



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

Course Identification

Course Number : WYB1501HF
Course Name: From the Gospel to the Gospels (NT1)
Campus: Wycliffe College, 5 Hoskins Ave.

Instructor Information

Instructor: John A. Bertone, Ph.D.
E-mail: johnabertone@gmail.com
Office Hours: Online Course (available via email and discussion board)

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

None.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the four Gospels in their social, historical and theological setting. Using a —socio-literary approach, we will study the Gospels within a two-dimensional framework, both centered on what the early Christians called the —gospel. One dimension has to do with social history—the origin and development of Christianity as a distinct social entity, from its foundations in the ministry of Jesus and the Easter experience (summarized as the —gospel), through its emergence as a Jewish renewal movement, and on to its development into a separate, largely Gentile, institutionalized religion. The second dimension has to do with literature—the process by which the Gospels came to be written, their literary form and texture, and their character as narrative versions of the "gospel."

Course Methodology

The methodology used in the course is a combination of online lectures, assigned readings, discussion board postings, and written assignments.

Course Outcomes

Upon the completion of this course you should be able to:

- ☐ demonstrate a familiarity with the content of the four Gospels
- ☐ demonstrate an awareness of the historical and cultural context in which the Christian movement emerged and in which the writings of the New Testament were produced
- ☐ demonstrate that you recognize and are beginning to reflect on issues pertaining to the formative period of early Christianity, especially those having to do with unity/diversity and continuity/development
- ☐ demonstrate an awareness of the importance of method in NT interpretation, and begin to develop an appropriate method of interpretation for yourself

| COURSE OUTCOMES | COURSE ELEMENT | PROGRAM OUTCOMES |
|---|---|--|
| By the end of this course, students | This outcome will be achieved through these course elements: | This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv) (primary correspondence; secondary correspondence): |
| • will have increased their familiarity with the content of the four Gospels | lectures 6, 9,10,12; analysis-reflection questions; online discussions | A. General: 1.a-k MTS: 1.1 MDiv: 1.1-2, 4 |
| • will have developed a greater awareness of the historical and cultural context in which the Christian movement emerged and in which the writings of the New Testament were produced | lectures 3, 4, 5, online discussions | A. General: 1.a-k MTS: 1.1 MDiv: 1.1-2, 4 |
| | | |
| • will be able to recognize and reflect on issues pertaining to the formative period of early Christianity, especially those having to do with unity/diversity and continuity/development | lectures 2,4,5; analysis-reflection questions; online discussions | A. General: 1.a-k MTS: 1.1 MDiv: 1.1-2, 4 |
| • will have become aware of the importance of method in NT interpretation, and will have begun to develop an appropriate method of interpretation for themselves | Lectures 1,2,3; analysis-reflection questions; online discussions | A. General: 1.a-k MTS: 1.1 MDiv: 1.1-2, 4 |
| • will have an increased and more mature confidence in the NT as a source and ground for faith | course as a whole; homiletical reflection at the end of some lectures; online discussions | A. General: 1.a-k MTS: 1.1 MDiv: 1.1-2, 4 |
| Additional learning outcomes will be found at the beginning of the lecture notes for each week. | | |

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- Burton H. Throckmorton, *Gospel Parallels, NRSV Edition: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. 5th edition. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992. ISBN: 978-0-8407-7484-2
- Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament*. 3rd edition. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8006-6361-2
- John A. Bertone, *Finding God in Scripture*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-62032-024-2

Instead of in-class lectures, you are required to read the online course notes. For those of you who might want a second opinion on things, two supplementary texts are recommended. (Note that you are not required to buy these books; they are recommended for supplementary purposes only.) One is Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green and Marianne Meye Thompson (eds.) *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). The other is *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (editors Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), a very helpful and relatively up-to-date reference work.

Course Website(s)

Quercus <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

How to log into your Quercus Course

1. Go to <https://q.utoronto.ca>
 2. Use your UTORid and password to log in.
- Once you've logged in, you'll be in your "**Dashboard**";
 - You should see a "**Course Card**" for each of the courses you are enrolled in;
 - Click on a "**Course Card**" to access the course.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (May 3-7):

Read Lecture 1: Assumptions and Method of Approach.

