

**COS #321 – BIBLE III  
GOSPELS**

**COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO  
West Virginia Extension**

**Fall Term, 2020**

**ON - LINE**

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## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

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.

(Objectives, COS Revised Curriculum-2014)

## **II. TEXTBOOKS:**

### **Required Reading:**

Powell, Mark A., *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2018; ISBN: 9780801096601.

Murphy, Frederick J., *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2005; ISBN: 9781426749155.

NRSV Bible translation

### **Reference: (Recommended & Supplementary)**

Culpepper, R. Alan, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, Fortress Press, Kindle Version; ASIN: B002C1AGVI.

Ringe, Sharon, *Luke: Westminster Bible Companion*, Westminster Press, Louisville, 1995; 9780664252595.

Smith, Moody, *Abingdon New Testament Commentary on John*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1999; 9780687058129.

## **III. GOAL OF COURSE:**

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.

## **IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

### **Students will be able to:**

1. Understand the origin, message, and purpose of each Gospel.
2. Exegete this form of literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.
4. Show understanding of the context of New Testament background

## V. CALENDAR OF CLASS & TOPICS AND READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:

**SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 9:00am – 11:00am ZOOM session #1**

### ASSIGNMENTS prior to Zoom session #1 (Sept 26, 2020):

Read *Introducing the New Testament*, Powell; pages 11-75 (Preface & Chap 1-3)

Read *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, Murphy; pages 1-85 (Intro & Chap 1-2)

Write reflection paper - Favorite “Gospel” story, scripture text (2-3 pages);

See VII. Syllabus, page 7 (A)

**DUE: Friday, Sept 25 12noon**

(email to instructor – DrBillWilson@aol.com)

### ZOOM SESSION #1

- **9:00am - 9:45am** Introductions  
(What is your favorite Gospel story/text?)  
Syllabus review/assignments  
Basic understanding of Scripture study (Discussion)
  
- **15 minute on-line break**
  
- **10:00am – 11:00am** Exegesis – what? why? how?  
New Testament culture & history  
(Lecture [screen sharing] and discussion)

**OCTOBER 10, 2020 9:00am – 11:00am ZOOM session #2**

### ASSIGNMENTS prior to Zoom session #2 (Oct 10, 2020):

Read *Introducing the New Testament*, Powell; pages 77-117 (Chap 4 – 5)

Read *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, Murphy; pages 291 – 372 (Chap 7-8)

### ZOOM SESSION #2

- **9:00am – 9:45am** General view of The Gospels  
Synoptic puzzle  
The Canon - Closed or open?  
The “Other Gospels”  
What about the historical Jesus?  
(Lecture [screen sharing] and Discussion)
  
- **15 minute on-line break**
  
- **10:00am – 11:00am** Gospel - “Infancy Narratives”  
Gospel - “Passion Narrative”  
(Lecture [screen sharing] and Discussion)

**OCTOBER 31, 2020 9:00am – 11:00am ZOOM session #3**

**ASSIGNMENTS prior to Zoom sessions #3 & #4 (Oct 31, 2020):**

**Read** *Introducing the New Testament*, Powell; pages 119-229 (Chap 6-10)

**Read** *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, Murphy; pages 89-289 (Chap 3-6)

**Write a Reflection Paper –“Gospel”** (3-6 pages)

See VII. Syllabus, page 7 (C.)

**DUE: Friday, Oct 30 mail or email by 12noon**

- **9:00am – 9:45am** Gospel of Mark  
(Discussion and break out “zoom rooms”)
- **15 minute on-line break**
- **10:00am – 11:00am** Gospel of Matthew  
(Discussion and break out “zoom rooms”)

**OCTOBER 31, 2020 1:00pm – 3:00pm ZOOM session #4**

**ASSIGNMENTS prior to Zoom sessions #3 & #4 (see above – Session #3)**

- **1:00pm – 1:45pm** Gospel of Luke/ Acts  
(Discussion and break out “zoom rooms”)
- **15 minute on-line break**
- **2:00pm – 3:00pm** Gospel of John  
(Discussion and break out “zoom rooms”)

**NOVEMBER 14, 2020 9:00am – 11:00am ZOOM session #5**

**ASSIGNMENT prior to Zoom session #5**

**Research for project; develop project;**  
2-4 page summary **DUE: Friday, Nov 13, 12noon**  
**email to instructor (DrBillWilson@aol.com)**  
See syllabus, VII. page 8 (D.) for instructions



**9:00am – 11:00am (with 10 min. break)**

Project sharing by class members (no more than 10 min. each)

