

**COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO
MTSO**

COURSE 321: Bible III, Gospels

This course will begin July 10th, 2026, and end August 1st, 2026. We will meet for a total of 12 hours via an online conferencing software (likely Zoom). We will meet for 6 hours on Zoom each scheduled weekend: 2 hours Friday evening (7–9); 2 hours Saturday morning (9–11); and 2 hours Saturday afternoon (1–3).

The last paper is due August 4th. This gives you a chance to use the information from that final video conference in your paper.

Instructor:

Rev. Britt Leslie, PhD
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Greeting:

Welcome to Bible 3. I am excited about the opportunity to explore the New Testament with you. I was once a pastor too and working another job at the same time. I know how busy things can get. I have done my best to keep the readings and assignments reasonable and still cover all that needs to be covered. If any of you think that you may have a problem completing an assignment for a given week let me know right away and we can work something out.

I find that students and teachers can learn a great deal from each other and I am sure that will be true here. I am eager to hear about your individual ministry contexts and looking forward to discovering together ways to apply New Testament insights to those various contexts. It is my goal that this course will be helpful to you as a pastor.

I. Course Description and Goals:

This course focuses on the content and message of the Gospels, as well as the theological perspectives of the Gospel writers. The practice of exegesis will be emphasized. Students will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, message, and purpose of each Gospel.
2. Perform exegesis on this form of literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

II. Textbooks

(Students are responsible for obtaining their own books):

Required Textbooks: Please note that the required Study Bible, Dictionary and Commentary will be used in this class and in future COS classes, as well as being valuable additions to your pastoral library. You should already own the first three listed below from prior courses.

- 1) [NISB] Harrelson, Walter J. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version*

- with the Apocrypha*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003 ISBN 978-0687278329 \$32
- 2) [HCBD] Mark Allan Powell, ed. *The Harper-Collins Bible Dictionary*. Harper: San Francisco, 2011. ISBN: 978-0061469060 \$30
 - 3) [NIOVC] Gaventa, Beverly Roberts, and David L. Petersen, eds. *The New Interpreter's Bible One-Volume Commentary*. Abingdon Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0687334117 \$60 (Kindle \$37; Olive Tree bible software \$50)
 - 4) Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2018. (If you already have the first edition, 2009, you may use it.) ISBN 0801028687 \$33

Note that the abbreviations in brackets [] above are used in the syllabus to indicate that resource. An advantage of the NISB is its introductory articles to books of the Bible and also the excursuses*. I will assign these in reading assignments. An intro to a biblical book is at the beginning of that book in this study bible. Excursuses appear throughout this book. The list of excurses by subject is found on pg. xxiv - xxv. A list by title of the particular excursus follows on pg. xxv - xxvi. (* an excursus is a useful article set apart from the main text that explains an aspect of the text or a related issue.)

Note: because there is some verbatim repetition from Powell's NT intro and some of the articles in the HCBD, which he edited, your best bet is to read from Powell's NT intro first when doing the reading assignments.

Supplementary: (You won't have *required* readings from these but they might be good for a pastor to own.)

- 1) Rhoads, David M. *The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels*. Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress Press, 1996. ISBN 0800629825 \$20
- 2) DeSilva, David Arthur. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2000. ISBN 978-0830815722 \$20
- 3) Malina, Bruce J. *Windows on the World of Jesus: Time Travel to Ancient Judea*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993. ISBN 978-0664254575 \$20
- 4) The Following will be **very helpful** in completing and understanding your exegetical assignments
 - a. Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010 (may show as 2008 in Amazon). ISBN: 978-0801046407 \$16
 - b. A Gospel synopsis: (Pick *one* of these. This is a tool which allows you to compare the differences and similarities between gospels in a side by side layout. Note: a) is more useful for *pastors* and *teachers* and *include John*. b) does *not include John* but *includes non-canonical* gospels such as Thomas and seems more helpful to someone in *academics* rather than pastoral ministry.)
 - i. EITHER: Aland, Kurt. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. New York: American Bible Society, 2010. ISBN 1585169429. (uses the Revised Standard Version) \$30
NOTE: Make sure you get the English version (See ISBN above) of this and not the Greek only version or the Greek/English version (unless you know Greek and want one of those versions).
 - ii. OR: Jr, Burton H. Throckmorton. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels, NRSV Edition*. 5th ed. Thomas Nelson, 1992. ISBN 0840774842. (uses the New Revised Standard Version) \$27

