

ANCTI: The Synoptic Gospels

Course SF SA210



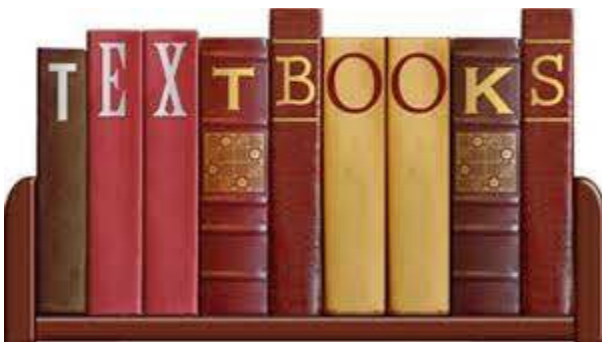
Spring Term, 2023 (April 15-June 24, 2023) Saturday, 11-12:30



Fr. Mark DeStephano, B.A. (Fordham), S.T.B., M.Div., M.Th., S.T.L.(Regis College of the University of Toronto), A.M., Ph.D. (Harvard)



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Required Texts:

- (1) Luke Timothy Johnson and Todd C. Penner, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress P, 1999. It is available at a very reduced price at [thriftbooks](http://thriftbooks.com) and also through Amazon.

Suggested Optional Texts for Further Reading:

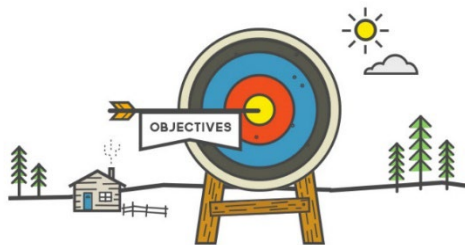
- (1) *The Bible* (Jerusalem Version, online – free access):

http://mullumbimbycatholic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Jerusalem_Bible_Readers_Edition.pdf

- (2) Étienne Charpentier, *How to Read the New Testament*. Trans. John Bowden. New York: Crossroad, 1986. (or any older edition);



Course Description: The very existence of the Church is based upon the life of Jesus, of which we know little. The scant details that make up the narrative of His life are to be found primarily in three books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which are known as the Synoptic Gospels. This course, an introduction to those works, will consider the sociohistorical context of the world of Jesus, His Judaism, and the Roman Empire that was then dominant. In order to understand the Synoptic Gospels, we will consider their writing, manuscripts, and linguistic background, as well as their authorship and dating. Who wrote the Synoptic Gospels and why? This will lead us to a study of the “Synoptic Problem” – how these works are related and how they differ. Why are they ordered as they are? What are the concerns of the writers of each gospel? How does this affect their version of the life of Jesus and the world around Him? What are the theological concerns expressed in each gospel? How was the early Church forming around Jesus during his lifetime? This course will explore the Synoptics as the centerpiece of Christianity.



Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives:

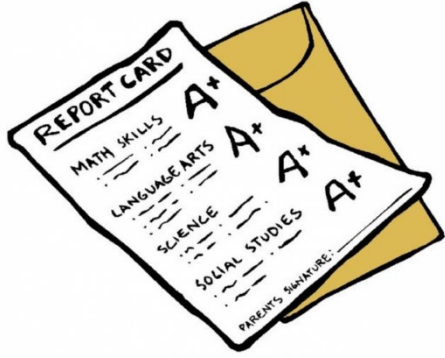
Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:

- Explain the difference between religion and theology
- Delineate the various disciplines of theology

- Identify the “Bible” and what constitutes it
- Discuss the elements of the biblical canon
- Delineate the differences between various versions of the Bible
- Identify geographical aspects of the world of Jesus
- Discuss the Greco-Roman world at the time of Jesus
- Explain the sociohistorical background of Judaism in the life and times of Jesus
- Explain what we know about the man Jesus of Nazareth
- Discuss the sources of what we know about Jesus
- Describe the experience and ministry of the first Christians
- Explain the Resurrection Faith of the Early Church
- Explain the principal approaches to modern biblical criticism
- Describe the difference between “gospel” and “Gospel”
- Explain the meaning of the term “Synoptic Gospels”
- Discuss the literary and linguistic aspects of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels
- Discuss the various manuscripts of the New Testament and the challenges they represent
- Describe the different authors of the Synoptic Gospels
- Explain the issues surrounding the “Synoptic Problem”
- Discuss the dating of the Synoptic Gospels
- Discuss the audience, structure, themes and concerns of Mark’s Gospel
- Explain the Jesus of Mark’s Gospel
- Discuss the audience, structure, themes, and concerns of Matthew’s Gospel
- Delineate Matthew’s Christian appeal to the Jewish people
- Discuss the audience, structure, themes, and concerns of Luke’s Gospel
- Describe why Luke is called “the Gospel of Healing”



