Syllabus

Mississippi Course of Study

COS 321: Bible III: Gospels

April 25—June 4, 2022

Millsaps College, Jackson, MS

(Online Instruction)

Rev. Dr. Kwasi Kena

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# 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

*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.

# Required Textbooks:

There are three primary required textbooks and two required reference texts for this course. Please feel free to order used copies to suit your needs.

**Primary Textbooks**

Culpepper, R. Alan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*: *A Study in Literary Design.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. ISBN: 978-0-8006-2068-4

Murphy, Frederick J. *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-1-4267-4915-5

Powell, Mark Allan. *Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical*, *Literary*, *and Theological Survey* (Second Edition). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9960-1

**Required Reference Textbooks**

Ringe, Sharon H. *Luke.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995. ISBN: 0-664-25259-1

Smith, D. Moody. *John.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999. ISBN: 978—0-687-05812-9

# Your Instructor

Rev. Dr. Kwasi Kena will be your instructor for this course. Dr. Kena is a retired elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) and currently serves as associate professor of ethnic and multicultural ministry at Wesley Seminary in Marion, Indiana. Dr. Kena served under appointment for 29 years and his ministry experiences range from the local church pastorate to overseas missionary service, to denominational director of evangelism ministries for the General Board of Discipleship, to his current faculty position. Among the variety of courses Dr. Kena has taught at Wesley Seminary in Indiana is Bible Storytelling, which is his passion. Rev. Dr. Kwasi Kena is married to the Rev. Dr. Safiyah Fosua. They live in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

# Collaborative Learning Philosophy

I encourage students to adopt a collaborative learning philosophy. In short, this philosophy encourages each student to contribute to the overall learning experience by exhibiting a charitable spirit willing to share information and insights with your peers beyond synchronous class sessions. Such sharing enhances our experience as a learning community. My hope is that by doing so you will be inspired to do collaborative ministry in your communities. I believe ministry is not competitive. I believe it should be a collaborative, cooperative venture. I covenant to share any information or insights I have to encourage productive teaching and learning to occur throughout this course. I hope you will join me in this covenant.

# Online Modality

This course will be conducted completely online using the *Zoom* application for synchronous (face-to-face) sessions on weeks 1,3, and 5, and a learning management platform, *Course Connect* for online discussions.

Online discussions will occur on the following weeks:

1. Two Pre-Course Discussions: The week prior to the first synchronous session. (Single Post)
2. Weeks 1-2 (Two-Week Discussion)
3. Weeks 3-4 (Two-Week Discussion)
4. Week 5 (One-Week Discussion)

Your papers will also be submitted to the instructor and returned to you through *Course Connect*.

# Guidelines for Written Assignments.

* 1. **Format**: All **papers** submitted via Course Connect should be in **.doc** or **.docx** format. If you are not using Windows software it is also acceptable to submit papers in PDF format. *Always begin filenames with your name*, then the *title of the assignment*. Examples: [firstinitial.lastname – assignment title] = **" K.Kena Exegesis.docx**
  2. **Documentation**: Please always *cite your sources* whenever you are quoting or summarizing from a text, even if it is obvious or mentioned in the assignment. Provide at least the author's name, the title, and the page number, even in discussion assignments. **Please see the plagiarism section of this syllabus for more information.**
  3. **Style**: Chicago Manual of Style documentation is expected for bibliographic references and any quoted or paraphrased materials. Basic information about this style may be found at The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). For this course we will be using the Notes and Bibliography (NB) options. <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html>
  4. **Due dates**: All assignments are due on the date specified by the syllabus. Written assignments submitted more than three (3) days after the due date *may be accepted* with a 10% penalty. Late discussion posts will attract a 25% penalty. If you experience extenuating circumstances that may result in a late submission, please contact your professor via email: [kwasi.kena@indwes.edu](mailto:kwasi.kena@indwes.edu).
  5. **Feedback**: I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades on all on-time submissions within ten days of the due date.

Guidelines for Online Discussions:  
  
**Identification:** Students - please adhere to the following **naming convention** for your initial discussion posts: "[name] - [assignment title]"  
  
So, e.g. *“Kwasi Kena – Gospel of John”*  
  
This will help your professor identify the posts you are responding to when she/he grades your discussions.  
  
**Content:** Discussion assignments are similar to group or all-class discussions in the classroom context. While these are not "writing assignments," you should still be careful with grammar, spelling, documentation, and formatting in your discussion posts and comments. Posts need to have *substance* in order to count. Short comments like, “I agree,” or “Good work,” will not count toward your week’s assignments. The posts that count grade wise will need to advance the discussion in some significant way.  
  
**Climate:** We encourage you to remember that the discussion room may be full of many opposing views on any given topic. We encourage you to view differences of opinion and belief as opportunities to learn from one another. Do engage your neighbor’s thoughts charitably. It is at the professor’s discretion to remove any posts or comments he or she thinks cross the line.

**General instructions:**

If you are responding to another post, click “reply.”

In your responses, compare, contrast, and/or question another’s postings.

**Late discussion posts**—Discussions are part of your interactive learning experience. You receive points for sharing as well as for interacting with others in the discussion forums. Late initial posts do not contribute to this process of interactive learning. Therefore *a 25% deduction will be recorded* for initial posts that are offered after the closing date of each discussion.