**NOTE:**

**Any document to share with class must be sent to instructor by Friday, Nov 13; 12noon. Instructor will coordinate “screen sharing” on Zoom with student.**

**FINAL ASSIGNMENT**

**Exegesis paper** on assigned Gospel text - **DUE: Monday, Nov 30; 11:59pm**  
See Syllabus, VII pages 8-9 (E.) for instructions

**Mail or email; if mailed, send a self-addressed stamped envelope  
for return of paper, otherwise return of paper by email.**

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**SUMMARY OF DUE DATES - PAPERS**

|                                    |   |            |
|------------------------------------|---|------------|
| <b>Friday, September 25 12noon</b> | Reflection paper - “Favorite Text/ Introduction | 2-3 pages  |
| <b>Friday, October 30 12noon</b>   | Reflection paper- “Gospel”                      | 3-6 pages  |
| <b>Friday, November 13 12noon</b>  | Project Summary                                 | 2-4 pages  |
| <b>Monday, November 30 11:59pm</b> | Exegesis paper                                  | 8-10 pages |

## VI. CLASS STANDARDS:

### A. Wesleyan “Rule of Life”:

- Do no harm
- Do good
- Attend to ordinances of God (spiritual discipline).

*(General Rules, Discipline 2012)*

### B. Inclusive language

It is expected that students be committed to equality for women and men of every racial and ethnic background. Students and instructor are to use language which exemplifies respect, dignity and equality in conversations with colleagues, in public discourse, in classroom discussions and in writings. Class participants will be expected to use inclusive language in all writings and during class discussion & participation. If you have specific questions, please see the instructor. (Helpful resource, *Words that Hurt, Words that Heal (new edition)* (Cokesbury.com download, original 1980 resource)

### C. Academic Integrity

Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the learning community. (see page 28, *COS Student Handbook, 2019-20* – “Academic responsibility”) Also, guidelines for writing, page 22, *COS Handbook*.

### D. Attendance

Instructor expects timely participation of students; tardiness is a sign of disrespect to others. Extenuating circumstances should be reported to instructor and COS Dean immediately. (see COS Attendance Policy – page 13, *COS Student Handbook, 2019-20*)

### E Confidentiality

It is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing conversations with those outside of the classroom.

## VII. ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, AND EVALUATION:

**Note: All assignments are due and expected on time. (If because of some extenuating circumstances you are unable to meet a given deadline, you must contact the instructor *before* the deadline in question is expected. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade for the assignment.) No Incomplete grade can be granted in this class.**

*Helpful hint - make a copy of all written work mailed or emailed and turned in to instructor.*

### **A. Reflection Paper – “Introduction & Favorite Gospel verse/story” (10% of final grade)**

**DUE: emailed to instructor ([DrBillWilson@aol.com](mailto:DrBillWilson@aol.com)), Friday, Sept 25, 12noon**

- ✓ 2-3 page paper
- ✓ What is your favorite Gospel scripture text, verse or story that gives you meaning, has formed you and continues to inform you, and inspires you in your life & ministry?
- ✓ Select the Gospel text – give the text or Scripture citation in the paper;
- ✓ Give a very brief introduction of yourself - (include where you were reared/family of origin, your length of time in ministry and where you are currently serving).
- ✓ Why does this story or the text have meaning to you? Why has it formed and informed you?

**B. Class participation (20% of final grade)** COS requires that students attend all class sessions in order to receive credit for the course. No “cuts” or “excused absences” are allowed for church, community, family or other business. In extreme cases, such as serious illness or a family emergency, an additional paper on the reading material of the missed session will be required and negotiated with the instructor.

- a) Timely, careful reading and completion of assignments in preparation for class participation is expected.
- b) Class discussion through verbal contributions including any small group is expected; respectful and hospitable listening to contributions by others is a class norm. It is the duty of each class member to contribute regularly to discussions without monopolizing the time.

### **C. Reflection Paper – “Gospel” (20% of final grade) DUE: Friday, Oct 30 12 noon**

- ✓ 3-6 page paper reflecting on reading.
- ✓ Select one of the Gospels
- ✓ Summarize a brief overview of its background (who, what when, where) (Note: describe as if introducing this as a Bible Study in a church or Sunday School class)
- ✓ Describe in the paper the primary emphasis, community or circumstances of the Gospel writer. What is significant about the particular Gospel you have chose?
- ✓ What does the Gospel chosen tell us about Jesus? How is Jesus portrayed?

**D. Project (25% of final grade)**

**Saturday, Nov 14 ZOOM session #5**

Each student will plan to share a “project” that reflects research and personal creativity using the website ([www.IntroducingNT.com](http://www.IntroducingNT.com)) from textbook, Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*.

