

# Four Gospels, ONE JESUS

THEO 3210 – MWF 1:30-2:50, Otto Miller Hall 128 – CRN 28758

Dr. David Nienhuis – Seattle Pacific University – Autumn 2016

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**UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT:** Seattle Pacific University seeks to be a premier Christian university fully committed to engaging the culture and changing the world by graduating people of competence and character, becoming people of wisdom, and modeling grace-filled community.

**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY MISSION STATEMENT:** The School of Theology at Seattle Pacific University aspires to embody God's diverse kingdom, equipping the people of God to be transformative agents in the world through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

*STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME #1:* Students will demonstrate an understanding of the Christian tradition and develop skills of theological reflection.

*STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME #2:* Students will demonstrate an understanding of the Bible as Scripture and develop skills and practices of biblical interpretation that illustrate a discerning use of Scripture.

*STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME #3:* Students will demonstrate an understanding of the principles and skills that are essential to serve and lead as agents of reconciliation in diverse settings.

*STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME #4:* Students will demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics and practices of nurturing their own Christian faith and the Christian faith of others.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

(From the SPU catalog) "This course is intentionally designed to be an introduction to biblical studies for students seeking to go deeper with what they learned in UFDN 2000. In it we will learn how to utilize the various tools and methodologies of academic biblical study to explore the history, literature and theology of the four canonical gospels."

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The course description highlights the two central learning objectives for our time together: First, this course is designed to transition students out of UFDN 2000 by introducing them to the practice of faithful academic biblical study. We will accomplish this by becoming familiar with the basic tools and research methodologies scholars employ when mining the depths of the biblical text. Second, our introduction to biblical studies tools and methods will be worked out through a survey of the four canonical gospels. Ideally we'd spend an entire quarter on a single gospel! Alas, once again we'll be rushing along, I'm afraid. At the bare minimum, my hope is that you'll leave this class knowing your way around the gospels. More than that, I hope that your understanding of the One Gospel of Jesus will be enriched by a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the literature and theology of the Church's four authoritative versions.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

- A modern English **Bible**, preferably the NRSV, ESV, or NIV. Bring it to class every day.
- Kurt Aland's ***Synopsis of the Four Gospels*** will aid us in our analysis of the gospel texts. Bring this each day too.
- Corrine Carvalho's ***Primer on Biblical Methods*** will help us grasp the basics of the various interpretive methods employed by academic biblical scholars.
- You'll also read the four gospels chapters from my forthcoming book, ***The Way of the Word: A Canonical Introduction to the New Testament***

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EXPECTATIONS, AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES:**

**1) Attendance:** Since one of the primary objectives of this course is to develop the practice of carefully reading scripture together, *class attendance* is taken very seriously, and most days I will pass around a sign-up sheet to check your faithfulness. After years of haggling with students over whether or not a particular absence should be considered “excused” or “unexcused”, I have decided to turn to a “banking” model. You have three free absences in your “Attendance Account”, and you may spend them in whatever way you choose. But you must spend wisely; these are the only absences you are allowed! If you know now that you will have to miss a class session at some point in the quarter, budget accordingly. If you tend to get sick, and these sicknesses tend to keep you from class, budget accordingly. Students will only be allowed to go into debt if an emergency can be *demonstrated* to have taken place *on more than one occasion* (i.e., you cannot blow your freebies and then expect more grace when emergency strikes). Otherwise, if you miss more than three times, your grade will drop by ½ point (i.e., from a B to a B-). More than five absences will reduce your grade by a full point.

## **2) Writing Assignments**

- **Daily Study Notes:** Study notes will be the “engine” that drives your learning this quarter. Study after study has shown that learning is enhanced if students not only *hear* information (from class lecture) and *read* information (from course texts), but also *write* that information down and *talk* about it with others. Solid, extensive note-taking is essential not only for our time in class but also for your preparation outside of class. For this reason, I will be evaluating your daily preparation by asking you to prepare study notes for every day we have gospel texts assigned this quarter (prep work for our intro days will be described in the course map).
  - **A word-processed, printed hard copy of the notes should be in your hand every day**, as you will use them to enable your class participation.
  - On most days you will add these to your handwritten lecture notes and place them in your course portfolio (see below), but **on at least five different occasions I will ask you to submit your notes for evaluation. I will not accept daily work by email; they must be in your hand in class.**
  - An **attached sheet** (p.7) describes in detail what substantive study notes ought to look like. I will be holding you to this expectation, so please look it over carefully.
  - I am well aware of the fact that the daily grind of course prep notes can be exhausting. I am also aware of how much is lost when a student comes to hear a lecture but has not prepared on her own before coming to class. Thus, you have two options open to you on the days I collect: you may submit “partial” or “complete” study notes. A “partial” set of study notes says “I did the reading and reflected on it, but didn’t have time to write up a complete and substantial set of observations.” A “complete” set is one that conforms precisely to the expectations outlined on the attached document. **Over the times I collect this quarter you are required to submit EITHER three “completes” OR two “completes” and two “partials.”** The type of submission should be printed clearly at the top of your homework. “Partials” are worth 4 pts and “completes” are worth 10— so this aspect of the course is worth up to 30 points toward your total score.
- **Methods Assignments:** We will be working through Corrine Carvalho’s *Primer on Biblical Methods* over the first two weeks of the quarter. Questions and exercises associated with this book can be found on pp.10-12 of this syllabus. Note the due dates on the course map. The first three assignments are worth five points each, and the fourth, which is more extensive, is worth ten.
- **Biblical Studies Resource Project:** Since one of our central tasks involves introducing you to basic biblical studies tools and methodologies, your primary research work this quarter will involve the

completion of a multi-step Biblical Studies Resource Project. See the course map for due dates, and pp.13-22 of this syllabus for a detailed description of this herculean task.

- **Course Portfolio:** On our last regular class meeting you will submit your course portfolio. The idea here is to have you collect all your course materials together in a meaningful fashion so that you can take it with you from this class as a lifelong resource. It should contain everything related to the class bound together in a three-ring binder.
  - Your portfolio will be graded according to two categories: thoroughness and usefulness (10 points each). “Thoroughness” means it should include everything related to class: daily prep notes (typed) and in-class lecture notes; any and all handouts; and all three parts of your Biblical Studies Resource Project. “Usefulness” means it should be carefully and clearly organized.
  - You will place the course syllabus on the front, followed by a tab that says “daily lecture notes” which are organized by date, followed by another tab that says “daily assignments,” followed by another tab that says “handouts,” and concluded with another tab that says “Resource Project.”

