directly to the desired outcomes constructed specifically for the MFT degree for which this course is a requirement. Below are the formal degree outcomes which this class supports:

1) Be a person whose Christ-like character is worthy of being emulated, and whose integrity imparts credibility to his/her ministry
   a) reflects biblical balance and skill in life management, appropriately fulfilling the roles and responsibilities mandated by God (MFM 500; SFS 501, 502; overarching)

2) Know the major themes and developments of God's redemptive activity revealed in Scripture
   a) understands the basic framework of biblical history (BLS 501-3)
   b) understands the major contribution of each book to the canon (BLS 501-3)
   c) understands the basic argument of each book and its relevance for contemporary ministry (BLS 501-3)

3) Be able to think biblically and critically so that various truth claims can be effectively evaluated
   a) has embraced a biblical world view (THS 501-3 overarching)

   b) able to apply the basic elements of critical analysis and sound reasoning (MFM 500; overarching)
   c) sensitive to cultural variations in styles of thinking (overarching)
   d) reflects an appropriately humble and charitable spirit in applying biblical criteria for truth (overarching)

4) Be able to communicate God's truth clearly, accurately, and convincingly

a) able to communicate one's thoughts effectively in writing (MFM 500; overarching)

5) Be a true life-long learner, building upon his/her seminary training
   a) committed to pursuing growth and learning in key areas of need (MFM 500; overarching)
   b) able to access and manage information (including that available via computer/on-line resources) so that it is readily available when needed (overarching)"

COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Interpretation of the Scriptures must first be appropriate to the character, composition, and context of the particular book. This foundational effort to "rightly handle the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15) calls for the application of solid interpretation skills to identify what is central and particular to the text, and for an appreciation of "the major themes and developments within biblical history to understand the 'big picture' of God's redemptive program." Toward that end this course is part of a multi-course sequence that surveys the content of the entire canon, intends to lead students to a basic cognitive grasp of the literature, to a more positive emotional response to the text and its Author, and to an ever more faithful application of its teachings.

TEXTBOOKS

Please support your seminary by using the following link for all your Amazon purchases – a minimum of 4% comes to Western Seminary. Click here to order texts and other products.

Required

- Carson, D. A., Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris. (1991). *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Zondervan Publishing House. ISBN: 0310519403
- Wilkinson, Bruce, Boa Kenneth. (1983*). Talk Thru The Bible* . Nelson Publishing Co. ISBN: 0840752865
- Green, Joel B., McKnight, Scot, Marshall, Howard I. (Eds.). (1992). *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 0-8308-1777-8

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading

The texts will be read as assigned in the course schedule. In order to participate intelligently in class and gain maximum benefit from class interaction you should complete the reading according to the schedule of assignments. These textbooks should be read at a mastery level, which means that you understand what the text is saying in sufficient detail so as to be able to explain it. It does not mean you remember all the details.

Assignments

Reflections
The student will be writing their reflections on the materials presented and discussed in readings and in the class. These papers should be between 1-3 pages long not including the bibliography.

Biblical Theology Paper
The student will be writing a 5-7 page biblical theology paper comparing two of the canonical Gospels.

The professor will give introductory guidance in class on the paper. Papers will be graded upon the following criteria:

a) Content
b) Organization
c) Evidence of academic library research (see final sentence of next paragraph)
d) Form.

Original interaction with the Bible text is expected and arguments should be supported by the text. It is important to keep in mind that the instructor not only values interaction with secondary sources, but what the student says based upon and supported by the text. The student's task is to investigate, describe, and evaluate what the Scripture teaches about the chosen subject.

All work must reflect master's level use of the English language. Plagiarism will result in failure of assignment.

GRADING

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
99-100%	95-98%	93-94%	91-92%	88-90%	86-87%	84-85%	81-83%	79-80%	77-78%	74-76%	70-73%

Activity	Percent of Final Grade	Estimated Time to Complete
Reading/Reflection Papers	55%	45 hrs
Biblical Theology Paper	35%	15 hrs
Class Participation	10%	30 hours
Total	**100%**	**30 class hrs + 60 outside hrs**

STANDARDS FOR WRITTEN WORK (MLA)

Papers must be written to a near-thesis standard. That is, minimum format standards must be met, as defined below. English grammar, idiom, and spelling must be up to graduate level. Always include a strong introduction paragraph (declare what you intend to show the reader) and conclusion paragraph. Qualities valued include clarity, succinctness, and precision.

This course employs the MLA (Modern Language Association) style guide. The basic elements are:

- Double-spacing, except for block quotes
- Single space block quotes
- Page numbers appear at the upper right on every text page
- Use footnotes or parenthetical citations.
- Footnotes and parenthetical references follow standard format.

Helpful web sites on MLA style include:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/

[These websites are expanded and pasted into Western Seminary's "How to Write a Research Paper" located at http://www.westernseminary.edu/papers/Faculty/WGuideNu.doc]

A good website with footnote/bibliography entries is:
http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Documentation.html

For assignments that require the use of non-course texts and include a bibliography, of the resources mentioned in the bibliography for your project/paper, two must be from a physical library. Note the physical location of each book as an addendum to each bibliographical entry.