# Class Calendar & Assignments

# Synchronous (Zoom) Meetings and

# Asynchronous (Course Connect) Discussion Forums

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Synchronous Meeting Dates Via Zoom | Asynchronous Assignments & Discussion Forums |
| **Week 1:** Friday, April 29, 7-9pm, CST  Saturday, April 30, 7-9pm, CST [Note: one-time only Saturday evening Zoom meeting.]  **Week 3:** Friday, May 13, 7-9pm, CST  Saturday, May 14, 10am – Noon, CST  **Week 5:** Friday, May 27, 7-9pm, CST  Saturday, May 28, 10am – Noon, CST | **Pre-Course Work:**   * Two Discussion Forums: April 25 – May 1   **Week 2:**   * Written Assignment 1: Due April May 6   **Weeks 2-3:** May 2-May 15   * Discussion Forum   **Weeks 4-5:** May 16-May 29   * Discussion Forum   **Week 4:**   * Written Assignment 2: Due May 21   **Week 5:** May 14-20   * Discussion Forum   **Post-Course Work:**   * Written Assignment 3: Due May 22 |

# Pre-Course Work

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Description** | **Time Estimate** | **Due Date** |
| Two Discussions | (1) **Discussion One—Personal Introductions:**  A. Where do you currently serve in ministry?  B. What are your ministry responsibilities?  C. What do you hope to gain from this  course?  (2) **Discussion Two—Personal Sermon Preparation Methodology**  (See Instructions below) | **1-2 hours** | **April 25-May 1** |
| **Readings** | *Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical, Literary and Theological Study* (Powell)  Chapters 1, 2, 3*.* | **5 hours** | April 29 |
| **Website Exploration** | Visit the following website containing supplemental resources for *Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical, Literary and Theological Study.* Explore the website to become familiar with the resources available. [www.IntroducingNT.com](http://www.IntroducingNT.com)  Click on the hyperlink below and view the introductory video by Mark Allen Powell, the author of *Introducing the New Testament.* [Mark Allen Powell, author of *Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical, Literary, and Theological Study*](http://bakerpublishinggroup.com/books/introducing-the-new-testament-2nd-edition/11940/students/esources)  [Video 2:02] | **30 minutes** | April 29 |

# Course Schedule: Assignments

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assessment Name | Reading Assignment | Date | Points | Time  Estimate |
| **Pre-Course Discussion Forum 1:**  Personal Introductions | None | April 25-May 1 | -0- | 30 minutes |
| **Pre-Course Discussion Forum 2:**  Personal Sermon Development (Single Post) | **[Video]** View Professor Personal Introduction & Course Overview | April 25-May 1 | 50 | 30 minutes |
| **Week 1**  Synchronous Class Participation:  (1) New Testament Background, (2) Roman & Jewish Worlds, (3) Introduction to Critical Biblical Analysis | **[Video]** Chapter 1: New Testament Background: The Roman World (Introducing the New Testament)(3 min) <https://youtu.be/cUKpOhhvv44>**[Video]** Chapter 2: New Testament Background: The Jewish World (Introducing the New Testament) (2 min 15 sec) <https://youtu.be/fsLyo0ZSzTc>**[Video]** Chapter 3: The New Testament Writings: (Introducing the New Testament) (1 min 34 sec) <https://youtu.be/0w9BatmERvg> **[Reading]** *Introducing the New Testament* (Powell) Chapters 1-3  [Estimated reading time 5 hours] | April 29-30 | 50 | 4 hours |
| **Week 2**  Written Assignment 1 | Compare and Contrast Societal Influences: Roman World & Contemporary Society  (See Instructions Below) **[Video]** Chapter 1: New Testament Background: The Roman World (Introducing the New Testament) (3 min) <https://youtu.be/cUKpOhhvv44> **[Reading]** Powell, Mark Allen. Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, literary, and Theological Survey, Chapter 1. | May 6 | 100 | 4-5 hours |
| **Weeks 2-3**  Two-Week Discussion:  (1) Roman and Jewish Worlds, and (2) Methods of Biblical Analysis (Application) | Powell, Chapters 1-3  **WEEK ONE:**  **[Video]** View Professor Lecture: The Three Worlds of the Text  **[Video]** View Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts  **WEEK TWO:**  **[Video]** View Professor Lecture: The Three Worlds of the Text (Continued)  **[Video]** View Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts | May 2- May 15 | 100 | 3 hours |
| **Week 3**  Synchronous Class Participation:  (1) Bible Analysis Methods (Continued), (2) The Synoptic Gospels, and (3) Matthew & Mark | Review the Descriptions of Methods of Analysis in Powell, pp. 66-72  Powell, Chapters 5-7  [Estimated Reading Time: 4.5 hours] | May 13-14 | 50 | 4 hours |
| **Weeks 4-5**  Two-Week Discussion: Analyzing the Biblical Text (Matthew & Mark) | Powell, Chapters 6-7  **WEEK THREE:**  **[Video]** View Professor Lecture: Plot Construction: The Plotted Narrative  **[Video]** View Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts  **WEEK FOUR:**  **[Video]** View Professor Lecture: Redaction Criticism Application, Mark & Matthew  **[Video]** View Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts | May 16-May 29 | 100 | 3 hours |
| **Week 4**  Bible Methods Written Assignment 2 | Review the descriptions of the Methods of Analysis you choose to use from  Powell, pp. 66-72. | May 20 | 150 | 5-6 hours |
| **Week 5**  Synchronous Class Participation:  (1) Luke, & (2) John | Powell, Chapters 8-9  [Estimated Reading Time: 3 hrs.] | May 14-15 | 50 | 4 hours |
| **Week 5**  Discussion: Personal Development Assessment | None | May 27-28 | 50 | 30 min |
| **Post-Course Work**  Final Paper  Written Assignment 4 | Consult relevant content from required texts and from personal research sources. | June 4 | 300 | 10-12 hours |
| Total Points |  |  | 1,000 |  |