#### **HOW WILL YOUR GRADE BE DETERMINED?**

Daily Study Notes	30 points	Project Part 3	40 points
Methods Assignments	25 points	Course Portfolio	20 points
Project Part 1	25 points	<u>Attendance &amp; Engagement</u>	<u>Leverage</u>
Project Part 2	15 points	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>155 points</b>

NOTE: Grading is on a straight percentage scale, though for final grades I typically expand the “B” range to 80-92% and restrict the “A” range to 93-100%.

#### **COURSE POLICIES AND OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

**CANVAS ONLINE LEARNING SITE:** I am only just now learning how to use Canvas! I’m going to figure it out over the course of the quarter, but my intention is to provide you with all powerpoints and handouts, and to keep the gradebook updated. Stay tuned!

**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE POLICY:** The Christian gospel aims to provide a clear witness to the revelation of God through Jesus Christ. For this reason, the words we choose are influential and significant. Because language related to race, gender, class, and nationality has a particular power to liberate or to marginalize other human beings, our words ought to exhibit the sort of grace-filled sensitivity to human dignity that is part and parcel of the Christian gospel (James 3:1-18). In particular, the School of Theology at Seattle Pacific University believes that language about God and people should mirror these biblical truths: that God created both male and female in God’s image (Genesis 1:27); that God formed male and female into a working partnership to steward all of God’s creation (Genesis 1:28); and that God loves every one equally without respect to race, gender, class, or nationality; yet all are equally in need of God’s forgiveness and equally transformed by God’s grace into new creatures because of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:3-6). The use of nondiscriminatory language substantiates these truths and fosters a community where “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

The social practices of Seattle Pacific University’s Methodist heritage exemplify these biblical truths. Rooted deeply within Methodism is the active participation in the lifting of oppression in any form so as to extend and implement the freedom of the gospel to all whom God has created and seeks to redeem. The record of Wesleyans on behalf of those on the margins is impressive and honorable and should be furthered by the modern offspring of Wesley in word and deed. Therefore, it is the policy of the School of Theology at Seattle Pacific University to use nondiscriminatory language in our syllabi, publications, and

communications. (The grammatical particulars about nondiscriminatory language are spelled out in *The Everyday Writer*.) Moreover, when writing and speaking about God, the School of Theology encourages the use of a wide variety of images found in Scripture and the Christian tradition, such as rock, sovereign, light, mother eagle, shepherd, creator, father, and so on. By drawing on the richness of these biblical images, we position ourselves to deepen our understanding of God's manifold attributes more fully and to help form God's multiform people into a more inclusive community.

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Students are expected to follow the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) stated in the current edition of the Undergraduate Catalog. The guidelines for handling any cases of suspected infractions are spelled out in the same place.

**Policy for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services in the Center for Learning, Lower Moyer Hall, to make your accommodations request. Once your eligibility has been determined, DSS will send a Disability Verification Letter to your professors indicating what accommodations have been approved. Here is the Center's contact information:

- Phone: (206) 281-2272 TTY: (206) 281-2224 Fax: (206) 286-7348
- Email: [dss@spu.edu](mailto:dss@spu.edu)
- Website: <http://www.spu.edu/depts/cfl/dss/index.asp>

**Inclement Weather School Closure Policy:**

\*Full Closure: All classes are canceled and all offices are closed. The Library, Campus Dining Services and the Student Union Building will be operational on a limited schedule.

\*Late Start: Indicates that classes begin at 9:30 a.m. and offices open at 9:30 a.m. Classes beginning at 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. are canceled. All other classes will operate as scheduled. Chapel will be held if planned.

\*For Evening Classes and Events: Allowing for weather changes during the day, a decision will be made by 2:00 p.m. for evening classes and events. Call the Emergency Closure Hotline for the updated information.

\*The Emergency Closure Hotline (206) 281-2800 always provides current and complete information.

**Reports of Threats, Crimes and Sexual Misconduct**

Seattle Pacific University is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment on campus. As part of this, university employees are generally required to report information they receive about threats, crimes, and sexual misconduct involving students to the Office of Safety and Security or the university's Title IX Coordinator.

Information that must be reported includes both verbal and written statements (e.g., spoken in class or submitted in a written assignment), whether by a victim or by a third-party. Types of incidents that must be reported include physical assault (including domestic or dating violence), sex offenses (e.g., rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment), stalking, robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, hate crimes, and arrests for weapon, drug, or liquor law violations.

If you are a victim of any of the offenses listed above, you are strongly encouraged to report the matter promptly to a professor, the Office of Safety and Security, or the university's Title IX Coordinator so that the university can offer you support and notify you of available resources. If you are a victim and would like to speak with someone confidentially, you can arrange to speak with a counselor at the Student Counseling Center or you can make an appointment outside of class with a pastoral counselor.

## ***Emergency Preparedness Information***

### **Report an Emergency or Suspicious Activity**

Call the Office of Safety and Security to report an emergency or suspicious activity by dialing 206-281-2911 or by pressing the call button on a campus emergency phone. SPU Security Officers are trained first responders and will be dispatched to your location. If needed, the SPU Dispatcher will contact local fire/police with the exact address of the location of the emergency.

### **SPU-Alert System**

The SPU-Alert System is SPU's emergency notification system. It can send information via text message, email, electronic reader board, computer pop-ups (for SPU computers), loudspeaker, and recorded cell phone messages. Text messaging has generally proven to be the quickest way to receive an alert about a campus emergency. In order to receive text messages from SPU-Alert, you must provide SPU with your cell phone number through the Banner Information System on the web, <https://www.spu.edu/banweb/>. Select the Personal Menu then choose the Emergency Alert System tab. Contact the CIS Help Desk if you have questions about entering your personal contact information into the Banner Information System. Emergency announcements may also be made by SPU staff members serving as Building Emergency Coordinators ("BECs").

### **Lockdown / Shelter in Place – General Guidance**

The University will lock down in response to threats of violence such as a bank robbery or armed intruder on campus. You can assume that all remaining classes and events will be temporarily suspended until the incident is over. Lockdown notifications are sent using the SPU-Alert System.

#### If you are in a building at the time of a lockdown:

- Stay inside and await instruction, unless you are in immediate visible danger.
- Move to a securable area (such as an office or classroom) and lock the doors.
- Close the window coverings then move away from the windows and get low on the floor.
- Remain in your secure area until further direction or the all clear is given (this notification will be sent via the SPU-Alert System).

#### If you are outside at the time of a lockdown:

- Leave the area and seek safe shelter off campus. Remaining in the area of the threat may expose you to danger.
- Return to campus after the all clear is given (notification will be sent via the SPU-Alert System).

