

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO at MTSO

2023 Winter

COS 321—Bible III: Gospels

Feb 17 – 18 and Mar 17 – 18

Professor: Mark Allan Powell

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Course Description

This course focuses on the content and context of the four New Testament Gospels, and on the theological emphases of their writers.

Goals

Students will be able to

- Distinguish these genres of biblical literature, and understand the major theological themes in these writings.
- Faithfully exegete these forms of biblical literature.
- Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.
- Articulate the unity and authority of Scripture as a whole.

Main Texts

- Mark Allan Powell. *Introducing the New Testament*. Baker Academic, 2017. NOTE: If you have the first edition of this book (2009, blue cover), the chapter numbers are different, so contact the professor for the correct reading assignments.
- PDF Document: “Background Information for Understanding the New Testament” – available under “Files” in the course website at Populi.
- An English New Testament. NRSV, NIV, or ESV are recommended translations. Paraphrases (e.g. *The Message*) are not appropriate for exegetical study.

Recommended Supplementary Text (not required for any of the assignments):

- Frederick Murphy, *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*.

Also recommended by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry:

- Warren Carter and Amy-Jill Levine. *The New Testament: Methods and Meanings*. Abingdon, 2013.

Requirements (General Description)

- **Participation** in all Zoom class sessions and Populi Discussion Groups is required.
- **Prior to each weekend session** students are to do the **required readings** from the textbooks and complete the **open book exam** relevant to the material for that session. These exams can be taken through Populi. The answers to all of the questions on these short quizzes may be found in the reading material from Powell, *Introducing the New Testament* and you may use the book to look up the material while answering exam questions (there is no time-limit on the exam). One re-take is allowed for each exam (that is, you may take exam twice, and the highest score will be the one that counts.).
- **Prior to each weekend session**, students are to compile **questions or other materials** that will be used in our Populi Discussion Sessions. Details are given below under “Specific Assignments” and “Populi Discussion Groups.”
- **Prior to the first weekend session** – and, then, **subsequent to the second weekend session** – students are to complete **major written assignments** (be certain that you complete these assignments in a manner that complies with the attached statement of the Course of Study School of Ohio regarding “Academic Honor”). Details are given below.

Specific Assignments to be completed prior to class February 17:

- Read Powell, chapters 4–7.
- Submit electronically: completed “Exam 1” (based on readings from Powell). You may use the book while filling out this exam—and you may take the exam twice (one re-take) in order to get the highest possible score.
- Submit electronically: Written Assignment One. See details below.
- Post on Populi before noon on Feb 17 (available 5:00 AM February 17):
 - For Discussion on Friday (Feb 17) at 4:30 PM: a statement of the possible or real question from a parishioner that you addressed in “Written Assignment # 1” and a short paragraph summary of how you responded—less than 150 words.
 - For Discussion on Friday (Feb 17) at 8:00 PM: a question that a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the Gospel of Mark
 - For Discussion on Saturday (Feb 18) at 9:30 AM: a question that a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the Gospel of Matthew

Specific Assignments to be completed prior to class March 17

- Read Powell, chapters 1–2; 8–9.
- Submit electronically: completed “Exam 2” (based on readings from Powell). You may use the book while filling out this exam—and you may take the exam twice (one re-take) in order to get the highest possible score.
- Post on Populi before noon on March 17 (available 5:00 AM March 17):
 - For Discussion on Friday (Mar 17) at 4:30 PM: a statement of how some information from the document “Background Information for Understanding the New Testament” might inform your teaching or preaching. Or—if you prefer—a question regarding how some information from that document ought to affect your teaching and preaching (for example, if the information is new to you and you’re not sure what to do with it).
 - For Discussion on Friday (Mar 17) at 8:00 PM: a question that a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the Gospel of Luke
 - For Discussion on Saturday (Mar 18) at 9:30 AM: a question that a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the Gospel of John.

After Class Written Work—submit electronically by March 31

- Written Assignment Two (see below).

