

School of Theology and Ministry  
Seattle University  
900 Broadway  
Seattle, Washington 98122

Fall Quarter, 2007

STMA 536-01: Synoptic Gospels  
Hunthausen 110  
Mondays, 9:00 – 11:50 a.m.

Pre-requisite: STMM 527: Christian  
Scriptures

Instructor: Ann Holmes Redding, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.  
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## Texts

**Required:** The basic text for the course is the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. You may certainly use other versions as supplements, but for the purposes of our common work we will use the NRSV. You may use any edition of the NRSV and Gospel parallels (NRSV).

Duling, Dennis C. *The New Testament History, Literature and Social Context (4th ed.)*.  
Horsley, Richard A. and Neil A. Silberman, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder*.

\*Kingsbury, Jack D. *Jesus Christ in Matthew, Mark, and Luke*.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Matthew as Story*.

Powell, Mark A. *What is Narrative Criticism?*

Rhoads, David, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story*.

Sprague, Minka S. *One to Watch, One to Pray: Introducing the Gospels*.

Tannehill, Robert C. *Narrative Unity of Luke—Acts: A Literary Interpretation: Volume One: The Gospel according to Luke*.

Throckmorton, Burton H. *Gospel Parallels: NRSV Edition*.

**Supplemental:** The texts below, while not required, may be helpful in your work for this class.

Cameron, Ron, ed. *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts*.

Funk, Robert W., ed. *The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say? The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*.

**Course Description (From the course listing):** Students gain expertise in interpreting the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke by considering: their major themes, composition and points of view in proclaiming Jesus, the historical communities for which they were written,

\*a late addition to the list.

and the challenges they present us. Special emphasis is placed on the Gospels as stories, requiring literary analysis and appreciation.

Instructor's addendum: Although we will focus on the narrative qualities of the Gospels, we also will examine them using four of the basic methods of historical criticism: tradition, form, source, and redaction criticism. See **Class Schedule**.

### **Objectives and students' learning outcomes**

1. Knowledge of the major distinguishing emphases, narrative features, and contents of the three synoptic gospels, such that students are able to:
  - a. Identify a gospel from characteristic content in a content quiz and in a game show exercise.
  - b. Write a final paper comparing the treatment of a narrative element in the synoptics.
2. Ability to use some of the basic methods and tools of historical criticism, such that students:
  - a. Incorporate the use of tradition, form, source, and redaction criticism, where appropriate in their final paper.
  - b. Research a term or group of terms as used in the synoptics and write a word study.
3. Understanding of the basic narrative contours of each of the synoptic gospels, such that students prepare a literary analysis of each of the gospels.

### **Evaluation Procedures**

1. For each of the requirements mentioned below the class and instructor will discuss the equitable and appropriate procedures and criteria for evaluation. The grading weight and scale included in the descriptions are suggested but open for negotiation.
2. The instructor will use those agreed upon procedures and criteria in her evaluation of the assignments.
3. The instructor will have a preliminary and final conference with each student during the quarter to discuss and evaluate the student's progress, specifically in terms of the final paper.

### **Course Requirements (Detailed assignment descriptions to be distributed separately.)**

1. **Attendance:** Attendance in a class that meets for one quarter, once a week is particularly important. Also, in a class that emphasizes collegial work, students are accountable to one another, as well as to the instructor in this regard. Students will submit in writing by the second class session notice about any anticipated absence. For other absences, students should, if possible, e-mail the instructor as soon as they are able. **Please note: The final content quiz, the "Synoptic Jeopardy" show, and the final paper are all due on 3 December. Attendance is required for that class session.** Suggested weight: 2 points extra credit for perfect attendance.
2. **Content quizzes:** Each student will take two quizzes on the content of the synoptic gospels, one on **1 October** and one on **3 December**. The evaluation proposed for this exercise would be based both on the progress shown over the

quarter and on the percentage of correct answers in the final quiz. Suggested weight: from 1 to 5 extra credit points.