# Personal Journal

Biblical exegesis and hermeneutics require two types of examination. There is the scholarly examination: What does the text mean in its context? What insights into the text can we glean from the customs, culture, and characters? The list goes on and on.

I propose that prior to scholarly examination, we should first engage in self-examination. Scriptural interpretation is a subjective process. Each of us brings something with us to interpretive process: personal life experiences, previous interpretations of the passage, awareness of current events, cognizance of the thoughts and concerns of the contemporary audience, etc. A candid examination of yourself throughout this course will help you discover who you are in relation to the biblical text. As you journey through this course, maintain a for-your-eyes-only journal. In this journal, jot down your reactions to the course content. Note how the concepts and methods are shaping your thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes toward the Bible and biblical exegesis and hermeneutics. In the Week Five Discussion Forum you will share a summary reflection describing the ways you have been formed by the course content, discussions, and/or written assignments. See the handout, “Journaling on and Off the Page,” in the Appendix for tips on maintaining a journal in traditional and non-traditional ways.

# Date: Monday--Thursday, April 25-May 1, 2022

**Pre-Course Discussion**

Topic: Personal Sermon Preparation Method

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Background**

Each of you comes to this course with varying degrees of experience and expertise in sermon preparation. Not everyone has the opportunity to preach regularly, so do not be concerned if your sermon preparation methodology is at its early stage of development. One of the aims of this course is to help you develop a robust sermon preparation process informed by a working knowledge of biblical exegesis and hermeneutics. This initial discussion on sermon preparation will help you identify your starting point. You will reference this starting point at the end of the course to help you assess your progress.

**Instructions**

Think about the sermon preparation method you currently use. In the Pre-Course Discussion Forum, post brief responses to the following prompts:

1. List the steps you use in sermon preparation. Include a rationale for each step listed. [i.e. Why do you do it? What purpose does it accomplish?]
2. What resources do you currently use? [Provide a short list of the resources you use most commonly.]
3. What do you believe would improve your current methodology for sermon preparation?
4. Describe “exegesis” and “hermeneutics” in your own words.
5. List 3-5 questions you have about the assigned readings in the Powell or Murphy texts for our first class.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this discussion forum is forming you.]**

In future discussions, you will be asked to interact with members of the class. For this first discussion, you will only be graded for your single response.

**Post your responses in the Pre-Course Discussion Forum in Course Connect from April 25-May 1.**

# Date: Friday, May 6, 2022.

**Written Assignment 1**

Topic: Compare and Contrast Societal Influences: Roman World & Contemporary Society

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Background**

In chapter one of *Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical, literary, and Theological Survey*, Mark Allen Powell describes what it was like for Jews to live under Roman rule. Powell also surveys the social influences that were “in the air” at the time. The myriad philosophical and religious schools of thought circulating throughout Roman society represented people’s efforts to answer common questions like the following:

“What is the purpose or goal or highest good in life? Is everything predetermined, or can people make choices that affect how their lives turn out? Is there life beyond death? What is the secret of happiness?” (p. 26)

The various rulers, the philosophical and religious schools of thought, and the Roman social systems and cultural values constituted the social influences that permeated the world of the Gospel writers.

**Readings for this assignment:**

Powell, Mark Allen. *Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*, Chapter 1.

**Instructions:**

Write a two-part essay that does the following:

1. Identifies and describes three or four of the societal influences in the Roman world you believe were most challenging to the Jews living in the first century B.C.E.
2. Compares and contrasts social influences in the Roman world to contemporary social influences you believe people in your ministry context face today.

**Include the following items in your essay:**

1. A thesis stating what you are attempting to accomplish in your paper. [**1-2 sentences]**
2. An introduction stating both the major topics you will address and why what you are writing about is important. **[1-2 paragraphs]**
3. Three or four major societal influences in the Roman world. Choose influences in Powell’s text from the following categories: Roman Rule, Philosophy and Religion, Social Systems and Cultural Values. **[2 pages]**
   1. Briefly describe the social influences.
   2. Describe how each influence would likely have affected Jews living under Roman rule.
4. A comparison and contrast of the three or four societal influences from the Roman world to social influences you believe are “in the air” in our twenty-first century context. **[2 pages]**
   1. Note how social influences from the Roman world compare or contrast with contemporary social influences.
   2. Describe how you believe the contemporary social influences above are affecting people in your ministry context.
5. A description of the contemporary social influences you believe pose the greatest ministry challenges to Christians and non-Christians in your ministry context (local church and community). [**1-2 pages]**
6. A conclusion offering a summary of the major points you covered and your final thoughts about what you learned. **[1-2 paragraphs]**

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this written assignment is forming you.]**

**Length: 5-6 pages**

**Possible Points: 100**

**Submit via Course Connect by May 6**

# Week 1 Synchronous (Zoom) Classes

## Date: Friday, April 29, 2022

Topics: *New Testament Background*: *The Roman World* & *The Jewish World*

Modality: Zoom (Face to Face) Class

Time: 7 pm – 9 pm CST (8 pm – 10 pm EST)

**Reading Assignments:**

*Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical, Literary and Theological Study*, Chapters 1-2.