Evaluation

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Exams 1 & 2	20%
Class participation (via Zoom and on Populi)	40%

CLASS SCHEDULE

Friday February 17	
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Zoom Class: Jesus
4:30 – 5:30 PM	Populi Discussion: Question from Written Assignment # 1
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Zoom Class: The Gospels
8:00 – 9:00 PM	Populi Discussion: Question a parishioner might have based on some passage or theme in the Gospel of Mark
Saturday, February 18	
8:00 – 9:30 AM	Zoom Class: Gospel of Mark
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Populi Discussion: Question a parishioner might have based on some passage or theme in the Gospel of Matthew
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Zoom Class: Feedback on Populi Discussions
11:15 AM	Worship on Zoom
1:30 – 3:00 PM	Zoom Class: Gospel of Matthew

Friday, March 17	
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Zoom Class: New Testament World
4:30 – 5:30 PM	Populi Discussion: How info from “Background Information for Understanding the NT” might affect teaching or preaching.
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Zoom Class: Gospel of Luke
8:00 – 9:00 PM	Populi Discussion: Question a parishioner might have based on some passage or theme in the Gospel of Luke
Saturday, March 18	
8:00 – 9:30 AM	Zoom Class: Gospel of John
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Populi Discussion: Question a parishioner might have based on some passage or theme in the Gospel of John
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Zoom Class: Feedback on Populi Discussions
11:15 AM	Worship on Zoom
1:30 – 3:00 PM	WRAP-UP: final project ideas + final comments from professor and/or questions from students

Written Assignment One **Submit before 3:00 PM February 17**

This is to be submitted to the professor electronically before the first class session on Feb 17. Length: 5-7 pages, double-spaced (Times New Roman 12-point, one-inch margins).

You are to address a question that might arise for a parishioner when reading the four New Testament Gospels. If you like, you may consider an actual question that has come up in your ministry setting—or you may simply imagine a question that would be likely to occur to someone in your setting as they encounter these books of the Bible.

Some examples (you may use one of these, but feel free to come up with one of your own):

- “In the Gospels, Jesus casts demons out of people all the time, but we don’t see that happening much now—and the church doesn’t seem to take it very seriously? Do people still have demons today and if so why don’t we do anything about it?”
- “Jesus tells rich people to give away all their money and he tells his disciples they have to leave everything to follow him? Was that only for his time or are we being less faithful to him today?”
- “Sometimes a story in one Gospel is different from the same story in another Gospel and at times there are total contradictions. Which one are we supposed to believe if it is all the word of God?”
- “If God loves people, why does Jesus talk about hell so much and claim that most people are going there? Why doesn’t he just save everybody whether they believe in him or not?”

You may submit this through the “Assignments” tab on Populi if you wish, but the easiest thing may be simply to send it as an e-mail attachment to markpowellbusiness@gmail.com. I will get it either way.

Written Assignment Two

This is to be submitted to the professor electronically before **March 31**.

Length: 8-10 pages, double-spaced (Times New Roman 12-point, one-inch margins)

The student is to complete an exegetical study, a reflection paper, or some similar project that is obviously inspired by a text or series of texts from one of the four New Testament Gospels.

The following ideas are suggestions for the sort of project that would be appropriate (the examples given are only random, sample ideas—you might use one of these but you may also feel free to be creative and come up with a topic of your own selection—one that fits your particular interests and the context in which you are now serving:

- a thematic paper treating a topic that is of relevance to the church today (e.g., “Worship in the Gospels” or “Healing in the Gospel of Mark”).
- a theological reflection paper on a theme pertinent to this literature, reflecting on that theme within the broader context of Christian theology (e.g., “How Matthew’s Understanding of Perfection Fits with a Wesleyan Concept of Sanctification” or “How Luke’s Understanding of the Holy Spirit Contributes to Christian Trinitarian Theology”)
- a report on a project planned or conducted within a ministry setting that attempts to relate ideas drawn from the biblical literature we have considered to pastoral ministry in a particular context. For example, a design for a unit of Confirmation Ministry, or for a Stewardship program, or for an Adult Sunday School program.
- a sermon based on a specific pericope from the literature we have examined. (in this case, the Sermon itself might be about 5 pages, with an additional 5 pages explaining why your exegetical understanding of the text led you to preach the passage in the manner that you did—consult at least two reliable biblical commentaries and consider what our textbooks have said about the biblical book in which this pericope is found).