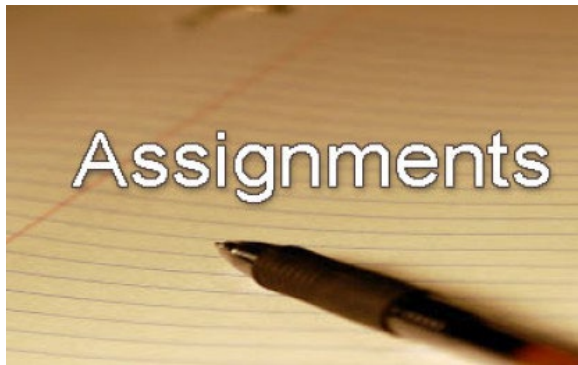
Required Attendance: Regular and punctual attendance; students with more than one unexcused absence will be asked to withdraw from the course or risk failure.



Calculation of Grades: (1) Four short (2-3 page) essays on topics provided by the instructor (80%); (2) A final oral examination (20%)



Time Management: It is the student's responsibility to examine this syllabus carefully and to judge whether s/he will be able to fulfill all of the course requirements in a timely fashion. I will not entertain requests for extensions for assignments, as it is the responsibility of the student only to undertake activities that s/he can adequately complete in the time listed.



As in any course, consistent, informed participation in class discussions that is based on reading of the assigned materials is essential. I strongly encourage you to share your ideas with the members of the class.

Tentative List of Themes and Assignments: Each week lists the lesson to be studied and any graded assessments that will be due. Required readings from the textbook should be prepared

before each class meeting, and are indicted by “J” (Johnson), followed by the title of the chapter and the page numbers. I will project scriptural texts as I teach them. Students are encouraged to read the Synoptic Gospels in preparation for each class.

WEEK 1 (APRIL 15-21, 2023)



THEMES: Course Introduction; Religion vs. Theology; What Are the Various Disciplines of Theology; What is the Bible?; The Biblical Canon; Different Versions of the Bible; Literary Genres of the Bible; The Geography of the World of Jesus; The Greco-Roman World at the Time of Jesus

Student Learning Objectives for Week 1:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

- Explain the difference between religion and theology
- Delineate the various disciplines of theology
- Describe what is meant by the term “Bible”
- Discuss the elements of the biblical canon
- Delineate the differences between various versions of the Bible
- Describe the various literary genres of the Bible
- Identify geographical aspects of the world of Jesus
- Discuss the Greco-Roman world at the time of Jesus

Required Readings for Week 1:

(1) Wikipedia, “The Catholic Bible”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Bible

(2) Stephen Kellmeyer, “Counting the Canon”

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/counting-the-canon>

(3) J, “Introduction,” 1-22; “The Greco-Roman World,” 23-42

Graded Assessment for Week 1:

No graded assessment for Week 1



WEEK 2 (APRIL 22-28, 2023)

THEMES: Judaism in Palestine and in the Diaspora; the Judaism of Jesus; What We Know about the Man Jesus of Nazareth; Sources of What We Know about Jesus

Student Learning Objectives for Week 2:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