III. Course Schedule:

A word about navigating the website:

Throughout this syllabus and in the course website (in Populi) you will see some references to the Course Main Module. This is found on the lessons page at the top. It is a one stop shop that contains various information needed in the course. The lessons page can be found by clicking on the word “Lessons” in the column to the left of the course site (the left navigation column).

You will be working through the lessons in order, one lesson for each week that corresponds to the schedule below. The lessons contain links to the discussion forums and an overview of the tasks for that week. They also contain additional material like files to download; PowerPoint files to view; videos to view; etc.

July 10–11 Audio-Video Engagement

- Times:
 - Friday 7–9 pm
 - Saturday 9–11 am; 1–3 pm

Topics

- New Testament Writings
- New Testament World and Ancient Mediterranean Personality
- Jesus
- Jews in a Greco-Roman world
- Synoptic Problem/Puzzle
- The Gospels
- Mark
- Bible Software

Required Readings

- Have the readings for these topics done by July 9th so we can discuss intelligently
- Powell Chapter 1-2, The New Testament Background (ch. 1 in edition 1)
- Powell Chapter 3, The New Testament Writings (ch. 2 in edition 1)
- Powell: Ch. 4, Jesus (Ch. 3 in edition 1)
- Powell: Ch. 5, The Gospels (ch. 4 in edition 1)

Suggested reading:

- NIOVC: Under General Articles: Canon of the NT; Narratives of the New Testament; Culture of Early Judaism; Cultures of the Greco-Roman World
- deSilva handout: Cultural and Social World
- HCBD articles entitled: Canon; Jesus Christ; Gospel; The Gospels; Synoptic Problem
- Rhoads: Introduction and Chapter 1 (not required)
- Malina: (We will talk about the topics covered in these readings, but the readings are not required)

given that this is a supplementary text.)

- Introduction, pp. xiii – xv
- Section I Honor and Shame, pp. 1-19
- Section III In Group, Introductory Window, pg. 47 and Windows 20-24, pp. 52-61
- Window 36, pp. 95-96
- Section IV Lovingkindness, pp. 103-112

Week 1, week of Monday July 13th

Topics

- Mark

Required Readings

- Skim the Gospel of Mark
- Videos on Mark
- Powell: Ch. 7, Mark (ch. 6 in edition 1)
- NISB: Introduction to Mark; All the excursions listed under Mark on pg. xxv

Suggested Readings

- HCBP articles entitled: Mark; Mark, The Gospel According to;
- NIOVC: Overview of Mark
- Rhoads: chapter 3 (not required)
- Gorman: chapter 4 (not required)

Tasks:

- Work the TheBible.org tutorial
- Work the Blue Letter Bible tutorial (Note, this tutorial uses an Old Testament passage as an example. Try the same steps with a passage from one of the Gospels)
- The above tutorials are found in the course main module in a section entitled: Bible Website Tutorials and original language word studies using websites.
- Post in the discussion forum/s by Thursday 11:59pm and reply by Saturday 11:59pm

Assignments Due

- Vital Info Sheet on Mark, DUE Wed. 11:59pm
- Post in the discussion forum/s by Thursday 11:59pm and reply by Saturday 11:59pm

