

MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

BI6616 Interpreting the Gospels, 3 credit hours

Course Description

Examination and utilization of various interpretative methods employed in the study of the Gospels and parables. Exploration of the social context of the gospels and its bearing on the interpretation of various gospel passages. Study focused on one of the synoptic gospels. Analysis of forms in the gospels and the use of parallel passages in interpretation addressed. Application of interpretative results to contemporary contexts achieved through case study method.

Course Objectives

1. Analyze passages in the gospels using various interpretative methods
2. Apply socio-cultural trends from the second temple period to passages in the gospels for interpretation
3. Evaluate significant aspects of the history of interpretation as part of one's interpretation of specific passages within the synoptic gospels
4. Present an argument for Jesus' mission as portrayed within one of the synoptic gospels in relation to socio-cultural trends
5. Differentiate the literary, thematic, and theological contributions of each gospel

Course Textbooks (Required)

- Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Zondervan, 2007). ISBN: 9780310226970
- Wright, N.T. *Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did and Why He Matters* (HarperOne, 2011). ISBN: 9780062084292

Audio/Videos:

- "The Crisis and Response of Second Temple Judaism" (Week 2 lecture by Kerwin Rodriguez)
- "Applying Narrative Criticism to Luke 7:36-50" (Week 5 lecture by Kerwin Rodriguez)

PDFs:

- Aune, David E. "The Gospels as Ancient Biography and the Growth of Jesus Literature." Pages 46-74 in *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Edited by Wayne A. Meeks; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987).
- Bock, Darrell L. "Form Criticism." Pages 181-187 in *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002).
- Davids, Peter H. "Rich and Poor." Pages 701-710 in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Edited by Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight, I. Howard Marshall; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

- Heard, Warren J. Jr. "Revolutionary Movements." Pages 688-698 in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (Edited by Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight, I. Howard Marshall; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).
- Horsley, Richard. "Royal Pretenders and Messianic Movements." Pages 98-127 in Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999).
- Hurtado, L.W. "Christ" Pages 106-117 in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (Edited by Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight, I. Howard Marshall; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).
- Osborne, Grant. "Parable." Pages 235-251 in The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Introduction (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991).
- Osborne, Grant. "Redaction Criticism." Pages 662-668 in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (Edited by Joel B. Green, Scott McKnight, I. Howard Marshall; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).
- Osborne, Grant. "Round Four: The Redaction Debate Continues." JETS 28/4 (1985), 399-410.
- Pennington, Jonathan T. "Building the House through Wise Reading." Pages 169-210 in Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).
- Perrin, Nicholas. "The Imperial Cult." Pages 124-134 in The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts (Edited by Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).
- Scott Jr., J. Julius. "The Religious Thought of Intertestamental Judaism: A Background for Christian Customs and Controversies." Pages 283-323 in Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995).
- Stein, Robert H. "The Method and Practice of Redaction Criticism." Pages 243-272 In Studying the Synoptic Gospels: Origin and Interpretation (2nd Edition; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

Bible:

- ESV or NASB Bible translation

Assignments (what student does for a grade)

Guideline for the Discussion Board: Post your initial response to the discussion question by mid-week (Saturday, 12:00am CDT). Then read and respond to at least **TWO** of your classmates' initial posts by the end of the week (Tuesday, 12:00am CDT).

1. **2-1 Reflection Writing:** How does Isaiah 40-55 develop the theme of Messiah? What particular aspects of Isaiah's messiah does Mark intend to invoke in Mark 1:1-15? Write approximately two pages as a reflection of your thoughts.
2. **3-1 "Bad Economics is Good Business for Revolutionaries" Worksheet:** Compare the 1st Century response to poverty of the zealots with Jesus' kingdom of God response in the **worksheet** provided for this assignment.

3. **3-2 “Who’s the Messiah” Worksheet:** Compare Luke’s birth narrative to Caesar Augustus Good News pronouncement in Luke 2:1-20 in the **worksheet** provided for this assignment.
4. **3-3 Exegetical Paper #1:** Choose a passage from the **list provided**. You will apply various interpretive methods to this passage throughout the course. Identify any key words or ideas in your passage which are clarified by Second Temple Judaism or Greco-Roman society. Explain their significance. If your passage alludes to or quotes an Old Testament passage, explain how the passage is being used. (Approximately 1½ pages)
5. **4-1 Redaction Worksheet:** Complete the provided **worksheet**.
6. **4-2 Exegetical Paper #2:** Conduct a redaction analysis of your exegetical passage from Assignment 3-3. Answer the following questions: What differences appear? What, if any, significance do these differences have? (Approximately 2 pages)
7. **5-1 Interpreting Parables and Miracles Worksheet:** Complete the provided **worksheet**.
8. **5-2 Exegetical Paper #3:** Analyze your from passage Assignment 3-3 according to the Narrative model presented by Pennington (pp. 202 for full process). Analysis should be 1-2 pages.
9. **6-1 Synoptic Gospel Emphasis Worksheet:** Complete the provided **worksheet**.
10. **6-2 Exegetical Paper #4:** Provide the central point of your passage from Assignment 3-3. How does your passage and its central point contribute to the theological theme of the book it is a part of. (Approximately 1 page)
11. **7-1 Mission of Jesus Paper:** This paper should include two parts: (1) a short summary and an evaluation of Wright’s portrait of Jesus (approximately 1-2 pages), and (2) your statement of who Jesus was and why he lived; include comments on a particular gospel passage which demonstrates this understanding (approximately 3 pages).

Assessments

Discussions (3)	10%
2-1 Reflection Writing	10%
3-1, 3-2, 4-1, 5-1, 6-1 Reading and Scripture Worksheets	20%
3-3, 4-2, 5-2, 6-2 Exegetical Paper of a Synoptic Passage	30%
7-1 Mission of Jesus Paper	30%
Total:	100%

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Description
A	96 – 100	Exceptional work
A-	94 – 95	Excellent work
B+	92 – 93	Very good work
B	89 – 91	Good work
B-	87 – 88	Above average work
C+	83 – 86	Average work
C	79 – 82	Work needs improvement
C-	75 – 78	Minimally acceptable work
F	< 75	Unacceptable work

Course Resources

Online students have access to the Moody Library. Though students may wish to check out books via inter-library loan, the online database has a number of articles and reviews available for download. You can access the online database by logging into your account at my.moody.edu. If you have not previously accessed the library database you may wish to complete the database tutorial at <http://library.moody.edu>.

In addition to the resources available at the Moody Library, you may wish to visit <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk> or www.bible.org. These sites contain content on various topics written by competent biblical scholars. It is also suggested that you download a free version of the NET Bible at bible.org.

The final resource that deserves mention here is iTunes University. Apple has developed a platform for colleges and universities to post audio and video content. There are a number of lectures available on iTunes U, including some on the Old Testament historical and prophetic books. Various schools such as Dallas Theological Seminary, Seattle Pacific University, Duke, and Yale have posted content related to biblical and theological studies. In addition, Covenant Theological Seminary has an Old Testament podcast.

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