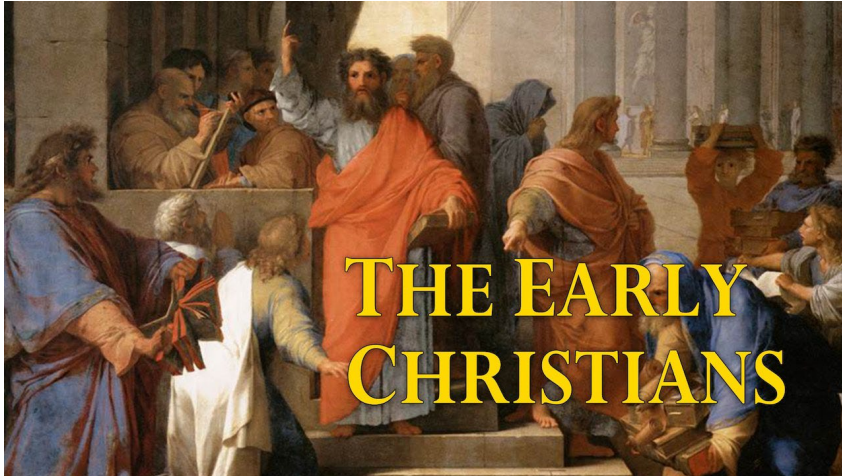
- Explain the sociohistorical background of Judaism in the life and times of Jesus
- Explain what we know about the man Jesus of Nazareth
- Discuss the sources of what we know about Jesus

Required Readings for Week 2:

(1) J, “Judaism in Palestine,” 43-72; “Diaspora Judaism,” 73-91

Graded Assessment for Week 2:

(1) Assignment 1



WEEK 3 (APRIL 29-MAY 5, 2023)

THEMES: The Experience and Ministry of the First Christians; the Resurrection Faith of the Early Church; Principal Approaches to Modern Biblical Criticism; The Difference between “gospel” and “Gospel”;

Student Learning Objectives for Week 3:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

- Describe the experience and ministry of the first Christians
- Explain the Resurrection Faith of the Early Church
- Identify the principal approaches to modern biblical criticism
- Explain the difference between “gospel” and “Gospel”

Required Readings:

(1) J, “The Christian Experience,” 92-94; “The Claims of the First Christians,” 95-106”; “The Resurrection Faith,” 107-124

Graded Assessment for Week 3:

No Graded Assessment for Week 3



WEEK 4 (MAY 6-12, 2023)

THEMES: What Are the “Synoptic Gospels?”; the Formation of the Synoptic Gospels; Manuscripts of the New Testament and the Challenges They Represent; The Authors of the Synoptic Gospels; The “Synoptic Problem”; The Dating of the Synoptic Gospels

Student Learning Objectives for Week 4:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of the term “Synoptic Gospels”
- Discuss the literary and linguistic aspects of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels
- Explain the principal approaches to modern biblical criticism
- Discuss the various manuscripts of the New Testament and the challenges they represent
- Describe the different authors of the Synoptic Gospels
- Explain the issues surrounding the “Synoptic Problem”
- Discuss the dating of the Synoptic Gospels

Required Readings:

(1) J, “Jesus in the Memory of the Church,” 125-153

Graded Assessment for Week 4:

(1) Assignment 2



WEEK 5 (MAY 13-19, 2023)

THEMES: The Audience, Structure, Themes and Concerns of Mark’s Gospel; The Jesus of Mark’s Gospel; The “Messianic Secret”

Student Learning Objectives for Week 5:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

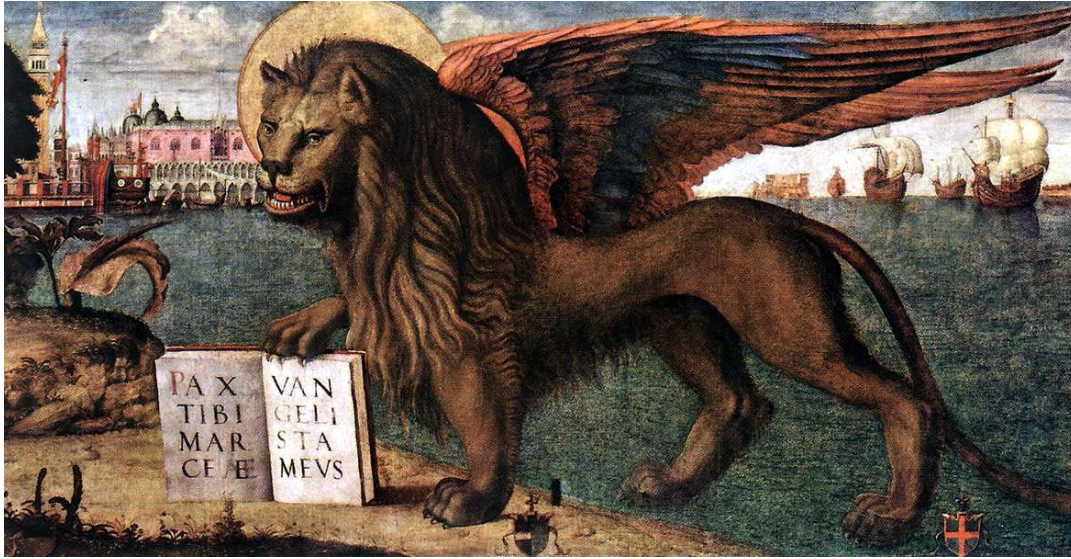
- Discuss the audience, structure, themes and concerns of Mark’s Gospel
- Explain the Jesus of Mark’s Gospel