Week 2 Week of Monday July 20th

Topics

- Matthew
- Luke

Required Readings

- Skim the Gospel of Matthew
- Videos on Matthew
- Skim the Gospel of Luke
- Videos on Luke
- Powell: Ch. 6, Matthew (ch. 5 in edition 1)
- Powell: Ch. 8, Luke (ch. 7 in edition 1)
- NISB: Introduction to Matthew
- NISB: Introduction to Luke

Suggested Readings

- HCBD articles entitled: Matthew; Matthew, The Gospel According to
- HCBD articles entitled: Luke; Luke, The Gospel of
- NIOVC: Overview of Matthew
- NIOVC: Overview of Luke
- Rhoads: chapter 4
- Rhoads: chapter 5
- Gorman: chapter 5

Assignments Due

- Vital Info Sheet on Matthew, DUE Wed. 11:59pm
- Vital Info Sheet on Luke, DUE Wed. 11:59pm
- Post in the discussion forum/s by Thursday 11:59pm and reply by Saturday 11:59pm
- EXEGESIS EXERCISE: Literary Context/Synoptic Comparison, **DUE Sat. July 25th 11:59pm**

Week 3, Week of Monday July 27th

Topics

- John

Required Readings

- Skim the Gospel of John
- Videos on John
- Powell: Ch. 9, John (ch. 8 in edition 1)
- NISB: Introduction to John and all excursus for John listed on pg. xxv.

Suggested Readings

- HCBD articles entitled: John; John, The Gospel of
- NIOVC: Overview of John
- Rhoads: chapter 6
- Gorman chapter 6-7

Assignments Due

- Vital Info Sheet on John, DUE Wed. 11:59pm
- Post in the discussion forum/s by Thursday 11:59pm and reply by Saturday 11:59pm

July 31st–August 1st Audio-Video Engagement

- Times:
 - Friday 7–9 pm
 - Saturday 9–11 am; 1–3 pm
- Topics:
 - Review of what we have learned
 - How to do a detailed analysis paper (for your paper)
 - Review of how to use Bible Software (from week 1)
 - How to integrate this into a detailed analysis of a passage

Assignments Due

- EXEGESIS EXERCISE: Close Reading/detailed analysis, **DUE Tuesday August 4th 11:59pm**

IV. Explanation of assignments and due dates:

- Assignments are due *11:59pm* at the night of the due date.
- Electronic submission of written work:
 - It is the STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY to submit work in the correct file format.
 - Assignments should be submitted in MS Word (*.doc or *.docx) format or Rich Text format (*.RTF). Most word processor programs (even for the Mac and I-Pad) have the capability to save documents in those formats. This is usually accomplished by choosing the "save as" feature on the program and then selecting the "rich text" or "word" file type.
 - Adobe Acrobat format (*.PDF) is also acceptable. Some programs can save files in this format. Also, there are some third-party programs and websites which will convert many file types into this format.
 - All assignments will be returned to you in Adobe Acrobat (*.PDF) format since this is the most efficient way I have found to comment on the contents of written work. So, you will need something like the Adobe Acrobat Reader (free download) to read the comments on the graded and returned assignments.
- General information on the papers:
 - Papers will be submitted electronically through the Populi website
 - Use of sources, citation and bibliography:
 - Papers will follow Turabian standards for reference citation and bibliography
 - This may be *footnoting* with a *bibliography*
 - This may be *author/page/date* citation with a *bibliography* (often this is the easiest if it is difficult to use the footnoting feature on your word processing software).
 - It is *very important* that you include a bibliography so that I can find what you are referencing! I can't check it if I don't know where it is.
 - Quotations should be placed in quotation marks and quotations over four lines should be single spaced and indented one half inch from the left margin of the main text. See various examples and style sheets on our course Populi page.
 - Resources for these citation styles are on our course Populi page.
 - Note that most of your work will be from your own observations of the biblical text and the exegetical tools you will use to understand that text.
 - When you use secondary resources, those resources should be given their due. See the Academic Honor Policy below.
 - Quoting verbatim or nearly verbatim from a print, electronic, or internet source *must* be indicated as a quotation (using quotation marks or indenting and single-spacing quotations over 4 lines) and the source cited. Also, when using information or an idea from a particular source it *must* be cited. Failure to do so shall result in one or more consequences listed in the Academic Honor Policy below.
 - For Exegetical Exercises, use 1-inch margins, 12-point font, and double spacing. Just FYI: For a page with 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, and minimal spacing elements, a good rule of thumb is 500 words for a single spaced page and 250 words for a double spaced page.
 - For the Exegetical Exercises below:
 - Each paper will report the findings of an exegetical method. This is the "what" of your paper.
 - Each paper will conclude with a paragraph or two about how the information discovered will affect preaching and teaching. This is the "so what" of your paper.