**Instructions:**

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and these topics: the Roman World & the Jewish World. Pay particular attention to these primary chapter emphases:

1. The social influences present in the Roman world and their effect on Jews living in the Roman Empire.
2. Beliefs of the various Jewish people groups [i.e. Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Herodians].

**Objectives:**

By the end of this session you should be able to do the following:

* Describe what life was like for Jews and Christians under Roman rule.
* Describe how people in the New Testament world tended to think about four social/cultural factors: wealth and poverty, patronage and loyalty, and honor and shame.
* Summarize the basic history of the Second Temple Period, which forms the background for the events and writings of the New Testament.
* Identify basic characteristics of five Jewish groups in Palestine during the time of Jesus (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Herodians) and likewise identify basic characteristics of the Samaritans and gentiles who inhabited Palestine at this time.

## Date: Saturday, April 30, 2022

Topics: *New Testament*: *The Jewish World* (Continued) & *Introduction to Biblical Analysis Methods*

Modality: Zoom (Face to Face) Class

Time: 7 pm – 9 pm CST (8 pm – 10 pm EST) [Note: one-time only Saturday evening Zoom meeting.]

**Reading Assignments:**

* *Introducing the New Testament*: *A Historical, Literary and Theological Study*, Chapter 1.

**Instructions:**

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and these topics: The Jewish World & Methods of Biblical Analysis. Pay attention to the following chapter emphases:

1. The effects caused by the overlap of Christian, Jewish, and Roman contexts.
2. The various exegetical methods used in biblical analysis.

**Objectives:**

By the end of this session you should be able to do the following:

* Describe the divergent influences of Hellenism on Jewish people in Palestine and in the Diaspora, with particular reference to the prominence of wisdom theology, dualism, and apocalypticism.
* Identify numerous scholarly approaches and methods employed within the discipline of academic New Testament study.
* Understand the manner in which various exegetical methods may be employed for different ends by scholars with diverse hermeneutical stances.
* Identify at least three methods of biblical analysis you will incorporate into your biblical analysis methodology.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this two-day synchronous class is forming you.]**

# Asynchronous (Course Connect) Discussions: Weeks 2-3

# Date: May 2-8, 2022

**WEEK TWO**

Topics: Roman and Jewish Worlds, and Methods of Biblical Analysis (Application)

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Written Resources:**

Powell, Chapters 1-3

**Video Resources:**

Professor Lecture: The Three Worlds of the Text

Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts

**Supplemental Resources**

* [3.9. Text Criticism: Determining the Original Reading of the Text](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/3.9.htm)
* [3.10. Source Criticism of the Gospels and Acts](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/3.10.htm)
* [3.11. Form Criticism of the Gospels and Acts](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/3.11.htm)
* [3.12. Redaction Criticism of the Gospels](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/3.12.htm)
* [3.13. Narrative Criticism of the Gospels and Acts](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/3.13.htm)
* [3.14. Rhetorical Criticism](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/3.14.htm)
* [3.15. Reader-Response Criticism](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/3.15.htm)
* [4.16. Criteria for Historical Criticism](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/4.16.htm)

**Instructions**

Review the descriptions of the Narrative Criticism Bible analysis methods (aka criticism) in the Powell text. Read Mark 1 through the lens of Narrative Criticism Bible analysis method. Read Mark 1 three times.

* **First Reading:** Think about the world *behind* the text (What is happening in the background?).
* **Second** **Reading:** Think about the world *of* the text (What can you learn from the written text?)
* **Third** **Reading:** Think about the world *in front of* the text (What do you and other contemporaries bring to the text? What historic interpretations from the church [including sermons you have heard] may be influencing your thinking?)

During your initial research, use this two-step process:

1. **First, jot down your initial observations without consulting any Bible resources.**
2. Second, analyze the text using the Bible resources available to you.

Post your responses to the following prompts in the Roman and Jewish World Discussion Forum:

1. Briefly define the Bible analysis method assigned to you.
2. State what you learned from the passage while using the assigned method.
3. Describe why these discoveries you made are important for biblical interpretation.
4. Describe how you were affected by what you discovered in your analysis.
5. Identify any content from your analysis you believe make good preaching points.

**Read** the analyses of at least three people.

**Engage** at least two class members by commenting on what you learned from their analyses. Respond to any questions posed by the professor.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this discussion forum is forming you.]**

**Post your responses in the Roman and Jewish World Discussion Forum in Course Connect. Initial post due Tuesday, May 3.**

# Date: May 9-15

**WEEK THREE**

Topics: Roman and Jewish Worlds, and Methods of Biblical Analysis (Application)

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Written Resources:**

Powell, Chapters 1-3

**Video Resources:**

Professor Lecture: The Three Worlds of the Text (Continued)

Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts

**Instructions**

Read Matthew 1 & 2 three times.