Read Lecture 2: Starting Point: The "Easter" Experience

****Discussion Question**

Week 2 (May 10-14):

Read Lecture 3: Questions of Approach

Read Lecture 4: The Jewish Context: A World in Tension

****Discussion Question**

Week 3 (May 17-21):

Read Lecture 5: Easter and the Construction of a New Christian "World"

Read Lecture 6: Case Study: The Gospel of Mark

****Discussion Question**

Week 4 (May 24-28):

Focus on Assignment Week – No Discussion Question

Exploring the Kerygma (Part 1). Due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday May 28, 2021.

See below for explanation of Assignment

Week 5 (May 31-June 4):

Read Lecture 7: Canon, Text and Translation

Read Lecture 8: The Formation of the Synoptic Gospels

****Discussion Question**

Week 6 (June 7-11):

Read Lecture 9: The Gospel of Matthew

Read Lecture 10: The Gospel of John

****Discussion Question**

Week 7 (June 14-18):

Read Lecture 11: Jesus: A Bridge Between Two Worlds

Read Lecture 12: The Gospel of Luke

****Discussion Question**

Week 8 (June 21-25)

Focus on Assignment Week – No Discussion Question

Exploring the Kerygma (Part 2). Due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday June 25, 2021.

See below for explanation of Assignment

Exploring the Kerygma (Part 1)

Due: 5:00 p.m. on Friday May 28, 2021

Length: 4 – 6 pages, double-spaced.

Value: 25%

This is the first of two assignments that focus on the characteristic beliefs or basic message of the early Christian movement (gospel, or “kerygma”). The purpose of this assignment is to study several summaries of early Christian preaching in order to come to some initial conclusions about the content of the kerygma.

This assignment is based on a set of New Testament summaries of early Christian preaching. One of these is by Paul: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; the others are contained in the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:30-32; 10:34-43. The purpose of the assignment is to construct a first approximation of the early Christian message by carrying out the following investigations of these passages:

- a. First, identify “elements” held in common by these passages; i.e., elements contained in each of the six passages. “Element” refers to a constituent part of the message, such as “Jesus died,” or “Jesus was raised from the dead.” What is important here is similarity in substance, not necessarily agreement in wording. In one or two cases in the Acts passages, if you don’t find what you are looking for within the strict limits of the passages, you might look elsewhere in the immediate context (i.e., within the narrative of the same incident or occasion). Footnotes in a study Bible might be useful for one of the elements. You should be able to identify at least four or five significant elements; careful examination might reveal a couple more. Taken together, these elements might be considered as the core of the early Christian message.
- b. Then, supplement this “core message” by adding elements found in **both 1 Corinthians 15** (here you should look at the [whole chapter](#), since it contains information on what Paul assumes to be part of, or implied by, the core message) and **at least once** in the passages from Acts (these elements do not have to be present in every one of the Acts passages, but they have to be present in at least one). The additional elements that we are looking for, then, cannot be found only in Paul or only in Acts; they need to be present in both.

Note: For both a) and b), you should include references for each element (e.g., [Acts 2:32](#)), but there is no need to quote the passage in full. In each case you should provide a concise description in your own words of the essential content of the element. (What is being affirmed or proclaimed?) Further, you should provide explanatory comments if it is not immediately apparent how a given element is present in a passage or, more generally, if you think some justification or explanation is required for your identification of any particular element.

- c. In a paragraph or two, comment on what this investigation might reveal about the substance of the early Christian message and the nature of the early Christian movement.

Exploring the Kerygma (Part 2)

Due: 5:00 pm on Friday, June 25, 2021

Length: 4 – 6 pages, double-spaced.

Value: 25%

In the first assignment we have attempted to sketch out the shape and content of the early message of the apostles. Since the time of the New Testament, of course, there have been many attempts in Christian history to capture the essential core beliefs of the faith in a confessional summary or creed. One of the most influential of the early creeds is the Nicene Creed. A comparison of the kerygma with this creed suggests that a certain measure of development took place between the time of the earliest Christian preaching and the fourth century, when the Nicene Creed appeared. At the very least, the differences between the two indicate a development in form, by which I mean the list of things that were considered to be essential components of a statement of Christian belief. But the differences also point to developments in theological understanding, i.e., developments in the answers that were being given to questions raised by the earliest kerygma. The purpose of this assignment is to explore this development and its significance.