1. Exegesis Exercise: Literary context and synoptic comparison (6-8 pages *double spaced*)
 - a. **DUE:** 11:59 pm Saturday July 25th
 - b. Passage: Luke 9:28-36
 - c. See **handout** (posted in course main module) for more information.
2. Exegesis Exercise: Detailed Analysis (6-8 pages *double spaced*)
 - a. **DUE:** 11:59 pm Tuesday August 4th
 - b. Passage: John 3:16-21
 - c. See **handout** (posted in course main module) for more information.
3. Vital Info Sheets (about one-page *single space*)
 - a. **DUE: on Wednesdays** by 11:59 pm.
 - b. Taken primarily from the required readings from Powell; and if you want, the suggested readings from Rhoads, NISB, NIOVC and from any online and posted material
 - c. Will contain information on the particular book of the bible assigned.
 - d. Will address the following:
 - i. Authorship
 - ii. Date
 - iii. Place (where was it written and where was it received)
 - iv. Audience
 - v. Exigence (why was it written)
 - vi. Summary of the message, content, major themes
 - e. Basically you are answering: WHO (author) said WHAT (content, major themes) to WHOM (audience)? WHEN (date) did they say it? WHERE it was said (place of writing)? WHERE was it heard (audience location)? WHY (exigence) did the author say it?
 - f. The purpose of these “info. sheets” is so that *you will have a ready reference* each time you prepare to preach or teach from one of these biblical books.
 - g. With that in mind:
 - i. Don’t worry about form. The sheet can be in outline form with bullet points etc. and organized in a way helpful to you in later ministry, if it contains the info listed above.
 - ii. Citations should be a simple author and page number in parenthesis method, such as (Powell, 200) or (Harrelson, 1953), placed beside a bit of info so later you will be able to find it.
4. Participation in the required discussion forum/s for each week:
 - a. This is akin to showing up for class in an online environment.
 - b. The way a discussion forum works is that there is an initial question about a topic for the week. A student makes an initial post to the forum answering that question based on the readings and other material. Then other students have a chance to post replies to that initial post.
 - c. Posts should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the readings and other posted material.
 - d. Posts should follow the guidelines stated for each discussion forum.
 - e. Replies should reflect genuine engagement with the post to which you are replying in relation to the readings and other posted material.
 - f. Posts and replies do not need to be lengthy (concise is better) but should reflect *familiarity with the readings and other posted material*. Replies should reflect a depth of

- engagement with the ideas in the post to which you are replying. This goes *beyond* something like, “Good ideas!” or “I liked what you had to say here” or “I really enjoyed your post.”
- g. The minimum for these will be one post and one reply *unless* otherwise stated in the discussion forum instructions.
 - h. All *initial* posts will be **due by Thursday 11:59 pm** so students will have time to reply to those initial posts.
 - i. Replies to initial Posts will be due by Saturday 11:59 pm.