- On website, go to Themes and Assets to explore possibilities; select a topic.
- Research the resource selected using the website link.
- Prepare a presentation of **no more than 10 minutes** length using art or music or poster, handouts of a theme you have chosen from the website. Saturday, Nov 14 ZOOM session #5 will be used for presentations to the class. The intention is to share basic New Testament background with class.

- **Submit a 2-4 page summary of what resource used from this website:**

**(<http://bakerpublishinggroup.com/books/introducing-the-new-testament-2nd-edition/11940/students/esources>), and basic outline of the theme. Address one learning take-away from the project theme. Summary to be submitted to instructor by email (DrBillWilson@aol.com) or mail by Friday, Nov 13, 12noon**

- Handout document for “Screen sharing” on ZOOM must be sent by email to instructor by Friday, Nov 13, 2020, 12noon; the instructor will coordinate the sharing on the ZOOM screen during the presentation.

**E. Exegesis paper – (25% of final grade)**

**DUE: Monday, Nov 30, 11:59pm**

**Mail or email**

- ✓ 8-10 page paper
- ✓ You are to select one of the following texts for the exegesis & a sermon outline:  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent (Year B) – Nov 29, 2020 - Mark 13:24-37**  
**Christmas Day (Year B) Dec 24 or 25, 2020 - John 1:1-14**  
**New Years/Watch Night (Year B) – Dec 31,2020 - Matthew 25:31-46**
- ✓ You may use any of the resources from this class – DO NOT RELY ON OTHER COMMENTARIES; you may use a Study Bible and must footnote any reference from it, as well as proper footnote of any of the class resources.
- ✓ Following the outline provided here for the paper, mark each section of the paper with the categories below:

**Text.** Copy the text of the passage chosen, single-spaced, including verse numbers and indications of your own paragraph divisions; **(must be from NRSV)** you may use another translation or paraphrase in the paper only to compare or inform. That other text must be copied out at the point of usage.

**Historical Context.** Focus here is on information not directly gathered from the text itself or its literary contexts (i.e., things such as dates, international situation, larger setting within Israel's history, etc.). Outside sources (such as Bible commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, or histories) should be used (and footnoted) here.

**Literary Context.** (1) Discuss the placement of the passage in its immediate and larger contexts within the Gospel or other scripture, and (2) justify the paragraph divisions you have provided above. Look for clues in the immediately preceding and following contexts that show how the passage you are considering fits into its context (i.e., why it is where it is). In this process, you should carefully examine the surrounding paragraphs and then the surrounding chapters (or, perhaps you might find it easier to reverse the process, going from the larger chapter level to the more immediate paragraph level). Be as specific as you can.



**Paragraph Analysis.** Identify the theme of each paragraph in one sentence per paragraph. This may be a key sentence taken directly from the text or a statement in your own words of the paragraph's theme. Justify your judgment in each case (i.e., give your reasons for it).

**Verse Analysis.** Comment here on important features of individual verses. (In a longer passage, focus on each paragraph instead of each verse.) Do not merely summarize each verse (or paragraph) or re-state the obvious. Do comment on the flow of the argument or story-line from verse to verse (or paragraph to paragraph), including commenting upon why certain things may be stated in the particular way that they are, why certain statements are included where they are, why there may be omissions of expected materials, etc. Comment as needed on important theological words or ideas. Notice where else in the book or in other Biblical books certain words or ideas are found. You may use concordances or theological wordbooks here, including any cross-referencing guide you like (such as that found within most Bibles themselves).

**Theme.** Provide a one-sentence statement of the theme of the entire text (i.e., what is the author's main point in this text?). This should be based upon the various stages of your detailed analysis above, especially building upon your statements of theme for each paragraph. Please explain the basis for your decision.

**Homiletical (Sermon) Outline.** Conclude with a brief outline for preaching the text. What are the points you would make in the sermon; show how it relates to the text or how you are using the text or interpreting the text. Be sure that you reflect the theme of the passage in this outline. (Give a brief description of your context in which this sermon would be preached.)

**Note: The model here - of several steps comprising an exegesis of a text - comes from and is modified from the following work, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.**

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*Lord, inspire me to read your Scriptures  
 and to meditate upon them day and night.  
 I beg you to give me real understanding of what I need,  
 that I in turn may put its precepts into practice.  
 Yet, I know that understanding and good intentions are worthless,  
 unless rooted in your graceful love.  
 So I ask that the words of Scripture may also be not just signs on a page,  
 but channels of grace into my heart. Amen.*

(Origin, 184-253 AD)