### **Evacuation – General Guidance**

Students should evacuate a building if the fire alarm sounds or if a faculty member, a staff member, or the SPU-Alert System instructs building occupants to evacuate. In the event of an evacuation, gather your personal belongings quickly and proceed to the nearest exit. Most classrooms contain a wall plaque or poster on or next to the classroom door showing the evacuation route and the assembly site for the building. Do not use the elevator. Once you have evacuated the building, proceed to the nearest evacuation assembly location. The "*Stop. Think. Act.*" booklet posted in each classroom contains a list of assembly sites for each building. Check in with your instructor or a BEC (they will be easily recognizable by their bright orange vests). During emergencies, give each BEC your full cooperation whenever they issue directions.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information about emergency preparedness can be found on the SPU web page at <http://www.spu.edu/info/emergency/index.asp> or by calling the Office of Safety and Security at 206-281-2922.

FOUR GOSPELS COURSE MAP			
DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
M 9/26	Course Introduction		
W 9/28	<i>Genre</i> : What is a gospel?	Carvalho Introduction	Methods Assignment I due
F 9/30	<i>History</i> : Form, Source, Redaction	Carvalho Part 1	Methods Assignment II due
M 10/3	<i>Literature</i> : Text, Narrative	Carvalho Part 2	Methods Assignment III due
W 10/5	<i>Reader</i> : Hermeneutics	Carvalho Parts 3 and 4	Methods assignment IV due
F 10/7	<i>Diversity</i> : Many, One, or Four?	<i>The Gospel of Thomas</i>	15 observations of <i>GThom</i>
M 10/10	<i>Church</i> : Canonical Approach	Nothing due Monday 10/10, but skim Matt + read Nienhuis chap, plus bring notes for Wednesday 10/12	
W 10/12	Introduction to Matthew		
F 10/14	Matthew's Opening	Matthew chs.1-4	Prepare study notes
M 10/17	The Sermon on the Mount	Matthew chs.5-7	Prepare study notes
W 10/19	Mission and Rejection	Matthew chs.8-13	Prepare study notes
F 10/21	The Church	Matthew chs.14-20	Prepare study notes
M 10/24	Matthew concluded	Matthew chs.21-28	Prepare study notes
W 10/26	<b><i>Day of Common Learning</i></b>	For Friday 10/28: Skim Mk., read Mk. chapter, bring notes, + <b>Project Part 1 Due</b>	
F 10/28	Introduction to Mark		
M 10/31	Who is this?	Mark 1-4	Prepare study notes
W 11/2	The Way of the Cross	Mark 5-10	Prepare study notes
F 11/4	Mark concluded	Mark chs.11-16	Prepare study notes
M 11/7	Introduction to Luke	Skim Lk + read Nienhuis chapter on Luke	
W 11/9	The Spirit is upon me...	Luke chs.1-4	Prepare study notes
F 11/11	<b><i>Veterans Day Holiday – Class will not meet</i></b>		<b>Project Part 2 Due</b>
M 11/14	Discipleship	Luke chs.5-12	Prepare study notes
W 11/16	The Kingdom is among you	Luke chs.13-18	Prepare study notes
F 11/18	The Righteous One	Luke 19-24	Prepare study notes
M 11/21	Introduction to John	Skim John, read Nienhuis chapter, bring notes	
W 11/23	John's Opening Section	John chs.1-4	Prepare study notes
F 11/25	<b><i>Thanksgiving Holiday – Class will not meet</i></b>		
M 11/28	I am the bread of life...	John chs.5-12	Prepare study notes
W 11/30	The High Priestly Prayer	John chs.13-17	Prepare study notes
F 12/2	What is Truth?	John 18:1-21:25	Prepare study notes
FINALS	<b>Project part 3 due Wednesday, Dec.7, before 5pm. You must pick up your portfolio in order to receive a grade for the course!</b>		

## STUDY NOTES GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS

THEO 3210 – Four Gospels, One Jesus

What do substantive study notes look like? What follows are basic guidelines based primarily on my own experience as a student. Keep in mind: (1) your work must be *substantive* and show that real *effort* has been applied, and (2) your notes must be word processed (so I know you prepared in advance).

### REQUIRED ELEMENTS:

1. Make sure your **name, the date, and the text under review** are clearly identified at the top of the page.
2. **Include at least 20 substantive observations** of the biblical text under review (25 or more good ones will be required for you to receive the full 10 points). What constitutes a substantial observation?
  - a. Something that strikes you as important, interesting, exciting, or scandalous (but note: you must explain in detail *why* it is you find it to be such).
  - b. A word you don't understand— though you must express your attempts to figure it out yourself. Don't just write, "What's a \_\_\_\_?" An observation must be more substantive than that.
  - c. A key word or idea that is emphasized or repeated, or perhaps a word mentioned in the section assigned that you know to be a key word or idea for the letter or author. Again, spell out the repetition or emphasis by describing how it functions in the verses under consideration.
  - d. Something you noticed about the formal or rhetorical elements of the passage.
  - e. A significant difference noted while comparing English translations.

→ Key point: observations should include more than one sentence and must not leave me wondering what it is you're observing. Think "substantial".
3. **Number each of them**, and include a clear reference to the verse or verses involved.

### SOME GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVING THE GOSPEL TEXTS:

- **The most important pitfall to avoid** here is slipping too soon from *description* into *interpretation*. We are seeking to be careful, deep readers of the text, and we must work hard to avoid imposing our assumptions about what we think the text might mean. Your observations are interested in "description" pure and simple, not significance per se (though of course you will begin such thinking when you offer thoughts on interpretation for our context). **Focus on asking questions. If you find yourself telling me what the text says, or what you think it means, you've missed the point.** We want to go deeper, not simply re-affirm what we think we already know.
- My advice? Keep a notebook open and jot down everything that strikes you as a possible observation as you read. When you finish, go back over your notes and choose the best 20 to reformulate into well thought out, properly-formed observations.
- I go into evaluating your study notes expecting that **most of you will be receiving a score of 8 on a "complete" assignment or 3 on a "partial" assignment.** Those who fail to complete one or more of the three points above, or who appear to have not given themselves fully to the assignment, will receive less than 8—though most who turn much of anything in will receive some points, so please don't hesitate to turn-in work that is only partially complete. 9's and 10's are reserved for those among you who produce excellent study notes, e.g. those who offer more than 20 observations of real depth and substance.

## PARALLEL STUDIES USING THE *SYNOPSIS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS*

*Help in Navigating the Synopsis* (adapted from a handout prepared by Bruce Fisk at Westmont College)

- The scripture references at the top of the page are in **bold** face only when that column is following material **in order**. The references are **in plain** face when a passage is presented **out of order**—thus, somewhere else in the book, the same passage appears again in its proper order (in bold face). When a pericope (paragraph or unit) appears out of order, the location of the same passage "in order" is given in parentheses under the reference. See, e.g., #17 on p.15: since both Matt. 14:3-4 and Mark 6:17-18 appear out of order, we are told to go to #144 on p.133 to see the same passages in their proper order.
- If you are studying a passage in a particular gospel, it is usually best to examine it in its proper sequence, which means it should appear in bold at the top of the page.
- **Small print** may indicate a remote parallel. Examine each small print passage to determine whether or not the passage contains clear verbal parallels. If it is similar but not parallel, leave it alone.
- **Small print** may also display parallel passages that appear in reverse order. Study the way the three temptations appear in #20 (Matt.4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13).
- Note the extensive sections at the bottom of the page. This is known as a "critical apparatus." Since the parallels come from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, top section contains variant readings in the major literal equivalence English translations (see the "signs and symbols" on p. XII). The bottom includes references to some of the more important NT cross references or OT texts alluded to and/or quoted.
- The indexes of Parallels and New Testament Passages at the back are very helpful for finding passages.

