

**COS #321 – BIBLE III  
GOSPELS**

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

**Fall Term, 2023**

**HYBRID  
SEPT 16, 2023 ON LINE (ZOOM)  
NOV 17-19, 2023 (SPRING HEIGHTS)**

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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 16, 2023 9:00am – 11:00am ZOOM session #1**

### ASSIGNMENTS prior to Zoom session #1:

**Read *Introducing the New Testament*, Powell; pages 11-117 (Preface & Chap 1-5)**

**Read *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, Murphy; pages 1-85 (Intro & Chap 1-2)  
& pages 291 – 372 (Chap 7-8)**

**Write reflection paper - Favorite “Gospel” story, scripture text (2-4 pages);**

See VII. Syllabus, page 8 (A)

**DUE: Friday, Sept 15 12noon**

**(email to instructor – DrBillWilson@aol.com)**

### ZOOM SESSION #1

- **9:00am - 9:50am**                      Introductions  
(What is your favorite Gospel story/text?)  
Syllabus review/assignments  
Basic understanding of Scripture study (Discussion)
  
- **10 minute on-line break**
  
- **10:00am – 11:00am**                Exegesis – what? why? how?  
New Testament culture & history

**SEPTEMBER 16, 2023 1:00pm – 3:00pm ZOOM session #2**

### ZOOM SESSION #2

- **1:00pm – 1:50pm**                General view of The Gospels  
Synoptic puzzle  
The Canon - Closed or open?  
The “Other Gospels”  
What about the historical Jesus?
  
- **10 minute on-line break**
  
- **2:00pm – 3:00pm**                Gospel - “Infancy Narratives”  
Gospel - “Passion Narrative”

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

See VII. Syllabus, page 8 (C.)

**DUE: Friday, Oct 20 mail or email by 12noon**

**SEPTEMBER 17 – NOVEMBER 12, 2023 ASYNCHRONOUS (ON LINE WORK)**

**Discussion Instruction:** Each week you are to post on **Teachable platform** - a response of 100 words or less to question posed by instructor; and also reply/respond with no more than 100 words to at least two (2) of your fellow students and their response; (throughout the term, you must have responded to each of the class members). **Deadline each week: post must be done by Friday's, 12noon.**

**Video instruction:** You are to view the video clip, and then reflect and respond in 100 words or less to the questions asked; **NOTE:** feel free to discuss by reply to other class members, but for video responses this is not required.

**Week 1 (September 17-22)**

- **Question:** *What is your favorite Gospel story or verse? How has it been formational for you? What meaning to you?*
- **View video – YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEEvKa3U3Y>  
Prof. N. T. Wright, "The New Testament in Its World"
- **Response to video:** *What one idea, insight was helpful? What is the one take-away concept you like from the video clip? Any issues?*

**Week 2 (September 24-29)**

- **Question:** *Scripture itself and biblical scholars challenge us to be "doers of the Gospel"; and, we teach and preach that we are to "live the Gospel" – what does this mean to you in these days, in these times, and culture?*
- **View video – YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICHovRHJAYY>  
Prof. N. T. Wright, "Gospels"
- **Respond to video:** *What one idea, insight was helpful? What is the one take-away concept you like from the video clip? Any issues?*

**Week 3 (October 1-6)**

- **Question:** *From the text, An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels, author, Frederick Murphy in Chapter Eight, "The Historical Jesus", raises the issue (pp. 317-319) – "texts that do not simply claim to convey history. They proclaim religious truth. . .believers are accustomed to thinking that they have a firm historical foundation of what Jesus actually said and did on which to build their religion." What is your reflection, reaction or response, and understanding of any differences; what concerns, what issues do you see after reading about "The Historical Jesus"?*

#### **Week 4 (October 8-13)**

- **Question:** *Some biblical theologians have suggested that one of the primary purposes of the Gospel story is to point to the Passion Narratives. One theologian says, “Gospels are passion narratives with extended introductions”. Each Gospel writer has their own perspective. How do the other stories and approach of the individual gospel writings point to the death and resurrection of Jesus? Give one specific example of this from your understanding.*