Required Readings:

(1) J, “The Synoptic Tradition,” 154-158; “The Gospel of Mark,” 159-186

Graded Assessment for Week 5:

No Graded Assessment for Week 5



WEEK 6 (MAY 20-26, 2023)

THEMES: The Audience, Structure, Themes and Concerns of Mark’s Gospel; The Jesus of Mark’s Gospel; The “Messianic Secret”

Student Learning Objectives for Week 6:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

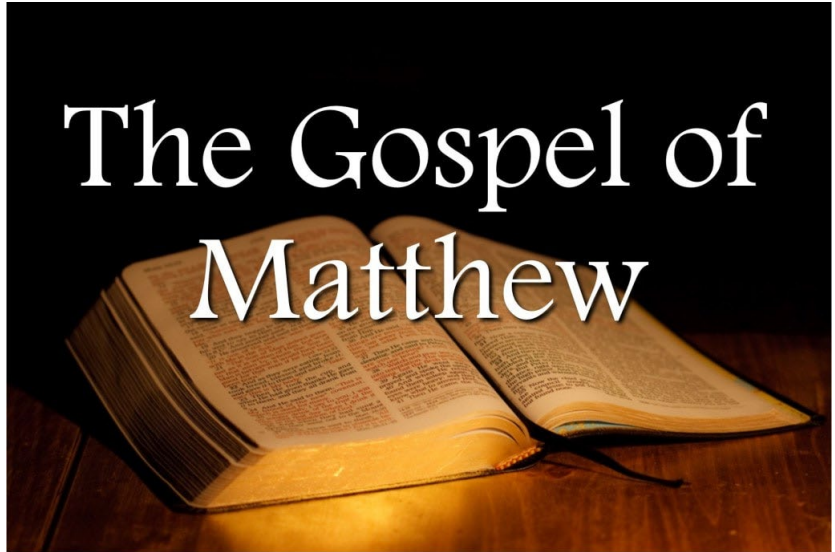
- Discuss the audience, structure, themes and concerns of Mark’s Gospel
- Explain the Jesus of Mark’s Gospel

Required Readings:

(1) J, “The Gospel of Mark,” 159-186 [continued]

Graded Assessment for Week 6:

(1) Assignment 3



WEEK 7 (MAY 27-JUNE 2, 2023)

**THEMES: The Audience, Structure, Themes, and Concerns of Matthew’s Gospel;
Matthew’s Christian Appeal to the Jewish People**

Student Learning Objectives for Week 7:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