### Doing a parallels analysis:

#### 1. Begin by doing a "source critical" analysis. Answer the following:

- Get a sense of where the pericope falls in each gospel. Look at the two or three pericopes that come before it and those that come after. Do each of the authors place the pericope in the same basic place in the gospel story, or has one or more rearranged the sequence?
- Is the pericope found in all four gospels? Which omit it and which include it? How might inclusion or exclusion be explained?
- Provide a list of the most obvious similarities and, especially, the differences. As you do this, consider:
  - Is one version longer than another? Note which are more expansive and which are sparser.
  - What material within the pericope is included in one parallel but omitted in another?
  - Is the parallel material arranged differently within the parallel pericopes?
  - Are synonyms used?

#### 2. Conclude with a "redaction critical" analysis. Briefly address the following:

- *Selection*: If the pericope is not found in all four gospels, does its inclusion or omission in one or more gospels correspond to what we know about that gospel's overall purpose or theological emphasis?
- *Adaptation*: Can we identify differences or modifications that reveal the author's distinctive theology or purpose? Consider looking at a concordance; if one gospel has changed a particular word, the concordance will tell you if it is a key term for the author. Read the word in the other passages to see if it is part of a recurring theme or motif. Study bible notes may also shed some light in this regard.
- *Arrangement*: Each pericope can be considered a "thought unit" or a "plot point" that has been placed in logical relation to what comes before and what comes after. Can you tell if the placement of the pericope in each gospel bear any interpretive significance?

## INTERPRETIVE METHODOLOGIES FOR CRITICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Adapted from Paula Gooder (ed.) *Searching For Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the NT* (WJK, 2008)

Realm	Approach	Key Features
Exploring the Historical World Behind the Biblical Text	HISTORICAL	Historical criticism does not constitute a particular method of study, but includes a range of techniques to increase our understanding of the social and cultural world of the NT and further our understanding of the NT itself.
	SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC	Social scientific criticism attempts to understand the NT writings using the perspectives of social history and the methods of social or cultural anthropology.
	FORM	Form criticism is the study and classification of literary patterns and typical features of a biblical passage (e.g. controversy or miracle stories, hymns, confessions) often with the aim of gaining an insight into the original context that shaped it.
	GENRE	Genre criticism analyzes a text according to the conventional features of its genre classification.
	SOURCE	Source criticism attempts to discover the sources used by an author in constructing a text.
	REDACTION	Redaction criticism studies how the gospel writers “redacted” (edited) their source material.
Exploring the Literary World Of the Biblical Text	TEXTUAL	Textual criticism seeks to discover, as far as is possible, the original version of the text found in a manuscript and to remove errors or alterations that have been made by scribes when they transcribed the document.
	TRANSLATION	Translation theory studies the principles and procedures that govern translating the Bible.
	CANONICAL	Canonical criticism is the study of a particular passage in the light of other passages and books of the Bible.
	RHETORICAL	Rhetorical criticism is the study of how texts use either ancient or modern rhetoric (the art of persuasion) to convince their readers of a particular point or position.
	NARRATIVE	Narrative criticism interprets NT narratives as literary texts, using categories applied in reading all other forms of literature, for example, plot, characterization, setting, and so forth.
	STRUCTURAL	Structural criticism (sometimes called structuralism) is a form of narrative criticism which pays particular attention to the deep, permanent structures that are common to all stories.
Exploring the Reader’s World In Front Of the Biblical Text	POSTSTRUCTURAL	Poststructural criticism (also called poststructuralism) is a postmodern variety of structuralism in which the physical stuff of the text (the “signifier”) is seen as interfering with the understanding of the text’s meaning or thought (the “signified”), with the result that no text ever presents a single, clear truth.
	RECEPTION HISTORY	Reception history is the study of the way in which a text’s interpreters have read that text in their various social and religious contexts.
	THEOLOGICAL	Theological interpretation is concerned with exploring the relationship of the NT to Christian theology and to understanding how it functions in worshipping communities.
	READER-RESPONSE	Reader-response criticism encompasses a range of criticisms which emphasize the role of readers as active agents in completing the meaning of a text by the way that they read it.
	FEMINIST	Feminist criticism interprets the Bible from a position which pays particular attention to gender issues as they affect women, both in the NT and in its interpretation.
	RACIAL/ETHNIC/ GLOBAL	Racial/Ethnic/Global criticisms interpret the NT from the experience and perspective of particular non-majority peoples and cultures, exploring how such persons are treated in the text, have been treated in subsequent interpretation of the text, or interpret the text out of their own interpretive traditions.
	LIBERATION	Liberation criticism is not so much a method of criticism as an ideological orientation which seeks to make common cause with the poor and the marginalized and to liberate them from oppression. Insights from liberation criticism are applied socioeconomically or politically to explore the nature of oppression and the uses (and abuses) of power.
	POST-COLONIAL	Postcolonial criticism interprets the Bible from the perspective of those who seek to engage with the legacy of colonial rule.

## **CARVALHO BIBLICAL METHODS ASSIGNMENTS!**

Look to the syllabus for due dates

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### **Assignment I: *Introduction: A Quick Guide to Biblical Interpretation* – pp.vii-xiii**

1. Why, according to Carvalho, must we learn to ask systematic questions of the biblical text?
2. Offer a thorough definition of the following terms as they are described in the introduction:
  - a. *Critical methods*
  - b. *Exegesis*
  - c. *Pericope*
  - d. *Inspiration* (in relation to the author and the text)
  - e. *Inerrant* (in its two different forms)
3. On “inspiration” and “inerrancy”: the last paragraph of today’s reading clearly describes Carvalho’s position on these matters. What do you think? What is gained—and what might be lost—by following her lead (as we will, to a certain extent, in this class!)?
4. List whatever other questions this section raises for you (try to come up with at least two).

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### **Assignment II: *The World Behind the Text* – pp. 1-29**

After reading the entire chapter, choose **TWO** of the methodologies below and, for each, (1) offer a brief, basic definition as provided by Carvalho, and (2) practice the method according to the instructions provided.