All work must reflect master's level use of the English language. Plagiarism will result in failure of assignment.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Date	**Readings Due** (Always bring the books read and your English Bible to class.)	**Assignments** (Deemed late from 10 minutes after the beginning of class.)
1/11/10	**Background to the NT** • Bible: Mathew & Mark • Intro.NT: The Synoptic Gospels • Dict.Jesus: Archeology and Geography, p. 33-46; Authority and Power 50-54; Matthew, Gospel of 526-541 • Walk Thru: Intro to NT; Intro to Historical Books	Readings should be completed prior to first class.
1/25/10	**The Four Gospels** • Bible: Luke & John • Intro.NT: Matthew • Dict.Jesus:; Sermon on the Mount 735 – 744; Kingdom of God/ Heaven 417-430; Eschatology 206-209; Salvation in Matthew 721; Law 450-461. • Walk Thru: Matthew	Reflection 1

2/8/10	**Birth, temptations, baptism** • Bible: Mark • Intro.NT: Mark • Dict.Jesus: Mark, Gospel of 512-525; Miracles 549-560; Salvation in Mark 722; Son of Man 775-781. • Walk Thru: Mark	Reflection 2
2/22/10	**The method and message of Jesus** • Bible: Luke • Intro.NT: Luke • Dict.Jesus: Luke, Gospel of; 495-510; Birth of Jesus 60-74; Christ 106-117; Death of Jesus 146-163; Demon, Devil, Satan 163-172; Disciples 176-189; Divorce 192-199; Ethics of Jesus 210 – 222. • Walk Thru: Luke	Reflection 3
3/8/10	**Miracles** • Bible: John • Intro.NT: John • Dict.Jesus: John, Gospel of 368-383; Holy Spirit 341-351; Israel 356-363; Judas Iscariot 406-408; Languages of Palestine 434-444; Last Supper 444-450; Logos 481-484; Parable 591-600 • Walk Thru: John	Reflection 4
3/22/10	**Trial to Resurrection** • Bible: John • Dict.Jesus: Preaching from the Gospels 625-630; Priest, Priesthood 633-636; Rabbinic Traditions and Writings 651-660; Repentance 669-673; Resurrection 673-688; Rich and Poor 701-710; Son of God 769-775; World 887-890; Worship 891-894.	
4/5/10	**To be announced**	Biblical Theology Paper due (Class Evaluations) (Class Closing Party Potluck)

CLASS POLICIES

Cover page: To safeguard confidentiality, provide a title page as a cover for all assignments. Include your student mailbox number in the upper right corner of the cover page.

Attendance and Late Assignments: Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Students who miss class are responsible for missed work. Unexcused absences and tardiness will impact a student's grade. Students who anticipate an absence should discuss it in advance with the instructor. Students who miss two or more classes will not pass the course, without a request for

and the completion of additional assignments. Assignments submitted after the due date and time constitutes a drop in the student's letter grade for that assignment.

Enrichment Students: Enrichment students are encouraged, but not obligated, to participate in assignments and class discussions. Professors are not obligated to grade participation for these students, but may opt to do so depending on class size.

Incompletes: Faculty members determine their own procedures and due dates for the completion of course assignments. The final deadline for submitting all course work is the last day of the semester as noted in the Academic Calendar and in the Sacramento class schedule. In the case of serious illness, family emergency, or similar extenuating circumstances, the instructor may, **if it is initiated by the student**, grant an extension. A 1-3 week extension is typical in all except the most extreme cases, and in all cases the standard decrease of a full letter grade for late work applies. Extensions desired by the student beyond 3 weeks, with prof support, must be approved by the Sacramento Academic Coordinator, with 5 weeks after the end of the course being the longest possible extension for work being due to the prof; for this semester that date is **Saturday, 5/29/10**. (This allows a 6th week for the grading of work and a grade change request to be filed.) A temporary notation of "I" (incomplete) is assigned until a final grade can be determined. Under no circumstances may the six-week period (allots 1 week to the prof for grading and grade change petition) be extended except by petition and approval of the Administrative Committee in Portland.

The Availability of Disability Services at Western Seminary: Western Seminary is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as outlined in both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Western students are assisted individually as their needs dictate. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities to identify themselves and the nature of the disability. Any student who has a disability should contact the seminary's Disability (Section 504) Coordinator, Ken Epp, at 503-517-1815/1-877-517-1800, ext. 1815. His office is at the Portland campus. Students at the northern California campuses may contact Carrie Priest (Student Services Coordinator – San José) or PJ Oswald (Director of Student Development – Sacramento), or they may contact Dr. Epp directly. Appropriate forms will be provided and must be submitted to the Disability Coordinator's office.

LIBRARY AND INTERNET RESEARCH – SACRAMENTO

All class assignments with a research element require library research annotated as such in the bibliography. A minimum of two resources must be from a physical library. Note the physical location of each resource as an addendum to each bibliographical entry.

For complete library information including: hours of operation, interlibrary loan, local library resources, etc., please:

- Visit www.westernseminary.edu/sacramento
- Click the link "Library Services" in the right navigation pane.

Reserve Collection
The library carries all required readings for this course.

Print Resources
Use the Western-Arcade Library catalog to find books and other materials. To search the library collection:

- Visit http://www.westernseminary.edu/Library/SAC .
- Click the link "Search the Library Collection Online".

Periodical & Research Databases
As you complete your assignments for this course, don't forget about the resources in the Western research databases. Remember to evaluate and cite your information too. To access the Western research databases:

- Visit http://www.westernseminary.edu/Library/SAC .
- Click the link "Research Databases" from the bottom menu.
- Click the link "Ebsco Host Research Databases".
- Log in. [**User ID:** westsem / **Password:** seminary]
- Click the link "EBSCOhost Web".
- Click the database(s) you wish to use. Start with *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*.

To cite your information, consider the following MLA composers:
http://www.noodletools.com and http://www.citationmachine.net

Western-Arcade Library offers a variety of ministry related software for student use including BibleWorks, Logos Bible Software, and SeminaryLibrary.

Course Packs (if applicable)
To access the course pack(s) for this course:

1. Go to the library homepage: http://www.westernseminary.edu/Library/SAC
2. Click the link 'Course Packs'.

Reference and Research Contact Information
David Holifield, M.A., M.L.S. / (916) 488-3720, ext. 7 / dholifield@westernseminary.edu