

# McMaster Divinity College

PhD CHTH G105 – C03  
MA-NT 6ZD6  
Synoptic Gospels

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Fall 2009 (Term 1)  
Thursdays 1:30-3:20 P.M.

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## I. Course Description

This course provides a brief overview of the critical issues in the study of the Synoptics and a seminar-led in-depth exploration of different facets of the Synoptic Gospels. The explorations may involve topics such as the critique and application of various synoptic methodologies, aspects of the quest for the historic Jesus, or work in a given synoptic gospel.

## II. Course Objectives

Specific Objectives – Through required and optional reading, lectures, class discussion, seminar presentations assignments the student will be exposed to all of the following objectives:

### A. Knowing

1. Understand debates surrounding the Synoptic Gospels including genre, oral tradition, Q, the relationship between the Synoptics, and the historical Jesus
2. Understand the critical methodologies that are applied to the Synoptics and how they are applied, including form criticism, redaction criticism and narrative criticism.
3. Be acquainted with the individual structures and theologies of the Synoptics

### B. Doing

1. Research one of the areas of the synoptic issues
2. Explore and apply a critical methodology to the study of the Synoptics
3. Develop a college level course with a syllabus, either a general introduction, or an elective course that integrates insights from your papers

### C. Being

1. Become an expert in one area of Synoptic study
2. Become skilled in applying critical methods to the Synoptics
2. Become a generalist in Synoptic study, qualified to teach a college level course
3. Appreciate the contribution of Synoptic studies to biblical studies, theology and ministry

## III. Course Prerequisites

Prerequisites: M.A. level or doctoral level study as a minimum, including a course in New Testament introduction; and ancient languages as appropriate.

## IV. Course Requirements

This is a graduate research level course. It is assumed that students will perform as graduate research students to facilitate learning. Students will be expected to do suitable academic work outside of the classroom.

Successful completion of the course requires satisfactory completion of the course requirements. Failure to make a valid attempt to complete the requirements may constitute grounds for failure of the course.

### A. Participation

The student is expected to come to class having prepared sufficiently to make a contribution to the topic of discussion and raise significant questions by reading primary and secondary material and by reading all seminar papers in advance. A general introduction to the course subject is required and a short bibliography is included for further reference; each student will want to build a more extensive bibliography.

**B. Reading**

Students will read 5,000 pages from works on the Synoptics. They will turn in a reading list on Dec 10.

**C. Written Assignments**—Students are encouraged to integrate the three assignments together when possible so that they form one extended project

1. A paper (5,000 words, excluding notes and bibliography) on an issue in Synoptic studies
2. A paper (5,000 words, excluding notes and bibliography) on and apply a critical methodology to the study of the Synoptics)
3. A detailed syllabus and lecture outline for a college level course, either a general introduction, or an elective course that integrates insights from your papers

The professor assumes that students already know how to research, write and orally present papers. Both content (research, analysis, organization of material) and presentation (mechanics and style) are important. Each student must utilize the MacDiv style guide. The general guidelines are that the paper should be 12 pt. font, double-spaced, with 1” margins and utilize footnotes (not endnotes). The paper should include a title page, numbering and a staple cover (not fancy). Each paper should include a formal introduction and conclusion as well as implications for contemporary hermeneutics and any applications for contemporary ministry.

Papers are due in electronic form at class time the week before they are to be presented. They will be posted on the course link for access. Every student will be given feedback from the professor in writing and verbal response from class members and have an opportunity to revise the first two papers after receiving feedback in the seminar session before the paper is marked. Electronic copies of revised papers are due the scheduled final (**December 10, 1:30 p.m.**). No late revisions will be accepted.

**D. Presentation of Seminar Papers**

1. Students will sign up in class to present the first two papers during specific sections—there will be an attempt to group similar topics on the same day
2. Each student will distribute their paper one week in advance to the entire class. Late distribution will result in a subtraction of 2% a day from the final mark
3. During the scheduled final, each student will give a short presentation of their course design with appropriate handouts and visual aids
4. Each student may turn in revisions of the first two papers on the day of the final

**IV. Textbooks and Materials****A. Required Texts**

Aland, Kurt, ed., *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.

**B. Recommended Texts**

A standard edition of the Greek New Testament, such as the Nestle-Aland (26th or 27th edn), UBS (3rd or 4th edn)

**C. Textbook Purchase**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College’s book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance

purchase, you may contact READ On Books stores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

#### **D. Additional Materials**

1. Handouts for lectures and class discussion will be made available during class and/or online.
2. Students will distribute their papers to the entire class one week before their oral presentation.

#### **V. Course Assessment**

Each student is required to complete the following requirements:

- A. Paper on a Synoptic issue (25%)
- B. Paper on the application of a critical methodology (25%)
- C. Design of college level course (20%)
- D. Seminar presentations (10% each/20%)
- E. Final presentation (10%)

#### **VI. Classroom Behavior**

##### **A. Attendance**

1. Students should be on time to class or be prepared to offer an explanation to the professor.
2. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.

##### **B. Participation**

1. Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
2. Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except that which is appropriate in the course outline.
3. Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class.
4. Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class with consequences.

##### **C. Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the DivinityCollege Statement on Academic Honesty [www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php](http://www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php).