- **Source Criticism:** Using your Aland text, read the story of Jesus walking on water in Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, and John 6:16-21. While there are more than a few differences between these versions (especially in the way the stories end), note in particular Mark’s inclusion of Jesus’ enigmatic intention “to pass them by” (6:48). Now read Ex.33:18-23, 1Kings 19:1-13, and Job 9:1-12. How do these source texts as a whole help us understand Mark’s particular intention in this gospel scene? Given the way Mark’s version ends, which of the texts might have been in the forefront in his mind?
- **Form Criticism:** Compare the following healing stories: Mt.8:5-13; Mt.20:29-34; Mk.2:1-12; Mk.7:24-30; Lk.6:6-11; Lk.8:26-39; Jn.5:1-9. Is there a discernable pattern in each of them? What “form” do most healing stories follow? Are the same “steps” involved in the relation of each story? What are they?
- **Tradition Criticism:** Consider our three most ancient versions of the Lord’s Prayer: Mt.6:9-13, Lk.11:2-4, and the version found in the eighth chapter of an early Christian document called *The Didache* (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html>).
  - First, list off the similarities and differences you notice between these three.
  - Second, try to order them *chronologically*; which, would you guess, is considered the earliest version, which is the latest, and on what basis might we justify the ordering?
  - Third, consider whether any of these three are *dependent* on the others. Is one of these the *source* for one or both of the others? Are some of them dependent on another source which is not one of these three? How do we know?
  - Finally, can we make any guesses about the original *Sitz im Leben*, the social “setting in life” for these three versions?

- **Redaction Criticism:** Using your Aland text, compare and contrast the story of the Stilling of the Storm in Mt.8:18-27 and Mk.4:35-41 (Luke's version, at 8:22-25, is a good one too, but let's focus on Matthew and Mark for now). The two versions clearly relate the same event, but there are significant differences between them. List all the significant differences you can find, and then try to describe Matthew's and Mark's intention for shaping the story as they did. Does one story "feel" different than the other? Are the characters presented differently? Do the two versions make a different point about Jesus and/or discipleship?

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### Assignment III: *The World of the Text* – pp.30-54

Two questions from the opening section:

- Why did historical criticism arise in the Enlightenment period, and why, according to Carvalho, did it have limited success?
- Where is "meaning" located? Describe the difference in ascribing meaning to (a) the author, (b) the text, or (c) the reader.

Choose **ONE** of the methodologies below; define it, then practice it according to the instructions.

- **Textual Criticism:** Consider the following classic textual "problems" in the gospels:
  - Mk.1:41 — was Jesus moved with "anger" or "pity"? How might we go about making a case for which word is original?
  - Mt.19:20 – while all the manuscripts have the man say "*all these I have observed*," some of them add "*from my youth*." Which represents the original text? For this one, consider the parallel texts in Mark and Luke, and argue a case for the "right reading."
  - Lk.22:43-44 and Jn.7:53-8:11– did some ancient versions *exclude* this part of these stories, or did someone *include* them later? How might we tell? Why would some ancient versions *not* include these, or why would someone choose to *insert* them?
- **Narrative Criticism:** Biblical scholar Robert Alter suggests that a character can be understood in terms of the following components:
  - a. Actions (what a character does)
  - b. Direct speech (what a character says)
  - c. Inward speech (what a character thinks)
  - d. Appearance or presentation (gestures, posture, costume)
  - e. Statements made by narrator about this character

Based on this list, do a literary analysis of the character called "the beloved disciple" or "the disciple whom Jesus loved" a figure found only in the Gospel of John (see 13:23-26; 19:25-27; 20:1-10; 21:1-8; 21:20-25; some also include 18:15-16 in this list). While a historical critic might ask "Who was this disciple?" narrative criticism asks, "What *role* does this character play in the story?" Do your best to bracket out the historical question and attempt to answer the latter question after you've completed your literary analysis.

- **Reader-Response Criticism:** Text critics have had to do a lot of work to make sense of the ending of Mark's gospel in chapter 16. Note that there are four different possible endings here: (1) the gospel could have originally ended at 16:8; (2) it could have originally ended after v.8 with the "shorter ending" (not included in all English translations; it is included in the NRSV, and you may find it in the footnotes of a different study bible); (3) it could have ended with the "longer ending" (this is the ending ultimately "canonized," as evidenced by the presence of verse numbers); or (4) it could have ended after v.8 with an ending that was somehow lost in the transmission of the gospel. Prior to the modern period most people would have assumed the gospel ended at 16:20, but since the rise

of literary critical methodologies in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, most now argue the gospel did indeed originally end very abruptly at v.8, with the women disciples fleeing from the tomb in terror and saying nothing to anyone about the angel's proclamation of Jesus' resurrection. There are lots of interesting historical and textual issues at stake here, but for now, concern yourself with the "reader-response" issue: how does this "suspended ending" affect me as a reader? What is Mark trying to *do* to me in ending the gospel this way? What "response" does Mark intend for me? What *other* responses are possible?

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**Assignment IV: *The World the Text Creates* and *The History of Biblical Interpretation* – pp.55-84 (plus the pdf chapter from Clayton Croy's *Prima Scriptura*)**

This is the most extensive of the four Carvalho assignments, and I think it will be difficult to do a thorough job here in less than three single-spaced pages. Do not put this one off until the night before it is due!

1. How does Carvalho define *hermeneutics*? Why is it crucially important that we pay attention to this issue?
2. What is a *reading community*? Why does Carvalho think we need to pay attention to the readings produced by communities other than our own?
3. How does Carvalho define *postmodernism*, and by extension, what is the task of *deconstruction*?
4. Define and briefly describe each of the following approaches to biblical interpretation:
  - Canonical
  - Liberation/Postcolonial
  - Feminist
  - History of interpretation
5. Read the chapter from Clayton Croy's *Prima Scriptura* entitled "Analyzing and Preparing the Interpreter" and write the 500-ish word essay described in exercise 1.

## BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE PROJECT FOR EXEGESIS OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

Four Gospels, One Jesus – Winter 2015 – Dr. David Nienhuis

**As you begin the project, spend some time living and praying with your text.** Read it through several times, slowly and meditatively. Ask God to help you get to know the text better. At this point you should avoid rushing toward assumptions about the meaning of the text. Take it as an opportunity to settle yourself in for a long, deliberate journey of abiding with the passage (Jas.1:22-25).

It will serve you well to start gathering a folder of study materials. You'll add to this folder over the course of the quarter, and the more careful you are about the gathering, the easier it will be to produce your papers. You might start by printing out a hard copy of the passage to mark up with all your notes and observations. Early on you should become perfectly clear about where the passage falls in the plotline of the gospel: what comes before, and what comes after? You mustn't ever study a passage in isolation from its larger literary context. In order to get to know the meaning of your passage for today, you must begin by figuring out the *role* your passage plays in the larger gospel story.

