Seattle University
School of Theology and Ministry
Spring 2010: Th / 5:45 - 8:35 PM
Hunt # 100

Instructor: Leticia Guardiola-Sáenz
Office Hours by appointment
Hunt 211; ext. 6436

STMA 536: SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

DESCRIPTION: A detailed examination of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, with special focus on the distinctive portrait of Jesus as presented by each evangelist. Major issues and contemporary methods for the study of gospel literature will be introduced.

This course explores the synoptic gospels as rhetorical documents that respond to the literary conventions of their time; as ancient records that reflect their socio-cultural context of production; and as Sacred Scriptures, documents of faith that have shaped the beliefs of the Christian church.

This course operates under a policy of inclusiveness and diversity. All interpretations of the gospels are partial, non-universal interpretations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course students will develop:

1. *Knowledge of the content and themes of each Synoptic Gospel*
2. *Understanding of the Synoptic Problem and its hermeneutical implications*
3. *Skills to use the tools of Synoptic criticism*
4. *Ability to interpret the Synoptic Gospels both in their own context and in our contemporary contexts.*

REQUIREMENTS:

A. One final paper, on a topic of your choice, related to the synoptic gospels and to a contemporary social issue. The paper should be between 3500-3700 words long. You can work with one or the three gospels. Select your topic by May 6 and bring to class a written paragraph with your thesis or tentative outline. Due date: June 10: 40% of final grade.

B. Three creative-critical outlines of the Gospels (5% each, 1-2 pp, s/s) 15% of final grade. After reading each synoptic gospel in one sitting appropriate its content by organizing it in a particular way that make sense to you, you can follow literary, geographical, theological, liturgical, chronological, symbolic, or personal patterns. Include a brief explanation of the rational behind your outline. Due dates: Mk on April 8; Mt on April 15; Lk on April 22.

C. One short integrative/comparative paper (500 words) speaking from your own reading experience of the ways in which you see the three gospels being connected, how they compare and how each of them differ, presenting their individual character according to you: 10% of final grade, due April 29.

D. 26 hours of informed and active participation in class. Come to class ready to examine and discuss the assigned articles and biblical passages: 30% of final grade.

E. 10-minute presentation of final paper on June 3. 5% of final grade.

F. Three reading/listening sessions (one sitting): Mk – 1½ hours; Mt – 2½ hours; Lk - 2½ hours.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Reading

1. Mark, Matthew, and Luke (NRSV). (Read/listen to each Gospel at least once, preferably twice)

2. Perkins, Pheme. *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels.*

3. *The New Greek/English Interlinear New Testament*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

4. Cartlidge, David R. and David L. Dungan. *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (DSG)

5. Boer, Martinus C de. “Ten thousand talents: Matthew's interpretation and redaction of the parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:23-35).” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 50 no 2 Ap 1988, p 214-232.

6. Charles, J Daryl. “The "Coming One"/"Stronger One" and His Baptism: Matt 3:11-12, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16-17.” *Pneuma*, 11 no 1 Spr 1989, p 37-49.

7. Cranfield, Charles E B. “The Good Samaritan.” *Theology Today*, 11 no 3 O 1954, p 368-372.

8. Carter, Warren. “Matthew 4:18-22 and Matthean Discipleship: An Audience-Oriented Perspective.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 59 no 1 Ja 1997, p 58-75.

9. Donaldson, Terence L. “The mockers and the Son of God (Matthew 27:37-44): two characters in Matthew's story of Jesus.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, no 41 F 1991, p 3-18.

10. Juel, Donald H. “Encountering the sower: Mark 4:1-20.” *Interpretation*, 56 no 3 Jl 2002, p 273-283.

11. Rosenblatt, Samuel. “Crucifixion of Jesus from the standpoint of Pharisaic law.” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 75 no 4 D 1956, p 315-321.

12. Wahlstrom, Eric H. “Beginning of Jesus' ministry” *Lutheran Quarterly*, 9 no 2 May 1957, p 151-153.

13. Weaver, Dorothy Jean. “Rewriting the messianic script: Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus.” *Interpretation*, 54 no 4 O 2000, p 376-385.

14. West, Gerald O. “Constructing Critical and Contextual Readings with Ordinary Readers: Mark 5:21-6:1.” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no 92 S 1995, p 60-69.

Suggested Reading

Boring, M. Eugene. “Gospel of Matthew” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible. Volume VIII*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995

Culpepper, R. Alan. “Gospel of Luke” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible. Volume IX*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Green, Joel et. al. eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Hanks, Tom. The Subversive Gospel. A New Testament Commentary of Liberation. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000.

Hengel, Martin. *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Harrisburg: Trinity International Press, 2000.

Nickle, Keith E. *The Synoptic Gospels: An Introduction*. Louisville: WJK Press, 2001.

Perkins, Pheme. “Gospel of Mark” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible. Volume VIII*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Links for synoptic material:
Synoptic Problem; *Mahlon Smith's Synoptic Gospels Primer*

COURSE CALENDAR

S.	Date	Topics and assignments	Readings
1	Apr. 1	Syllabus: Content, methods, class format, etc Introduction: Framing the study of the Gospels	Perkins: chapters 1-3
2	Apr. 8	Mark (outline due)	Gospel of Mark Perkins: chapter 4 DSG: 13-22
3	Apr. 15	Matthew (outline due)	Gospel of Matthew Perkins: chapter 5 DSG: 98-103
4	Apr. 22	Luke (outline due)	Gospel of Luke Perkins: chapter 6 DSG: 104-106
5	Apr.29	Comparison of synoptic gospels Infancy narratives: 1. The birth of Jesus 2. The adoration of the infant Jesus (Short comparative-paper due)	Perkins: chapter 7 DSG: 92-97; 129-136 Mt 1:18-25 / L 2:1-7 Mt 2:1-12 / Lk 2 Weaver's article
6	May 6	John the Baptist Baptism of Jesus	Mk 1:2-6; Mt 3:1-6; Lk 3:1-6 Mk 1:9-11; Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-22 Charles' article
7	May 13	The Beginning of Jesus' ministry Call of disciples Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage	Mk 1:14-15; Mt 4:13-17; Lk 4:14-15 Mk 1:16-20; Mt 4:18-22; Lk 5:1-11 Mk 5:21-43; Mt 9:18-26; Lk 8:40-56 Wahlstrom' article, Carter's article, West's article
8	May 20	3 Parables of Jesus The Sower and the kingdom The Unforgiving Servant The Good Samaritan	Mk 4:1-9/Mt 13:1-9;Lk 8:4-8 Matthew 18:23-35 Luke 10:25-37 DSG: 140-141 Juel's, Boer's, and Cranfield's articles
9	May 27	Trials and crucifixion of Jesus	Mk 15:2-5; Mt 27:11-14; Lk 23:2-5 Mk 15:22-32; Mt 27:33-43; Lk 23:33-38 Donaldson's and Rosenblatt's articles
10	June 3	Conclusion: Discussion of main topics Individual presentations	
11	June10	Final paper due	