* **First Reading:** Think about the world *behind* the text. (What is happening in the background?)
* **Second** **Reading:** Think about the world *of* the text. (What can you learn from the written text?)
* **Third** **Reading:** Think about the world *in front of* the text. (What do you and other contemporaries bring to the text? What historic interpretations from the church [including sermons you have heard] may be influencing your thinking?)

During your initial research, use this two-step process:

1. **First, jot down your initial observations without consulting any Bible resources.**
2. Second, analyze the text using the Bible resources available to you.

Review the Reader-Response Bible analysis method (aka criticism) from the Powell text. Read Matthew chapters 1 & 2 in their entirety through the lens of your chosen Bible analysis method.

Post your responses to the following discussion prompts in the Roman and Jewish World Discussion Forum.

1. Briefly define the Bible analysis method you chose.
2. State what the method revealed to you in the passages.
3. Describe why these discoveries are important for biblical interpretation.
4. Describe how you were affected by what you discovered in your analysis.
5. Identify any content from your analysis you believe make good preaching points.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this discussion forum is forming you.]**

**Post your responses in the Roman and Jewish World Discussion Forum in Course Connect. Initial post due Tuesday, May 10.**

* **Read** the analyses of at least three people.
* **Engage** at least two class members by commenting on what you learned from their analyses. Respond to any questions posed by the professor.

**Two-Week Discussion Period: May 2-15**

**Points: 100 points (10% of grade)**

# Week Three Synchronous (Zoom) Classes

## Dates: May 13-14, 2022

Topics: Bible Analysis Methods (Continued), The Synoptic Gospels, and Matthew & Mark

Modality: Course Connect

**Reading Assignments:**

* *Introducing the New Testament* (Powel), Chapters 5-7.

## Date: Friday, May 13, 2022

Topics: Bible Analysis Methods (Continued) & The Synoptic Gospels

Modality: Zoom (Face to Face) Class

Time: 10 am – noon am CST (11 am – 1pm EST)

**Reading Assignments:**

* *Introducing the New Testament* (Powel), pp. 66-72 & Chapter 5.

**Instructions:**

Come to class prepared to discuss (1) the readings, (2) the topics Bible Analysis Methods (Continued), and (3) The Synoptic Gospels.

## Date: Saturday, May 14, 2022

Topics: Mark & Matthew

Modality: Zoom (Face to Face) Class

Time: 10 am – noon am CST (11 am – 1pm EST)

**Reading Assignment:**

Powell, Chapters 6-7

**Instructions:**

Come to class prepared to discuss (1) the readings, (2) the primary purposes the authors of Mark and Matthew had for writing their Gospel accounts, and (3) unique features of Mark and Matthew.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this two-day synchronous class is forming you.]**

# Asynchronous (Course Connect) Discussions: Weeks 4-5

# Date: May 16-22, 2022

**WEEK FOUR**

Topic: Mark

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Background**

Many scholars agree that Mark was the first written Gospel account. It contains little unique content not found in the other synoptic Gospels: Matthew and Luke. Nevertheless, the writer of Mark had definite reasons for compiling and ordering the content into an intentional progression of stories. As you prepare your responses for this discussion forum, pay particular attention to the “plotted narrative” (the progression of stories) and the choice of stories the author of Mark decided to include in this Gospel account.

**Written Resources**

Powell, Chapter 7

**Video Resources**

Professor Lecture: Plot Construction: The Plotted Narrative

Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts

**Supplemental Resources**

* [7.0. Mark: Outline of Contents](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/7.0.htm)
* [7.1. Content Summary: Expanded Overview of the Gospel of Mark](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/7.1.htm)
* [7.14. The Disciples of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/7.14.htm)

**Instructions:** Scan the entire Gospel of Mark. As you read, do these two tasks:

**I.** **Note the Plot Construction:** Look at the progression of stories in Mark.

(Study Tips: (1) Look at 7.0 or 7.1 in the Supplemental Resources, or (2) look at a Bible with chapter subtitles like “John the Baptist Prepares the Way,” “The Baptism and Testing of Jesus,” “Jesus Announces the Good News,” etc.).

**II. Identify the Ways Mark’s Gospel Portrays Jesus:** Skim Mark and note: (1) *who* calls Jesus and (2) *what* title do they use when they call him?

Write brief, 1-2 paragraph responses to the following prompts:

1. **The World *Behind* the Text**

Describe what people living around 65-73 B.C.E. were experiencing while living in the Roman Empire. This is the context in which the Gospel writer lived. Note the implications of those experiences [Think of rulers, conflicts, movements, etc.].

1. **The World *of* the Text**
2. What do we learn about Jesus, his ministry, or his message from the progression of stories in chapter 1 of the Gospel of Mark? Why do you believe the writer of Mark started the Gospel account with these stories?
3. What portrait of Jesus do you believe the writer of Mark paints throughout the Gospel by including the particular people who called Jesus and the title they called him?
4. **The World *in Front of* the Text**

What do you bring to the text (i.e. what from your personal experiences, values, beliefs, etc.) that influences how you read and interpret any of the stories in the progression in chapter 1 of the Gospel of Mark? What perspectives do believe your contemporary audiences bring to the text? What historic Christian interpretation of Mark, Chapter 1 do you bring to the text?