#### **Week 5 (October 15-20)**

- **Question:** *In your opinion, what one parable of Jesus has significant meaning for teaching, preaching, and proclaiming the “gospel message” in these days, in these times, and our culture?*

#### **Week 6 (October 22-27)**

- **Question:** *For centuries in many liturgical practices and worship it has been appropriate to ask persons to stand for the reading of the Gospel in worship settings. What meaning does this have or not have for you and your current congregational setting?*

#### **Week 7 (October 29 – November 3)**

- **Question:** *Nearly one-fifth of the Gospel accounts are devoted to Jesus’ healing ministry, including the circumstances, the methods used and the effects on the individual and those who were on-lookers. What is one of your favorite stories of healing (give biblical reference)? What meaning does that story have on your understanding of Jesus’ ministry and the message of the Gospel?*

#### **Week 8 (November 5-10)**

- **View video:** YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGS6YWz3oDY>  
Bishop Will Willimon preaching, “The Woman at the Well”, John 4:5-42.
- **Respond to video:** *What one idea, insight was helpful? What is the one take-away concept you like from the video clip? Any issues?*

**NOVEMBER 17 – 19, 2023 @ SPRING HEIGHTS, SPENCER**

**ASSIGNMENTS prior to WEEKEND:**

**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)

**Research for project; develop project;**

2-4 page summary **DUE: Friday, Nov 17, 12noon**

**email to instructor** (DrBillWilson@aol.com)

See syllabus, VII. page 9 (D.) for instructions

- **FRIDAY evening**      **Class Session 1**      **Gospel of Mark**
- **SATURDAY morning**    **Class Session 2**      **Gospel of Matthew & Luke**
- **SATURDAY afternoon**    **Class Session 3**      **Gospel of John**
- **SUNDAY morning**      **Class Session 4**      **Project sharing**  
Project sharing by class members (**no more than 10 min. each**)

**FINAL ASSIGNMENT**

**Exegesis paper** on assigned Gospel text - **DUE: Friday, December 1; 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 15</b>	<b>12noon</b>	Reflection paper - "Favorite Text/ Introduction" 2-4 pages
<b>Friday, October 20</b>	<b>12noon</b>	Reflection paper- "Gospel" 3-6 pages
<b>Friday, November 17</b>	<b>12noon</b>	Project Summary 2-4 pages
<b>Sunday, November 19</b>		Presentation of project in class session
<b>Friday, December 1</b>	<b>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 15, 12noon**

- ✓ 2-4 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.

**NOTE: See asynchronous learning instructions; posting in “Discussion Board” (Teachable platform) will be a major factor in participation grading.**

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

- ✓ 3-6 page paper.
- ✓ 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 chosen?
- ✓ What does the Gospel chosen tell us about Jesus? How is Jesus portrayed?

**D. Project (25% of final grade)****SUNDAY, November 19 class session**

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 DOWNLOADS (Students) to explore possibilities; (pages 1-174 of download most helpful); select a topic (i.e. “coins in the New Testament)
- Research the resources selected using the website, class text, and other web resources.
- Prepare a presentation of **no more than 10 minutes** length using art or music or poster, creativity & handouts of the topic you have chosen. Sunday morning session, Nov 19 will be used for presentations to the class. The intention is to share basic New Testament background & learnings with class.

• **Submit a 2-4 page summary of what resource used (website location), 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) by Friday, Nov 17, 12noon.**

**E. Exegesis paper – (25% of final grade)****DUE: Friday, Dec 1 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) – Dec 3, 2023 - Mark 13:24-27**  
**Christmas Day (Year B) Dec 24 or 25, 2023 - John 1:1-14**  
**New Years/Watch Night (Year B) – Dec 31,2023 - Luke 2:22-40**
- ✓ You may use any of the resources from this class – **DO NOT TOTALLY 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.