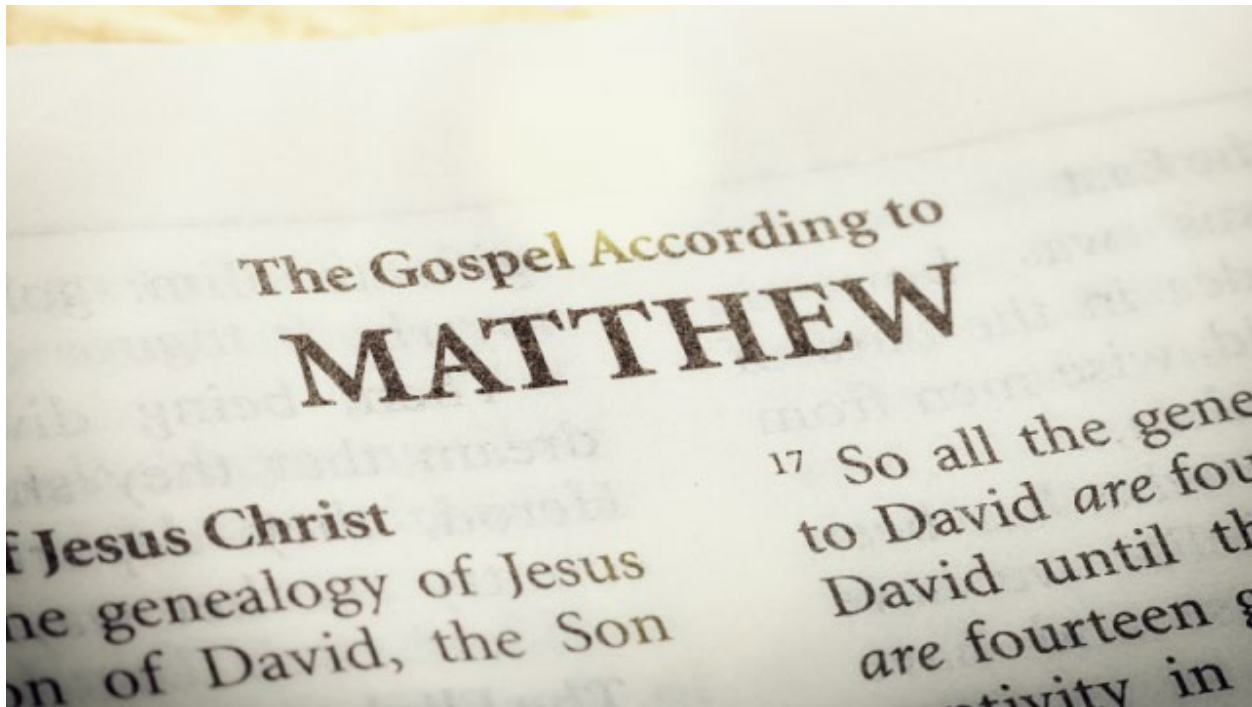
- Discuss the audience, structure, themes, and concerns of Matthew’s Gospel
- Delineate Matthew’s Christian appeal to the Jewish people

Required Readings:

(1) J, “The Gospel of Matthew,” 187-212

Graded Assessment for Week 7:

No Graded Assessment for Week 7



WEEK 8 (JUNE 3-9, 2023)

THEMES: The Audience, Structure, Themes, and Concerns of Matthew's Gospel; Matthew's Christian Appeal to the Jewish People

Student Learning Objectives for Week 8:

Upon successful completion of the week's assignments you will be able to:

- Discuss the audience, structure, themes, and concerns of Matthew's Gospel
- Delineate Matthew's Christian appeal to the Jewish people

Required Readings:

(1) J, "The Gospel of Matthew," 187-212

Graded Assessment for Week 8:

(1) Assignment 4



WEEK 9 (JUNE 10-16, 2023)

THEMES: The Audience, Structure, Themes, and Concerns of Luke’s Gospel; Why Luke is Called “the Gospel of Healing”

Student Learning Objectives for Week 9:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

- Discuss the audience, structure, themes, and concerns of Luke’s Gospel
- Describe why Luke is called “the Gospel of Healing”

Required Readings:

(1) J, “Luke-Acts,” 213-257

Graded Assessment for Week 9:

No Graded Assessment for Week 9



WEEK 10 (JUNE 17-23, 2023)

THEMES: The Audience, Structure, Themes, and Concerns of Luke’s Gospel; Why Luke is Called “the Gospel of Healing”

Student Learning Objectives for Week 10:

Upon successful completion of the week’s assignments you will be able to:

- Discuss the audience, structure, themes, and concerns of Luke’s Gospel
- Describe why Luke is called “the Gospel of Healing”

Required Readings:

(1) J, “Luke-Acts,” 213-257

Graded Assessment for Week 10:

FINAL EXAMINATION

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