* **Read** the analyses of at least four people in the discussion forum.
* **Engage** at least two class members by commenting on what you learned from their analyses. Respond to any questions posed by the professor.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this discussion forum is forming you.]**

**Initial post due by Tuesday, May 17.**

# Date: May 23-29, 2022

**WEEK FIVE**

Topic: Matthew

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Background**

Scholars believe the Gospel of Matthew was written likely in the mid-80s—soon after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. Matthew contains distinctive content not found in the other three Gospels. A common strategy used to explore Matthew is a side-by-side comparison of its contents to the contents of Mark. Such a comparison reveals that Matthew’s author *redacted* (i.e. edited) content from Mark’s Gospel. When you discover such redactions, ask the “why” question. In this discussion forum we will focus on redaction criticism and its implications.

**Written Resources**

Powell, Chapter 6

**Video Resources**

Professor Lecture: Redaction Criticism Application, Mark & Matthew

Professor’s Mid-Week Prof Post with Additional Discussion Prompts

**Supplemental Resources**

* [6.0. Matthew: Outline of Contents](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/6.0.htm)
* [6.1. Content Summary: Expanded Overview of the Gospel of Matthew](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/6.1.htm)
* [6.2. Material Unique to Matthew’s Gospel (Box 6.1)](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/6.2.htm)
* [6.3. Passages from Mark Omitted by Matthew](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/6.3.htm)
* [6.9. Distinctive Characteristics of Matthew’s Gospel](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/6.9.htm)
* [6.11. Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/6.11.htm)
* [6.23. How to Interpret the Scriptures according to Matthew](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/6.23.htm)

**Instructions:** Read one of the pair of Gospel readings from the list below.

* Jesus’s baptism: Mark 1:9–11 and Matthew 3:13–17
* Jesus’s temptation: Mark 1:12–13 and Matthew 4:1–11
* Peter’s confession: Mark 8:22–33 and Matthew 16:13–28
* Blind men: Mark 8:22–26; 10:46–52, and Matthew 9:27–34; 20:29–34

During your initial research, use this two-step process:

1. **First, jot down your initial observations without consulting any Bible resources.**
2. Second, analyze the text using the Bible resources available to you.

As you read, jot down your initial observations about the following questions:

1. What additions does Matthew make to the Mark passage?
2. What does Matthew leave out?
3. Do you notice any change in tone, perspective, or emphasis in Matthew?
4. What kinds of “corrections” does Matthew make to the way Mark tells the story?

In the Matthew Discussion Forum, write brief responses to the discussion prompts below based on what you learned from your comparison and contrast of your Gospel readings from Matthew and Mark:

1. What additions does Matthew make to the Mark passage?
2. What does Matthew leave out?
3. Do you notice any change in tone, perspective, or emphasis in Matthew?
4. What kinds of “corrections” does Matthew make to the way Mark tells the story?
5. What did you learn from this exercise?

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this discussion forum is forming you.]**

**Initial post by Tuesday, May 22.**

**WEEK FIVE**

# Date: Friday, May 27, 2022.

**Written Assignment 2**

Topic: Bible Background Research

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Background**

The first assigned textbook readings in this course surveyed the background of the New Testament world: the historic events during the intertestamental period, the Roman rule, the various Jewish groups, and the Samaritans and the gentiles. The readings also introduced you to multiple biblical analysis methods. With this foundational background, you are ready to begin to develop your skills in critical biblical analysis.

**Instructions**

Choose one of the readings from the Gospel of Mark. Prepare a thorough exegetical essay highlighting important aspects of the cultural background of the passage. You may use the prompts below to help think through what to research in the passage.

1. What do we need to know about the Gospel writer’s purpose for writing the book or the passage in question?
2. To whom or for whom was the Gospel writer writing?
3. Who is speaking and/or narrating in the passage?
4. What substantive background information do we need to know about the people, places, or problems present in the passage?
5. What are some potential preaching points in the passage? How might you develop one of the preaching points? (Explain)

Write a thorough exegetical essay on the passage (4-6 pages). In an appendix, include a 1-2 page, skeletal outline [major ideas] of a sermon you might craft using the content gleaned from your research.

Use content from your textbooks in your research.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this written assignment is forming you.]**

**Length: 6-8 pages**

**Due Date: May 27, 2022**

**Points: 150 (15% of grade)**

# Week Five Synchronous (Zoom) Class Meetings

## Dates: May 27-28, 2022

Topics: Luke and John

Modality: Zoom (Face to Face) Class

Time: 7 pm – 9 pm CST (8 pm – 10 pm EST)

**Reading Assignments:**

*Introducing the New Testament*,Chapters 8-9

*Luke* (Ringe), Introduction & pp. 1-22

*John* (Smith), Introduction & pp. 21-45

During our final weekend of classes we will analyze the Gospel accounts recorded in Luke and John.