Grading:

| Assignment | % Value |
|--|------------------|
| Literary Context and Synoptic Comparison (6-8 pages) | 16 |
| Close reading/detailed analysis (6-8 pages) | 24 |
| Vital Info Sheet for each Gospel (1-2 pages each, total 4-8 pp.) | 7.5 each x4 = 30 |
| Course participation including graded discussions* | 30 |
| Total | 100 |

*Note: participation in discussion forums in an online environment is akin to class attendance in a face-to-face setting. I have assigned a value to assess the quality of student interaction which should reflect familiarity with the course content and reading material, and thoughtful response to the comments of others as described in 4 above. However, simply not participating at all may result in a greater than the total reduction in the student’s final grade or perhaps failure of the course.

V. 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) [including online resources]. A writer’s work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) 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.

VI. 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 class sessions 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.)

Students attending online are required to show their faces the entire class time in order to be considered present, unless internet bandwidth issues or emergency circumstances (e.g., a power outage) necessitate turning off one's camera or calling in to class by phone. You are expected to attend class as you would in a face-to-face classroom (e.g, not driving). During asynchronous class time, faculty may monitor time used in posting and responding to colleagues to track your participation.

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 and unpaid registration fees are still due if withdrawing past the registration deadline. 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.

VII. Bibliography of recommended resources

A. Study Bibles

Attridge, Harold W., and Society Of Biblical Literature. *HarperCollins Study Bible - Student Edition: Fully Revised & Updated*. Rev Upd. HarperOne, 2006

Coogan, Michael D., Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, and PHEME PERKINS. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*. Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press, USA, 2010.

Harrelson, Walter J. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version With the Apocrypha*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Renovare, Richard J. Foster, Dallas Willard, Walter Brueggemann, Eugene H. Peterson, Bruce Demarest, et al. *The Life with God Bible NRSV*. HarperOne, 2009.

[NOTE: This is a more “devotional” oriented annotated bible written by sound biblical scholars. You may want to supplement your primary study bible with this.]

B. Bible Dictionaries

1. One Volume

Freedman, David Noel, Astrid B. Beck, and Allen C. Myers, eds. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

Powell, Mark Allan. *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary - Revised & Updated*. HarperOne, 2011.

Powell, Mark Allan. *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary - Condensed Edition*. Abridged. HarperOne, 2009.

2. Multi Volume

Freedman, David Noel. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vol. Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1992.

Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 vol. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009.

C. Biblical world

deSilva, David A. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Malina, Bruce J. *Windows on the World of Jesus: Time Travel to Ancient Judea*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

D. One Volume Commentaries
 1. General

Barton, John, and John Muddiman, eds. *The Oxford Bible Commentary*. 1st ed. Oxford University Press, USA, 2001.

Brown, Raymond E., Roland Murphy, and Joseph A. Fitzmyer. *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Continuum, 2003.

Dunn, James D. G., ed. *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.

Gaventa, Beverly Roberts, and David L. Petersen, eds. *The New Interpreter's Bible One-Volume Commentary*. Abingdon Press, 2010.

Mays, James L. HarperCollins Bible Commentary - Revised Edition. Rev Sub. HarperOne, 2000.

2. Written with social location in mind

Blount, Brian K., Cain Hope Felder, Clarice J. Martin, and Emerson B. Powery, eds. *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*. Fortress Press, 2007.

Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe. *The Women's Bible Commentary - expanded*. Expanded. Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Patte, Daniel. *Global Bible Commentary*. First ed. Abingdon Press, 2004. [NOTE: highly recommended]

E. Multi Volume Commentaries or Commentary Series

- Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
- Anchor Bible Commentaries
- Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
- Black's New Testament Commentaries
- Feminist Companion
- Hermeneia (requires biblical languages)
- Interpretation
- New Cambridge Bible Commentary
- New International Commentary on the New Testament
- New Interpreter's Bible
- New Testament Readings
- Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament
- Reading the New Testament Commentary Series
- Sacra Pagina
- Socio-Rhetorical Commentary Series
- Westminster Bible Companion
- Word Biblical Commentary