

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

THEO5314 Synoptic Gospels

Time: Thursday 9:30am – 12:15pm

Venue: ELB 403

Instructor: David Ganlin XIE

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1. Course Description:

The course introduces the three similar while distinct Gospels (Mark's, Matthew's, and Luke's Gospels) and discusses the related issues on the written contexts, their relationships, methods for interpreting them, and historical Jesus. It aims at providing a comprehensive introduction to this long-standing subject.

2. Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Gain a general understanding of the background, literary characteristics, theological themes of each Synoptic Gospel.
- 2) Acquire a basic grasp of the purpose and the development of the quest for historical Jesus.
- 3) Learn to appreciate the distinctions and the similarities of the Gospels.
- 4) Develop an effective method for analyzing and interpreting the synoptic Gospels.

3. Learning Activities:

There are various forms of learning activities in this course.

- 1) Lectures: While it is the most common way of learning, students are also expected to **engage in the classes actively**. Active learning includes pre-class preparation (reading the required reading or biblical texts) and in-class participation (hearing others' voices, asking questions, sharing your ideas, etc.).
- 2) Presentations: Students are invited to present their proposed topic in the class. By doing so, they would be prepared to move on to the final paper. Also, students will surely be benefited from others' presentations.
- 3) Individual learning: As the course consists of paper works, it requires students to be immersed in the readings and writings. Even so, please do not forget to reach out to others (families, friends, classmates, or even me). Keeping balance in life is always beneficial and motivating to your learning.

4. Course Syllabus:

Topics	Contents
1. Genre and Context	What is Gospel? Why are there Gospels?
2. Mark	Mark's compositional background Mark's literary characteristics Mark's theological themes
3. Matthew	Matthew's compositional background Matthew's literary characteristics Matthew's theological themes
4. Luke	Luke's compositional background Luke's literary characteristics Luke's theological themes
5. Synoptic Problems	What is the synoptic problem? Different theories
6. Methods	Criticisms for synoptic Gospels Methods for synopsis
7. Historical Jesus	The development of quests The origin of Jesus

8. Assessments:

1) Active Participation: 10%

2) Gospels Reading: 10%

Students are required to read the synoptic Gospels before they are introduced. The reading log is to be submitted **on or before 10 Mar 2022**

3) Presentation: 15%

Students need to choose a piece of synoptic passage and present their exegetical works and the theological implications. It is proposed to be conducted on 31 Mar and 14 Apr.

4) Exegetical Paper: 35%

Based on the presentation, a full

exegetical paper should be submitted. The guideline of an exegetical paper would be provided in the class.

Word limit: No more than 4000 in English and 5000 in Chinese.

Deadline: 21 Apr 2022

5) **Alternative Writing: 30%**

According to the interpretation given by the exegetical paper above, students need to write a non-academic paper as a practical and reflective work of their exegesis. The form could be a short sermon, a Bible study, a newsletter article, a long FB post, etc.

Word limit: No more than 3000 in English and 4000 in Chinese.

Deadline: 5 May 2022

9. **Required Readings:**

- 1) Blomberg, Craig. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 2nd ed. Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Academic, 2009.
- 2) 史特勞斯: 《福音書與耶穌生平》(麥種)
- 3) Those marked with [*] in the course schedule are required to be read. Those with [#] mean Chinese alternatives.

10. **Recommended Readings:**

In the course schedule below, those without [*] are recommended readings (still updating). On the other hand, the list below only includes books that are, I think, helpful for beginners to get familiar with each topic. If students need to further those topics with more readings, they could consult the detailed reading list at the end of every chapter of Blomberg's *Jesus and the Gospels* or a comprehensive NT bibliography provided by Denver Seminary.

<https://denverseminary.edu/the-denver-journal-article/new-testament-exegesis-bibliography-2020/>

1) Genre and Context

- a. Bird, Michael F. *The Gospel of the Lord*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014.
- b. Dunn, James D. G. *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making*; v. 1. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003.

2) Mark

- a. Rhoads, Michie, and Michie, Donald. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.
- b. Smith, Abraham. *Mark: An Introduction and Study Guide*. London: Bloomsbury T&T

Clark, 2015.

3) Matthew

- a. Wainwright, Elaine Mary. *Mark: An Introduction and Study Guide*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017.
- b. Weren, Wilhelmus Johannes Cornelis. *Studies in Matthew's Gospel: Literary Design, Intertextuality, and Social Setting*, 2014.
- c. Yieh, John Yueh-Han. *Conversations with Scripture: The Gospel of Matthew*. Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars Study Series. Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, Leiden: Brill, 2012.

4) Luke

- a. Carey, Greg. *Luke: An Introduction and Study Guide: All Flesh Shall See God's Salvation*. T & T Clark Study Guides to the New Testament. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017.

5) Synoptic Problem

- a. Porter, Stanley E., and Bryan R. Dyer ed. *The Synoptic Problem: Four Views*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.
- b. Stein, Robert H. *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.

6) Methods

- a. Allen, O. Wesley. *Reading the Synoptic Gospels: Basic Methods for Interpreting Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2013.
- b. Powell, Mark Allan. *Methods for Matthew*. MBI. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

7) Historical Jesus

- a. Darrell L. Bock. *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.
- b. Meier, John P. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. 1st ed. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

1) Course Schedule:

Date	Content	Pre-class Reading
1. 13/1	Introduction: What is Gospel? Why are there Gospels?	*Course outline *Michael Bird, <i>The Gospel of the Lord</i> , chp 5. #史特勞斯, chp1.
2. 20/1	Mark (1)	*The Gospel of Mark
3. 27/1	Mark (2)	*Crag Blomberg, <i>Jesus and the Gospels</i> , chp 6. #史特勞斯, chp 7. Abraham Smith, <i>Mark</i> , chp 1.
4. 3/2	Happy Lunar New Year!!!	
5. 10/2	Matthew (1)	*The Gospel of Matthew
6. 17/2	Matthew (2)	*Crag Blomberg, <i>Jesus and the Gospels</i> , chp 7. #史特勞斯, chp 8. John Yieh, chp 1.
7. 24/2	Luke (1)	*The Gospel of Luke
8. 3/3	Luke (2)	*Crag Blomberg, <i>Jesus and the Gospels</i> , chp 8. #史特勞斯, chp 9.
9. 10/3	The Synoptic Problem	* Michael Bird, <i>The Gospel of the Lord</i> , chp 4. Stanley Porter and Bryan R. Dyer, <i>Synoptic Problem: Four Views</i> , chp 1. Submission of reading log
10. 17/3	Basic Methods for Synopsis	*Crag Blomberg, <i>Jesus and the Gospels</i> , chp 4&5. #史特勞斯, chp 3.
11. 24/3	Historical Jesus	*Crag Blomberg, <i>Jesus and the Gospels</i> , chp 10. #史特勞斯, chp 11. Dale C. Allison, "How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity;" Darrell L. Bock, <i>Studying the</i>

		<i>Historical Jesus</i> , pp.43–78.
12. 31/3	Presentations	
13. 7/4	Reading Week	
14. 14/4	Presentations	
15. 21/4	Conclusion	Submission of the exegetical paper

2) Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. **Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers.** Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.