## Date: Friday: May 27, 2022

Topic: Luke

Modality: Zoom (Face to Face) Class

Time: 7 pm – 9 pm CST (8 pm – 10 pm EST)

**Reading Assignment:**

* *Introducing the New Testament*,Chapter 8
* *Luke* (Ringe), Introduction & pp. 1-22

**Supplemental Resources:**

* [8.0. Luke: Outline of Contents](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/8.0.htm)
* [8.1. Content Summary: Expanded Overview of the Gospel of Luke](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/8.1.htm)
* [8.2. Material Unique to Luke’s Gospel (Box 8.1)](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/8.2.htm)
* [8.3. Passages from Mark Omitted by Luke](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/8.3.htm)
* [8.8. Distinctive Characteristics of Luke’s Gospel](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/8.8.htm)
* [8.17. The Twelve Disciples](http://www.textbookesources.bpgftp.com/Powell_Explore/8.17.htm)

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and your summation of unique features of the book of Luke that will help you interpret passages better from this Gospel.

By the end of this session, you should be able to do the following:

* Analyze the significance of the emphatic attention given in Luke’s Gospel to such matters as worship, prayer, food, women, Samaritans, and the poor.
* Explain how the author of Luke’s Gospel draws upon various Jewish and Greco-Roman models in order to present an image of Jesus as one who fulfills diverse expectations.
* Describe Luke’s understanding of salvation and indicate how this affects his presentation of the Jesus story.

## Date: Saturday, May 28, 2022

Topic: John

Modality: Zoom (Face to Face) Class

Time: 10 am – noon am CST (11 am – 1pm EST)

**Reading Assignments:**

* *Introducing the New Testament*,Chapter 9
* *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, pp. 249-286
* *John* (Smith) Introduction & pp. 21-45

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and your summation of the unique features of John that will help you interpret passages better from this Gospel.

By the end of this session you should be able to do the following:

* Identify how plot and narration function in John’s Gospel.
* Describe how distinctive literary features and theological perspectives mark John’s Gospel as different from the other New Testament Gospels.
* Explicate the Johannine theme of Jesus as one who makes God known and as one who can actually be identified as God.
* Explain the distinctive Johannine understanding of Jesus’s death as his glorification and of salvation as abundant/eternal life.

**[Journal Entry Reminder: Be sure to jot down your personal reflection to note how participation in this two-day synchronous class is forming you.]**

# Asynchronous Course Connect Discussion: Week 5

# Date: May 30-June 4

**WEEK SIX**

Topic: Personal Assessment Summary

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Instructions**

Review the entries from the journal you have maintained for this course.

Write a short, one page summary derived from your journal that describes the various ways you experienced personal formation throughout this course. Below are some possible questions to consider responding to in your summary. You may respond to one or more of them in your post.

1. Which concepts, discussions, or assignments created an "a ha" moment for you? How do those revelations now influence your thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes about biblical interpretation?

2. What was most challenging for you that requires you to do some inner work? (Such as, confrontation of previous thoughts, beliefs, or behaviors about biblical interpretation or preaching?)

3. What from the course inspires you?

4. What was most formative for you? How are you now different?

* **Read** the summaries of at least three people in the class.
* **Engage** at least two class members by commenting on what you learned from their summaries. Respond to any questions posed by the professor.

**Discussion Dates: May 30-June 4, 2022**

**Points: 50 points, (5% of grade)**

# FINAL PAPER:

Topic: Biblical Analysis for Sermon Preparation

Modality: Online, Course Connect, Asynchronous

**Background**

During this five-week Course of Study, we have perused the four Gospel accounts and investigated their distinctive characteristics. Through practical application of various biblical analysis methods we have explored ways to explicate scriptural texts to glean useful information about first-century cultures, beliefs, philosophical and religious schools of thought, biblical characters, and the Gospel writers portraits of Jesus Christ. We examined how the Gospel writers crafted their works as plotted narratives with specific audiences and purposes in mind. Last, we noted three key lenses through which to examine Scripture: (1) the world *behind* the text, (2) the world *of* the text, and (3) the world *in front of* the text. In this final paper, you will harness your accumulated skills to write a thorough, exegetical, and hermeneutical work.

**Instructions:**

Choose any passage from one of the four Gospels. Consider choosing a passage that will help you prepare a sermon for use in the near future. (Make this assignment work for you.)

**Include the following items in your essay:**

1. A thesis stating what you are attempting to accomplish in your paper. [**1-2 sentences]**
2. An introduction stating both the major topics you will address and why what you are writing about is important. **[1-2 paragraphs]**
3. Exegetical and hermeneutical examination of the text. Provide an informed reflection on how the biblical text could be interpreted based on your analysis of the following three perspectives: **[7-8 pages]**
   1. The world *behind*the text (historical analysis)
   2. The world *of* the text (exegetical analysis)
      1. What can be gleaned from the text alone?
      2. For example, the genre, the location in the plotted narrative, the terms, the places, the people, any problems, etc.
   3. The world *in front of* the text (personal, contemporary society, Christian traditional interpretation)
4. Practical sermon application. Note how you would use the content from your research in an actual sermon. **[2-3 pages]**
   1. Write a skeletal outline displaying the flow of the sermon.
   2. Insert commentary in the above outline noting where you would include content from your research.
   3. Provide a paragraph rationale describing **why** you are including the content from the research, i.e. how does it help strengthen the sermon and help the audience?
5. Conclusion. **[2-3 paragraphs]**
   1. Summarize the main points of your analysis.
   2. Describe how you were affected by doing this research.

Celebrate! The coursework is complete.