#### **Gender Inclusive Language**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

#### **Appointments:**

Contact me if I can assist you in any way via E-mail: [westfal@mcmaster.ca](mailto:westfal@mcmaster.ca)  
Office hours: TBA

\*\*\*Disclaimer on Syllabi posted on the web:

Please Note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up until the first day of class.

The final **Daily Schedule** will be released when the class role is finalized since it is a seminar course.

Date	Class Session
Sept 10	Introduction to course and the study of the Synoptics
Sept 17	Synoptic issues
Sept 24	Synoptic Methodologies
Oct 1	Synoptic Structures and theologies
Oct 8	Seminar presentations of first paper
Oct 15	Seminar presentations of first paper
Oct 22	Seminar presentations of first paper
Oct 29	Seminar presentations of first paper
Nov 5	Seminar presentations of second paper
Nov 12	Seminar presentations of second paper
Nov 19	No class (SBL New Orleans)
Nov 26	Seminar presentations of second paper
Dec 3	Seminar presentations of second paper
Dec 10	Final Presentations of course design

### *Select Bibliography for the Study of the Synoptic Problem*

#### *Introductions*

- Tuckett, C. M., "Synoptic Problem" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992, 6:263-70.
- Goodacre, Mark, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze*. London: Sheffield, 2001.
- Stein, Robert H., *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1987.
- Throckmorton, Burton H., Jr., *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. 5th ed., Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson Pub., 1992.

#### *General*

- Aland, Kurt, ed., *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum: Locis parallelis evangeliorum apocryphorum et patrum adhibitis editit*. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt Stuttgart, 1964; 3d ed., 1965.
- Bellinzoni, Arthur J., Jr., ed., *The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985.
- Longstaff, Thomas Richmond Willis & Thomas, Page A. *The Synoptic Problem: A Bibliography, 1716-1988*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988.
- Sanders, E. P. & Davies, Margaret, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*. London: SCM Press, 1989.

#### *The Two-Source Hypothesis*

- Streeter, B. H., *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*. London: Macmillan, 1924, 1926.
- Hawkins, Sir John C., *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898, 1909.
- Tuckett, Christopher M., "The Existence of Q," *Q & the History of Early Christianity: Studies on*

- Q*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd. 1996.
- Kloppenborg, John S., *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes, & Concordance*. Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1988.
- Kloppenborg, John S., *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.
- Kloppenborg Verbin, John S., *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- The Two Gospel (Griesbach) Hypothesis*
- Farmer, William R., *The Synoptic Problem*. Dillsboro, N.C.: Western North Carolina Press, 1964, 1976.
- McNicol, Allan J., et al. eds., *Beyond the Q Impasse -- Luke's Use of Matthew: A Demonstration by the Research Team of the International Institute for Gospel Studies*. Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press Int'l, 1996.
- Orchard, Bernard J. & Riley, Harold, *The Order of the Synoptics: Why Three Synoptic Gospels?* Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1987.
- The Farrer Hypothesis*
- Farrer, Austin M., "On Dispensing with Q," *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in the Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955, 55-88.
- Goulder, Michael D., *Luke: A New Paradigm*, JSNTSS 20, Sheffield: Sheffield, 1989.
- Goodacre, Mark, *The Case Against Q*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 2002.
- The Traditional Augustinian Hypothesis*
- Butler, B. C., *The Originality of St. Matthew*. Cambridge: University Press, 1951.
- Wenham, John, *Redating Matthew, Mark & Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Historical Jesus Bibliography*
- Bammel, Ernst and C. F. D. Moule, Eds. *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Banks, Robert. *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Barrett, C. K. *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968.
- Borg, Marcus J. *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus*. New York: Mellen, 1984.
- . *Jesus: A New Vision*. New York: Harper Collins, 1987.
- . *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time. The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.
- Bornkamm, Günter. *Jesus of Nazareth*. New York: Harper, 1960.
- Bowker, John. *Jesus and the Pharisees*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Braaten, C. E. and R. A. Harrisville, eds. *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ: Essays on the New Quest for the Historical Jesus*. New York: Abingdon, 1964.
- Brandon, S. G. F. *Jesus and the Zealots*. New York: Scribner, 1967.
- Braun, Herbert. *Jesus of Nazareth. The Man and His Time*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Birth of the Messiah. A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*. Rev. ed. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1994.
- . *The Death of the Messiah. From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. 2 vols. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1994.
- Buchanan, George W. *Jesus: The King and His Kingdom*. Macon, GA: Mercer, 1984.

- Bultmann, Rudolf. *Jesus and the Word*. New York: Scribner, 1958 (1934).
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- Cook, Michael J. *Mark's Treatment of the Jewish Leaders*. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
- Cook, Michael L. *The Jesus of Faith*. New York: Paulist, 1981.
- Crossan, John Dominic. *The Historical Jesus. The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.
- , Luke Timothy Johnson, and Werner H. Kelber. *The Jesus Controversy. Perspectives in Conflict*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
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- Dunn, James D. G. *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990.
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- Fredriksen, Paula. *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity*. New York: Knopf, 1999.
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- Goergen, Donald J. *The Mission and Ministry of Jesus*. Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1986.
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- . *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
- Horsley, Richard A. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence. Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. New York: Harper, 1987; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993.
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- Wright, N. T. *Who Was Jesus?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Zeitlin, Solomon. *Who Crucified Jesus?* New York: Bloch, 1964 (1942).