**Before we turn to the specific learning activities of this assignment, let me offer up an exhortation about the task of engaging in biblical studies research.** You are about to begin digging through piles and piles of reference works and studies on your passage. You could conceive of yourself as a thinking and feeling subject gathering data from a pile of inanimate and inert objects, but instead I'd invite you to imagine yourself as a participant, sitting at a great big table with hundreds of others who have gathered together to study your passage. Some of the people at the table are still alive. Others are dead, though they lived in your lifetime. Still others have been dead for centuries. All of them are there together with you, a great cloud of witnesses, working together to help the church hear God's word. This is more than just an assignment for a college course: it is a great privilege to engage this task, and it calls for all the diligence and attentiveness you can muster. Forget about trying to be a scholar. Do not strive for originality. Join the community of those participating in God's work through scripture for the edification of the church.

Here's a key point in this regard: *one of the most important indicators of understanding yourself as a participant in scripture study is the care with which you cite your sources.* Think of your research as a kind of written transcript of the conversation you hear around the table. So and so says this; someone else responds by saying that; when I hear them I think this. Each voice deserves its own footnote. Indeed, it is not unusual in scholarly books and articles to find hundreds of footnotes, sometimes one for every sentence! Four things to say about this:

First, you must constantly keep careful notes of all the information you can find about the book, article, or reference work you're consulting. When I take study notes, I always begin by jotting down the work's entire bibliographic information. From there, each note below is headed off by a page number. Later, when I go back to write up my findings, I've got all the reference information I need right there in my notes. Otherwise you've either got to go back and look it up again or include an incomplete citation in your paper. The former will slow you way down; the latter will lose you points when it comes to assigning a grade. Keep good, thorough notes.

Second: in biblical studies, the most appropriate citation form is the footnote. In contrast to social-science methods, where studies are frequently referenced in simple parenthetical notes listing author and year of publication, the humanities' appeal to large, substantial studies requires more information, and you can't include it all in a simple parenthetical note. Use footnotes.

Third, keep in mind that footnotes aren't simply a place for listing the author, text, and page number of the work you're referencing— they are also a place to "continue your conversation" with the reader. In a footnote you can provide additional information that is not absolutely necessary in the main body of the text, e.g. personal reflections, clarification on the source, or discussion of detailed minutiae that substantiate a more general claim made in the main body of the text. Ultimately, solid, extensive footnotes are an important way of communicating your full engagement with your sources and your reader.

Finally, the folks around the table comport themselves according to an agreed-upon set of table manners. A guide to these manners is provided for you in the form of the *Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style*. A student's version is available in PDF and has been uploaded to blackboard. In this handy document you'll find all you need to know about proper format for transcribing the conversation you're having with your tablemates. Do yourself a favor: download a copy and either keep the electronic file handy or print the whole thing out and keep it in your research folder. Please note: I will not tolerate sloppy, incomplete citations that disrespect your tablemates.

Many blessings on your research this quarter!

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## PART ONE

Part one of your project consists of the following steps. It is worth 25 points.

### 1. TRANSLATIONS

- Consult five different English translations of your passage and list all significant differences you find. Among the five there should be at least one relatively literal translation (e.g. New American Standard Bible, Revised Standard Version), one relatively dynamic (e.g. Today's English Version, New Century Version), one that shoots for the middle (New Revised Standard Version, New International Version), and one other (e.g. New King James Version, New Jerusalem Bible, English Standard Version, Common English Bible). Avoid paraphrases like *The Message* or *The Living Bible*.
- Where the translations agree, it suggests that the underlying Greek is fairly straightforward and there are no major discrepancies in the textual tradition. Variation suggests that the Greek isn't as easily interpreted into English, and/or there are discrepancies in the textual tradition (if you're using a study bible, the notes may inform you of this). It is also possible, of course, that the theological concerns of the translator have had an effect on the translation.
- Also, be sure to note also where the English translations structure your pericope differently. The verse numbers are fixed, but paragraph breaks are determined and subject headings are added by contemporary editors. Do the translations *structure* your pericope differently? Are there different *titles*?
- Write up your findings: (1) Tell me what translations you're using; (2) List off all the major differences found among the translations; (3) offer comment on the potential interpretive significance of each difference. That is, how might the differences affect our understanding of the verse? Please note: this will usually absorb at least one and a half pages of single-spaced writing. Some of you will want to simply list off the relevant differences in bullet-point fashion. Others will prefer to provide a complete comparison, in five columns, with the significant differences marked off by color or font. The latter model is not required, but is preferred insofar as it will help you show me that you've done a thorough job. Of course, doing so will take several pages, not just 1-1/2. If you do employ the column approach, make sure you still isolate the differences you consider significant and offer up some commentary on their potential interpretive significance.

## 2. WORD STUDY

- Working from one translation (please let me know which one it is!), list off all the words in your passage that seem significant to you, along with a sentence or two explaining why it is you think that word might be worthy of investigation. How do you know what words are significant enough to merit investigation? Here are some suggestions for determining candidates for further study:
  - Any word that seems ambiguous or unclear, especially those that can have more than one meaning.
  - Any word that is repeated in your pericope or is known to be a word used frequently in the gospel as a whole (a concordance will tell you this). Check synonyms of the word while you're at it; such word groups often form motifs within a book.
  - Any word that gets translated in different ways in the English versions.
  - Any word that appears in your passage but turns out to be a rare word in the NT as a whole. This is especially the case if your word is a *hapax legomena*, i.e. it occurs only once in the NT.
  - Any word that you *think* you already know because it is a common NT or Christian word.

I should think you'd be able to come up with around 10 candidates for further study. After you've generated your list and explained your choices (one full page?), do parts 2a and 2b.

### 2a. CONCORDANCES

- To study how a word is used in the Bible, you'll need to use a concordance, which are located in the reference section of the library. The problem with most English concordances, of course, is that they track the use of English words that may or may not correspond to the underlying Greek word (e.g. there are multiple words for "love" in Greek, but the English concordance simply lists the one word "love"). The easiest way for non-Greek readers to study the underlying language is to use an online resource like the Blue Letter Bible. Look up your pericope on the website and click the "C" icon to the left of the verse. Find the word you want to search, and click on the number between the English and Greek words. Note: the BLB Lexicon (which provides a definition of the word) is quite out of date, so skip over it and look at the concordance results. **I repeat**: do not rely on either the "Outline of Biblical Usage" or the "Thayer's Lexicon" for your definition of the word being investigated.
- Here's the key thing to keep in mind when reading concordance results: ***words find their meaning primarily from the way they are used in context.*** Usage ultimately determines meaning; apparent meaning does not always determine usage. So, when you look at the way the word is used in the passages unearthed in your concordance, look to see if there are words, themes, synonyms, genres, or specific contexts regularly associated with your word (you must of course look at the larger context and not just the immediate verse in which the word is found). Perform your search in concentric circles: first analyze uses of the word in the book you're studying, then expand to look at uses by the same author (for the gospels, this means looking at both Luke *and* Acts, both John *and* 1-3 John), then go to books of related genres (all four gospels), and finally to the entire New Testament. While you're primarily looking to see *how* the word is used, it is also worth noting *how often* the word is used: is it common, or rare? If it is rare, you'll eventually want to investigate what accounts for its use by this writer. Of course, if the word is used numerous times it would take forever to analyze the usage in every context. If this is the case, at least get a good look at how the word is used in your text and how it is used in the particular book where your text is found.
- You will **choose one significant word** from your passage and submit it to a complete concordance study. Summarize your findings in at least one page, concluding with any thoughts you have about how the study helps you understand your word in context. Be sure to include a complete bibliographic entry of the concordance you used.