3. **Literary analyses:** For each gospel, students will do a literary analysis. Although these analyses will not be handed in, they will provide the foundation for the class discussion of each gospel and should be brought to the conferences.
4. **“Synoptic jeopardy:”** In teams, students will participate in a game show in which they identify terms, passages, scenes, and characters from the synoptic gospels. There will be no need to prepare for this exercise, nor will it be graded. It will help students get ready for the content quiz on the same day. Game airs: **3 December.**
5. **Word study:** Each student will choose a significant word, word family, or a term in the gospels and prepare a word study. Suggested weight: 35%. Assignment due: **3 December (as part of final paper).**
6. **Final paper.** Students will choose a topic which lends itself to comparative treatment in the synoptics. Suggested weight: 45%. Preliminary conferences: 22 October – 5 November. Final conferences: 26 November – 7 December. Paper due date: 3 December. (Grading for final paper: 2 extra credit points on assignment for handing in paper in November, 1 extra credit point on assignment for handing in paper on 1-2 December.)

### Class Schedule

Date, Class #	In-class activity/topics	Preparation for <b>class</b> (changes possible; stay tuned)	Due to be handed in
1 Oct., Class no.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to class (students, instructor, syllabus, approach, evaluation)</li> <li>• What is a gospel?</li> <li>• How to read a gospel: discussion of literary analyses</li> <li>• Diagnostic content quiz</li> <li>• The lenses: Empire and culture</li> </ul>		Sign-ups for conferences  Always read pertinent passages in scripture and Throckmorton.
8 Oct., Class no.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The World of the New Testament</li> </ul>	<b>Read <i>Duling</i>, Chs.1 and 3; <i>Horsley</i>, Prologue through Ch. 2; <i>Powell</i>, Chs. 1 – 2, and Appendix; <i>Rhoads</i>, beginning to as far as possible (to be finished for next week’s class); <i>Sprague</i>, Preface through Ch. 2.</b>	

		<b>Work</b> on literary analysis of Mark.	
15 Oct., Class no. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gospel of Mark</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 8; <i>Horsley</i>, Ch. 3 to as far as possible (skim Chs.6 – 9; to be finished by 26 Nov.); <i>Powell</i>, Chs. 3 – Appendix; <i>Rhoads</i>, to the end; <i>Sprague</i>, Chs. 3 – 4.</p> <p><b>Finish</b> literary outline of Mark.</p>	Literary analysis of Mark (not to be handed in)
22 Oct., Class no. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tradition criticism</li> <li>Form criticism</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 2 (especially pp 52-77); <i>Kingsbury – Matthew</i>, beginning to as far as possible (to be finished for next week’s class). <b>Continue reading</b> <i>Horsley</i>. <b>Review</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 3. <b>Work</b> on literary analysis of Matthew.</p>	Preliminary conferences begin, through 5 November.
29 Oct., Class no. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gospel of Matthew</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 9; <i>Kingsbury – Matthew</i>, to the end; <i>Sprague</i>, Ch. 5; <b>Continue reading</b> <i>Horsley</i>. <b>Finish</b> literary outline of Matthew.</p>	Preliminary conferences continue. Literary analysis of Matthew (not to be handed in)
5 Nov., Class no. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source criticism</li> <li>Redaction criticism</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Tannehill</i>, beginning to as far as possible (to be finished for next week’s class). <b>Review</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 2, especially pp. 66 – 80. <b>Continue reading</b> <i>Horsley</i>. <b>Work</b> on literary analysis of Luke.</p>	Last day of preliminary conferences
19 Nov., Class no. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gospel of Luke</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 10; <i>Sprague</i>, Ch. 6; <i>Kingsbury – Jesus</i>, beginning to as far as possible (to be finished for next week’s class); <i>Tannehill</i> to the end. <b>Continue reading</b> <i>Horsley</i>. <b>Finish</b> literary outline of Luke.</p>	Literary analysis of Luke (not to be handed in)
26 Nov., Class no. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 14; <i>Horsley</i>, to the end; <i>Kingsbury – Jesus</i>, to the end.</p>	
3 Dec., Class no. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Synoptic Jeopardy” – a game show.</li> <li>Final content quiz.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prepare</b> for “Synoptic Jeopardy” and final content quiz.</p>	Final paper. Final conferences begin 4 December. Last day, 14 December.
10 Dec., Class no. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“So what?”: Elements of hermeneutics</li> </ul>	<p><b>Review</b> <i>Duling</i>, Ch. 2, especially pp. 64 – 65; <i>Horsley</i>, Ch. 11; <i>Powell</i>, Ch. 7; <i>Rhoads</i>, pp. 135 – 150; <i>Sprague</i>, pp. 71 –</p>	Final conferences continue.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do Empire and culture have to do with it?</li><li>• Sharing from papers</li><li>• Taking it home: Bible studies, preaching, children</li></ul>	74.	
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