**Length: 10-12 pages**

**Due Date: Submit via Course Connect by June 4, 2022**

**Points: 300 points, (30% of grade)**

# Grading:

Pre-Course Asynchronous Discussion 50 points or 5% of final grade

Weeks 1-2 Asynchronous Discussion 100 points or 10% of final grade

Week 2 Written Assignment 1 100 points or 15% of final grade

Weeks 4-5 Discussion 100 points or 10% of final grade

Week 4 Written Assignment 2 150 points or 15% of final grade

Final Paper—assignment 300 points or 30% of final grade

Synchronous Class Participation (50 pts./session) 150 points or 15% of final grade

Total 1,000 pts 100% of final grade

# Letter-Grade Scale

90—100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60—69% D

0—59% F

# Late Policy:

We are endeavoring to study in the middle of a storm – a pandemic. Every attempt will be made to help students succeed under such dire circumstances. Written assignments submitted more than 3 days after the due date may be accepted with a 10% penalty. Late discussion posts will attract a 25% penalty. For all late assignments, please contact your professor.

# Honor Code:

The Honor Code refers to our commitment as a Christian community to maintain academic honesty and integrity.  The Honor Code of MSCOS requires that all material submitted by a student must be the student’s own work.  Violations include cheating, turning in someone else's work as one's own, copying and pasting information directly from the internet into one's own work without citation, and plagiarism, which is to knowingly claim the work of another person as one’s own (including the lack of proper citation in a paper or other assignment). Any person found guilty of violating the Honor Code may be subject to one or more of the following actions: receiving a warning, failing the assignment, being removed from the course, failing the course, being placed on probation, and being expelled from MSCOS.  Regardless of what the action is, communication about the incident will be sent to the student’s district superintendent and local pastor registrar. All MSCOS students are required to abide by the MSCOS Honor Code, and to seek to uphold the highest standards of academic and pastoral integrity.

# Plagiarism:

Papers must reflect your own thoughts, words, sentence structure, and ideas. Any use made of another author’s material must be acknowledged in the form of a citation (a footnote and/or bibliographic reference, appropriately formatted using the Chicago Manual of Style), whether or not the material was included in the form of a direct quotation. This applies equally to information from online sources and other websites. Please note that this professor does not regard Wikipedia articles as reliable scholarly resources. Importing online material – or any other material, whether written and published, or from a podcast, video, etc. –without formal written acknowledgement is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and a violation of the Honor Code. *Err on the side of caution and cite anything and everything you use to complete your assignments.*

**Appendix**

**Journaling—On and Off the Page**

**Journaling is simply a process used to record one’s experiences and reflections. Typically, people think journaling means writing their experiences and reflections onto paper or into an electronic device. The key action involved is *recording*, i.e. storing your expressions or thoughts for later reflection. You can express yourself through written and unwritten means. Listed below are a few non-traditional ways people can record their experiences. Following them are some prompts for traditional journaling. Use the process that best suites you.**

**Alternative Journaling Ideas**

**Record your thoughts by using a recording device: use your smartphone or carry a small digital recorder—remember to say the date to keep a chronological record.**

**Record your thoughts via video—again use your smartphone or other electronic device.**

**Write short phrases on sticky notes and create a storyboard afterward. Maybe your random thoughts are creating a larger storyline.**

**Write a poem—allow poetic language and word arrangements say what needs to be expressed.**

**Sketch or draw something that captures the thought or feelings you are experiencing. Provide some caption or word to remind you later what you were referencing.**

**Paint your experience—this may be an abstract creation. For example, maybe your choice of colors communicates what words cannot.**

**Write a poem or song lyrics to express yourself.**

**Movement or Role Play—let your body create the message through a posture, or movement. Create a role play where you take a role to engage in an experience further.**

**Traditional Journal Writing Tips**

1. **Date each entry—this helps you recall the evolution of your experiences and thoughts.**
2. **Keep and re-read what you write—you may discover new insights after reviewing what you wrote a day, a week, or a year ago.**
3. **Write quickly—keep your pen or fingers moving so your Internal Censor can’t shut down your honest expression.**
4. **Begin with the present—what are you thinking or feeling right now about a particular experience?**
5. **Tell yourself the truth—you are the only one reading your journal. Don’t try to talk yourself out of what you need to express.**

**Getting Started--Writing Techniques**

1. **Sentence Stem—create a fill in the blank writing prompt. Right now I feel \_\_\_\_\_. Or some other prompt related to your current experience.**
2. **Five-Minute Timed Writing—write without stopping for five-minutes. If you get stuck write the following phrase until additional thoughts come. “I don’t know what to write, but if I did know this is what I would write…” Do not worry about using correct spelling, grammar, or punctuation.**
3. **Take Inventory—how does the experience you are writing about affect your health, family, home, work, etc.**
4. **“I Sense That”—describe an experience using any of your five senses.**
5. **Unsent Letters—write a letter to another real or fictitious person that you will not actually send.**
6. **Dialogue—write as if you were having a dialog with another person about the topic. You might also imagine the response the other person might make.**
7. **Perspective—write about an experience from the perspective of another person.**
8. **Free Writing/Word Art—write random words, phrases, and fragments of thoughts. Write words or phrases in different sizes, vertically, on angles, intersecting other words…do whatever helps you express yourself best.**