## 2b. DICTIONARIES/ENCYCLOPEDIAS/WORDBOOKS

- Get to know more about your key word by using **three** Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, lexicons, or theological wordbooks. At least one must be Greek-based. Choose from among the following good options:
  - Greek-based:
    - *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*. Ed. Balz & Schneider. 3 vols. 1990-1991. REF BS2312 .E913 1990.
    - *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Ed. Kittel and Friedrich. 10 vols. REF BS2312 .K5813 1985
    - *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on semantic domains*. Ed. Louw-Nida. 2 vols. REF PA881 .G68 1989.
    - *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Rev. Ed. Danker. REF PA881 .B38 2000.
  - English-based:
    - *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Ed. Sakenfeld. 5 vols. 2006- . REF BS440.N445.
    - *Westminster theological wordbook of the Bible*. Ed. Gowan. 2003. REF BS543 .W47 2003.
    - *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Ed. Freedman. 2000. REF BS440.E44 2000.
    - *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Ed. Freedman. 6 vols. 1992. REF BS440.A54 1992.
    - *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Ed. Green, McKnight, & Marshall. 1992. REF BS2555.2.D53 1992.
- More advice:
  - Do not go to the dictionaries *without* having discovered the underlying Greek of the word you're exploring! This is crucial for at least two important reasons: (1) sometimes a translation will add a word in English that isn't there in the Greek in order to improve the sense for us, and (2) sometimes the underlying Greek word can be translated in multiple ways, so you could conceivably be studying *one possible* meaning of the Greek term, and not the full sense of what is implied in the text.
  - This should go without saying, but you should keep digging through the dictionaries until you find three that offer up something on your word. Let me especially recommend the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, as it is sure to have an article on any word of relevance in the Greek NT. If you're having any trouble finding resources for your word, contact me or Steve Perisho in the library.
  - **This part should really be a substantial component of your paper, as this is your chance to hear from the experts. Do not skimp on the research here!**
- Write up your findings, referencing *all three* of your sources throughout and including full bibliographic data at the end.
  - Note that the information provided above is a *library* reference code, not a bibliography. Do not simply copy and paste what I've provided here. Use the SBL guide.
  - End with a few comments about how the study affected your understanding of the passage.
  - Staple a copy of the "grading sheet" to the back of your paper, and sign the declaration stating that none of the material is plagiarized. Failure to sign the paper suggests that you were reluctant to sign because you *may* have plagiarized something. Don't leave me uncertain at that point.

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## PART TWO

Part two of your project involves the next three steps. It is worth 15 points.

### 3. YOUR TEXT IN CONTEXT

- By now you've lived with your passage for some time. Begin by offering a description of precisely where your passage falls in the larger plotline of the gospel (two substantial paragraphs). What is the scene? Who are the characters? Where are we in the story?

### 4. GOSPEL PARALLELS

- Offer a thorough analysis of your entire passage using Aland's *Synopsis*, according to the directions for using the *Synopsis* found in your syllabus.

### 5. SOURCES and BACKGROUND – three components here

- TEXTS: Take a moment at this point to list off any and all sources that appear to stand *behind* your text. While there may be any number of different sources involved (e.g. extra-biblical historical references) for the most part we are interested in Old Testament passages being quoted, alluded to, or echoed. At this point you're just going to list them all and offer your own short consideration of their possible significance, so do not worry about detailed research just now. You may find it useful to consult a resource that will help you discover what is being quoted and/or alluded to, e.g.:
  - *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Eds. Beale and Carson. 2007. REF BS511.3 .C653 2007.
  - *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*. Ed. Bratcher. 1987. REF BS2387 .B54 1987.
  - Often a good study bible will point out OT references in the study notes, so look there as well.
- CONCEPTS: Sometimes your author is quoting or alluding to particular OT texts, but other times there are basic "OT Background" issues assumed by the author but not necessarily understood by modern readers. List off and explore some "relevant historical background" questions or material in the passage that requires knowledge of OT history and/or theology to understand.
  - Examples: Herod thinks Jesus is "Elijah" – why Elijah of all people? Jesus offers his disciples a "new commandment" – how would this have been heard by an ancient Jew for whom "commandments" meant something in particular? The devil tempts Jesus by saying, "If you are God's son..." What were the Jewish expectations around the title "God's son"?
- ATLASES: Our library carries a number of Bible atlases, which are useful for tracing Jesus' movements in the gospel narrative.
  - *Oxford Bible atlas*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Curtis. 2007. REF BS630 .O96 2007.
  - Rainey & Notley. *Sacred bridge: Carta's atlas of the biblical world*. 2007. Summit.
  - *Carta Bible atlas*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Aharoni et al. 2002. REF G2230 .A2 2002.
  - *Tübingen Bible atlas*. Ed. Mittmann and Schmitt. 2001. ATL G2230 .T943 2001.
  - Rogerson. *Atlas of the Bible*. 1985. REF BS630 .R6 1985.

Even if your pericope doesn't include any *overt* geographical references, Jesus is always *somewhere* in the gospel! Include a paragraph or two describing the nature of Jesus' movements and their potential interpretive significance.

- As with paper #1, append a thorough bibliography and the signed grading sheet.

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### PART THREE

Part three consists of the following steps, which should result in a paper of at least twelve pages – probably more, but rarely less. It is worth 40 points.

#### 6. HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

- Before turning to contemporary scholarship, it is always worthwhile to hear what scholars of the past have had to say. A full survey of the history of interpretation really pays off for the interpreter, but for the purposes of this survey I'd like you to consult **four different sources, two ancient and two from the Reformation era**. See the attached "Gospel Commentaries" list for directions on where to find these resources.
- I expect you to include the insights of these historical conversation partners in your verse-by-verse commentary (see #7 below) but before you launch into that I'd like to hear a bit about what you discovered from them in distinction from what you'll learn from contemporary scholars. As you jot down the insights of these great thinkers of the past, pay particular attention to what sorts of things draw their attention; when they investigate scripture, what do *they* search for, and how does it differ from modern interests and concerns? After listing off your four sources (bullet points is fine), write a couple of substantial paragraphs describing what you learned and what it was like to read pre-modern commentaries.

