

**ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
**at *The University of Western Ontario***  
**Fall 2016**

**Biblical Studies 5201A**  
**The Synoptic Gospels**  
**Mondays, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Room 102)**

Professor: Rev. Fr. Mladen Horvat, 416-887-7094, profhorvat@gmail.com  
Office hours by Appointment

**A. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course encourages students to apply methods of interpretation learned in the introductory course. General issues pertaining to all three synoptic gospels will be considered, followed by treatments of each gospel separately. Basic issues such as authorship, date, place and characteristic themes will be addressed.

**B. GOALS**

This course will assist students to grow in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

**Knowledge:**

- A greater awareness of the historical and cultural context in which Christianity emerged and the writings of the New Testament were written;
- A deeper understanding of forming process of the Gospels, that includes a growth from oral traditions towards written passages;
- Familiarity with the outline and book structure of individual books;
- Familiarity with the main themes and basic issues such as authorship, date, place;

**Skills:**

- The ability to use important resources and tools available for the study of the Gospels, especially biblical software (BibleWorks; e-Sword...) based resources;
- The ability to delimit a certain passage on the basis of certain markers, and to recognize different literary types of texts: a Narrative, a Parable, a Miracle description, a Woe – utterance; a Lament;
- The ability to read the passages of the synoptic Gospels in a synoptic way, considering different viewpoints;
- To enable the students to integrate the results of exegetical studies with one's own spiritual life, developing in them the ability to preach on the basis of the Gospels;

**Attitudes:**

- To engender in the students a familiarity with the Gospels;
- To foster an appreciation for Gospels as the Word of God;

- To cherish the Gospels as sources for personal prayer, spiritual life and pastoral activity;

## C. ASSESSMENT

The final mark will be determined on three bases:

1) A written summary of between 6 and 7 pages of each of the synoptic Gospels, giving in summary its plan or outline, content and most important thought: 50%. These will be due on November 28, 2016. Each summary is to include the following three elements:

- a) The structure and content of each book in summary form;
- b) Its significance, main themes and the historical context;
- c) Students are to point out the importance and meaning of one significant passage in each book.

Note: Sources must be duly acknowledged. The standard form for all written materials in the course are found in, Alexander, Patrick H. *et al. (eds.) The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Early Christian Studies*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999, especially Chapter 7 on proper form for bibliographies.

2) Active class participation: 20% in all.

3) A final written examination of three questions out of a choice of questions, given to the students in advance. 30%

In order to ensure that the written work submitted fairly represents the work of a student, the instructor reserves the right, on an individual basis, to have the student undergo an oral exam on the written work submitted. The oral exam, if applied, will help determine the grade assigned to the written work in question.

## D. READINGS OR TEXTBOOKS

A. Required:

A contemporary English translation of the Bible, such as the New Revised Standard Version (preferred) the New Jerusalem Bible or the New American Bible.

MURPHY, Frederick J., *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005, pp. 1-378.

B. Recommended:

- BIRD, Michael F., *The Gospel of the Lord: how the early church wrote the story of Jesus*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014, pp. 1-335.
- MCMAHON, Christopher, *Reading the Gospels: Biblical Interpretation in the Catholic Tradition*, Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2012, pp. 1-201.
- MEYNET, Roland, *A New Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels*, Miami, FL: Convivium Press, 2010, pp. 7-409.
- KOESTER, Helmut, *From Jesus to the Gospels: interpreting the New Testament in Its Context*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007, pp. 3-291.
- PERKINS, Pheme, *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007, pp. 1-293.
- BURKETT, Delbert, *Rethinking the Gospel Sources: from Proto-Mark to Mark*, New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2004, pp. 1-271.

**E. SCHEDULE and STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE**

1. September 12: Critical Study of the Gospels: “Diachronic” and “Synchronic” work (MEYNET, 33-64; MURPHY, 1-42)
2. September 19: Reconstructing Ancient Worlds: Gospel Contexts (MURPHY, 43-87; KOESTER)
3. September 26: The Gospel of Mark: - book structure, main themes, authorship, date, place (MURPHY, 89-138)
4. October 03: The Gospel of Matthew:- book structure, main themes, authorship, date, place (MURPHY, 139-189)
5. October 14: The Gospel of Luke: - book structure, main themes, authorship, date, place (MURPHY, 191-247)
6. October 17: I) Synoptic work: - The healing at Jericho: Mat 20,29-34; Mar 10,46-52; Luk 18,35-43 (MEYNET, 68-91; 158-190; 267-386)

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| 7. October 31:   | II) Synoptic work:                     | - The calling of the rich man:<br>Mat 19,16-22; Mar 10,17-22; Luk<br>18,18-27 (MEYNET, 91-153;<br>191-264; 267-386) |
| 8. November 07   | Sermon on the Mount:                   | Mat 5,1-7,29;   |
| 9. November 14:  | The Parables:                          | Mat 13,1-52;<br>Luk 15,1-32 and Luk 16,1-8.19-31  |
| 10. November 21: | Prayer in Luke's Gospel:               | Luk 11,1-13 (Mat 6,5-15)  |
| 11. November 28: | Infancy narrative:                     | Mat 1,1-2,23; Luk 1,4-2,52;   |
| 12. December 05: | The Historical Jesus (MURPHY, 317-374) |   |
| 13. December 12: | Final written exam                     |   |

## F. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.”

**Students are responsible** for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

**Submission of Assignments:** It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

**Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offense. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

**Selection and Registration of Courses:** Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.

### **Support Services**

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

**Information about Counselling and Student Development, including Services for Students with Disabilities at King's is available at**

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/who-we-are/administrative-departments/dean-of-students/>

**For emotional/mental health assistance see specifically:**

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/currentstudents/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

**The web site for Academic Services at King's University College is**

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/currentstudents/academic-support/>

These services are not meant to replace those offered at the Seminary, but may be beneficial to our students after consultation with the appropriate instructors, administrators, and formators.

### **G. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

For an updated bibliography see: [http://www.biblico.it/doc-vari/bibl\\_nt.html](http://www.biblico.it/doc-vari/bibl_nt.html)