By March 31:

You may submit this through the “Assignments” tab on Populi if you wish, but the easiest thing may be simply to send it as an e-mail attachment to markpowellbusiness@gmail.com. I will get it either way.

Summary of Populi Discussions

MARCH 18 MORNING: Questions from Parishioners on John

BEFORE OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON MARCH 18--each student is to post one question that a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the Gospel of John.

At 9:30 AM on March 18, we will all go to this discussion and began responding to those questions . . . every student should respond to at least 3 different questions, indicating how you might answer the question or address the concern--then we will spend the rest of the time (until 10:30 AM) replying to the responses that others have given.

MARCH 17 AFTERNOON: Comments on “Background Information for Understanding the New Testament

BEFORE OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON MARCH 17--each student is to post a statement of how some information from the document “Background Information for Understanding the New Testament” might inform their teaching or preaching. Or—if they prefer—a question regarding how some information from that document ought to affect their teaching and preaching (for example, if the information is new they are not sure what to do with it).

At 4:30 PM on March 18, we will all go to this discussion and began responding to those statements or questions . . . every student should respond to at least 3 different posts, and then we will spend the rest of the time (until 5:30 PM) replying to the responses that others have given.

FEB 18 MORNING: Questions from Parishioners on Matthew

BEFORE OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON FEB 18--each student is to post one question that a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the Gospel of Matthew.

At 9:30 AM on Feb 18, we will all go to this discussion and began responding to those questions . . . every student should respond to at least 3 different questions, indicating how you might answer the question or address the concern--then we will spend the rest of the time (until 10:30 AM) replying to the responses that others have given.

FEB 17 EVENING: Questions from Parishioners on Mark

BEFORE OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON FEB 17--each student is to post one question that a parishioner might have regarding some passage or theme from the Gospel of Mark.

At 8:00 PM on Feb 17, we will all go to this discussion and began responding to those questions . . . every student should respond to at least 3 different questions, indicating how you might answer the question or address the concern--then we will spend the rest of the time (until 9:00 PM) replying to the responses that others have given.

FEB 17 AFTERNOON: Questions addressed in Written Assignment #1

BEFORE OUR CLASS SESSIONS ON Feb 17--each student is to post s brief statement of the question they addressed in “Written Assignment # 1” and a short paragraph summary of how they responded—less than 150 words.

At 4:30 PM on Feb. 17, we will all go to this discussion and offer responses to the posts of other students-- every student should respond to at least 3 different posts, indicating agreement, disagreement, questions, etc. After about half an hour, students should go back to their original posts and offer replies to responses that have been made by others.

COSSO Academic Honor Policy

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work with the work of another whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following sanctions: (1) warning; (2) failing grade for the assignment and/or course; (3) probation; (4) suspension; (5) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio. In severe or repeat cases (regardless of the sanctions) a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.

COSSO Attendance Policy

National policy from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) states that a student is expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing 20% or more of the classroom work shall not receive credit for the class. In the event of extenuating circumstances which require the student to miss up to 20% of the synchronous course time (whether in-person or on Zoom), the student should contact both the instructor and the Director prior to the start of the class to get approval and discuss make-up work. (Extenuating circumstances include emergency situations, illness, and dire circumstances, for example. Students are to provide back-up coverage at the local church while attending COS classes.)

Cancellation and Withdrawal: Student must notify the COSSO office if they will be unable to attend class for which they are registered. Although there is no penalty when withdrawing more than two weeks in advance of the beginning of a term, registration fees are nontransferable and nonrefundable. A \$50.00 late withdrawal fee is charged for all withdrawals within two weeks of the start of a class. All tuition and housing payments are applied to a future term.

Students withdrawing after the start of a term will be assigned a grade of AW (Administrative Withdrawal) and will be responsible for the full \$300.00 tuition amount. Any annual conference scholarship applied to the student billing record becomes the student's responsibility and is due by the end of the term. Housing payment is non-refundable.

NO SHOWS: Except in cases of immediate and dire emergencies, if a student misses any class without notifying the COSSO office, tuition and housing fees are due immediately, a \$50.00 no show fee is charged, and the student will receive an "F" in the class.