#### 7. CONTEMPORARY COMMENTARIES

- These are scholarly works which enable you to study biblical books and passages in a verse-by-verse analysis. Commentaries come in many different forms; some are single-volume editions covering the bible as a whole, others interpret individual books for pastors and laypeople, and still others are written for scholars.
- Choose at least three of the suggested commentaries and read what they have to say about your pericope. Then do the following:
  - *Begin* your paper with a short bibliography listing all the commentaries consulted.
  - Offer an introductory paragraph or two that carefully establishes the literary context of your pericope. Where does your passage fall in the gospel's plotline? What comes before, and what comes after? Note especially any key words or themes that form a "bridge" between your pericope and those that come before and after.
  - Offer a verse-by-verse summary of your commentary research (carefully footnoting sources throughout). Pay particular attention to disagreements among the commentators.
  - Be certain to draw in information gleaned from your work in parts 1 and 2! Doing so is one of the ways you demonstrate your learning.
- It would be very easy to go overboard on this one, folks. Remember, I'm asking for a summary; you should be able to do this part in around five pages.
- NOTE: If you want to use a commentary that isn't listed, it must be cleared with me first.

#### 8. MONOGRAPHS AND ARTICLES

- Monographs, strictly speaking, are full-length books written by a single author about a single subject; articles are shorter studies on a single subject which can be found in *edited* monographs or periodicals. Though there are quite a few different search mechanisms for finding relevant articles and books written on your pericope, three in particular will probably be most valuable to you.
  1. ATLA is a good search engine; we'll go over precisely how to use it in class, but if you forget, please ask for help.

2. Many commentaries include brief bibliographies for each pericope analyzed, and they typically include the most important scholarly contributions to the passage studied.
  3. Ask Steve Perisho for help!
- What will you do with all this information?
    1. Choose one of the articles, read it, and summarize it in three to four paragraphs.
    2. Create a bibliography for further study that includes 10-20 books and articles of relevance to your passage. Some guidelines:
      - You may NOT include commentaries here. Sermons, blogs, or other “popular” sources are also not appropriate at this point. Again, we’re interested in scholarly articles and monographs of relevance to your passage.
      - Pay attention to the *date* of the work. Generally speaking, anything more than 30 years old should be considered “out of date”. Exceptions are in the case of older studies that are viewed as “classics” by contemporary scholars. You’ll recognize classics by the fact that they are constantly referred to as such in the commentaries. NOTE: *If it is “old” but you want to include it as a “classic” you’ll need to justify it by including a note describing where you picked it up and why.*
      - If the book or article being cited bears a title that does not immediately explain its relevance to your study (e.g. *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*), include a sentence or two beneath the citation explaining its relevance to your study (e.g. “includes an important chapter on Matthew’s depiction of Jesus’ ministry to Jews and Gentiles alike”).
  - Note the following excellent NT journals:
 

<i>Bible Review (BR)</i> <i>Biblica (Bib)</i> <i>Biblical Theology Bulletin (BTB)</i> <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly (CBQ)</i> <i>Evangelical Quarterly (EQ)</i>	<i>Expository Times (ExpT)</i> <i>Horizons in Biblical Theology (HBT)</i> <i>Interpretation (Int)</i> <i>Journal of Biblical Literature (JBL)</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament (JSNT)</i> <i>New Testament Studies (NTS)</i> <i>Novum Testamentum (NovT)</i> <i>Semeia (Semeia)</i>
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## 9. THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

- Based on all the work you’ve done thus far, this is where the payoff comes. Write a concluding section addressing the following:
  1. How would you sum up the exegetical “point” of the passage? What is its basic, “plain sense” meaning? Write this in one substantial paragraph.
    - a. Note: avoid talking about your context here. Avoid “we” statements or any form of self-reference. Sum up the “point” of the passage on *the text’s* terms, not on your terms.
  2. What central theological message might this passage present to 21<sup>st</sup> century North American Christians? Articulate this according to the three classic interpretive foci:
    - a. Orthodoxy: *What does the text urge us to believe?* What is this passage’s central contribution to the church’s Rule of Faith?
    - b. Orthopraxy: *What does the text urge us to do?* What would it mean for the community of faith to treat this passage as normative for Christian life and witness?
    - c. Orthopathy: *What does this text urge us to hope for?* What human hopes, fears, or values do you see expressed in this text? How might it touch the soul of your audience? What tensions or difficulties might the text raise for your audience? How might one respond to these?
  3. Bring the text to life for your reader by means of one or both of the following:

- a. What “cultural products” (literature, art, music, pop-culture, cultural events, politics, etc.) might you use to help interpret this passage to a contemporary audience? Come up with as many as you can, and append examples (as appropriate) of the most significant ones to your paper.
  - b. What concrete examples might be offered to people of faith who seek to live out this passage in their lives? What people (past or present, personal relations or famous figures) have embodied this text?
4. How has this study affected you personally?
5. As always, end with a thorough bibliography and the grading sheet.

## **Gospel Commentaries**

### ***A Guide to Resources Available Online and in the SPU Library***

#### **SELECT PATRISTIC AND MEDIEVAL COMMENTARIES**

Many fine English translations of these commentaries are available in the SPU library. Most of these can be found on the shelves at BR60, but sometimes they are located under the specific biblical book. Note: Blessed Theophylact, the most important medieval commentator for the Eastern Orthodox tradition, frequently passes down what he received from Chrysostom, so if you choose one (and you should!) then avoid choosing the other.

#### **Useful Websites: Browse books by ancient author**

- New Advent ([www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/))
- Christian Classics Ethereal Library (<http://www.ccel.org/index/author/a>)

#### **A Sampling of Patristic and Medieval Commentaries Available Online and in the Library**

- **Matthew**
  - Origen (184/185 – 253/254) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1016.htm>
  - St. Chrysostom (347-407), <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2001.htm>
  - St. Jerome (347-420), *Commentary on Matthew* (BR65.J473 C6413 2008)
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#### **SELECT 16<sup>TH</sup>-18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GOSPEL COMMENTARIES**

Note: John Wesley's "notes" are often just that—little more than short explanatory comments. Other sections are more substantial, however, so you should definitely consult him as well as the others.

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- John Calvin (1509-1564) [www.ccel.org/index/author/C](http://www.ccel.org/index/author/C)
- Matthew Henry (1662-1714) [www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc5.toc.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc5.toc.html)
- John Wesley (1703-1791) <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/notes.toc.html>

## SELECT MODERN COMMENTARIES

There are many others, besides these. Check with Dr. Nienhuis if you wish to use one not listed here.

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