Below is a copy of the [Nicene Creed](#) (in its Constantinople form).

- a. Carry out a comparison of the kerygma (as examined in the first assignment) with the Nicene Creed. What elements of the kerygma are found in the creed? Are there any elements missing? What elements of the creed are not found in the kerygma?
- b. One of the elements of similarity and difference has to do with Christology, i.e., answers given to the question “Who is Jesus, that his life, death and resurrection can have such far-reaching significance?” In order to explore issues of development a little further, let us bring Mark’s Gospel into the picture. An aspect of the Creed is the set of statements about Jesus’ divine nature (of one being with the Father, etc.), his role in creation (through him all things were made) and, implicit in these two, his pre-existence. Compare this with Mark. With respect to the points of difference between the kerygma and the Nicene Creed on the matter of Christology, where does Mark fit? Is Mark closer to one than to the other? Does Mark present Jesus explicitly as of divine nature, as the agent of creation and thus as pre-existent? (Note that there is a limit to the amount of weight you can put on the Christological titles in and of themselves. See, for example, the discussion about the term “Son of God” in Lecture 5.)
- c. Finally, give some thought to the significance of your observations. Is the Christian faith to be seen as a static thing in these early centuries, its core beliefs fully present from the beginning and handed down intact from generation to generation? Or does the evidence suggest development not only in form (as defined above) but also in theological content? With respect to Christology, for example, do we see differences between the early kerygma, the Gospel of Mark and the Nicene Creed? Can we speak of a process of development? If so, how is this process to be understood (e.g., deepening insight into what has already been revealed; progressive revelation; a process of evolutionary

development, where through a series of changes Christianity was transformed from one thing into something distinctly different; etc.)?

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

I believe in One God,
the Father Almighty,
Maker of Heaven and Earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God,
the Only-Begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages;
Light of Light;
True God of True God;
begotten, not made;
of one essence with the Father,
by Whom all things were made;
Who for us men and for our salvation
came down from Heaven,
and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate,
and suffered, and was buried.
And the third day He arose again,
according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into Heaven,
and sits at the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead;
Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life,
Who proceeds from the Father;
Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
Who spoke by the prophets.

And in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.
I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Evaluation

Requirements

Discussion Forum (50%)

Submit a minimum of—but not limited to—three postings per unit to the Discussion Forum. One of these will be your own substantial response to the question that is posted on Quercus (about 200 words). The other two will be responses to your classmates' comments (about 100 words each). Grading will be based upon substantive responses. Please make sure to answer the question specifically.

"Exploring the Kerygma" Papers (2 X 25%= 50%)

There are two major assignments worth 25% each. The first is due **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 28, 2021**; the second is due **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 25, 2021**.

******These exercises will be seen only by the instructor and are to be sent by email to:

johnabertone@gmail.com

Grading System

| Letter Grade | Numerical Equivalents | Grade Point | Grasp of Subject Matter |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| A+ | 90–100% | 4.0 | Profound & Creative |
| A | 85–89% | 4.0 | Outstanding |
| A- | 80–84% | 3.7 | Excellent |
| B+ | 77–79% | 3.3 | Very Good |
| B | 73–76% | 3.0 | Good |
| B- | 70–72% | 2.7 | Satisfactory |
| FZ | 0–69% | 0 | Failure |

Grades without numerical equivalent:

| | |
|-----|--|
| CR | Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value |
| NCR | Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation |
| SDF | Standing deferred (a temporary extension) |
| INC | Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value |
| WDR | Withdrawal without academic penalty |
| AEG | May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value |

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a

mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar's office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges

(http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

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Online Recourses

The Gospel of Q (http://www.religioustolerance.org/gosp_q.htm)

A summary of opinions on the Q Gospel

The Two Source Hypothesis (<http://www.mindspring.com/~scarlson/synopt/2sh/index.htm>)

Summary of the dominant synoptic theory by Stephen Carlson

All about Q (http://www.geocities.com/b_d_muller/q.html)

Paper arguing that Q is a late (80 C.E.) document.

The Synoptic Problem (<http://www.bible.org/docs/soapbox/synoptic.htm>)

A defense of the Two Source Hypothesis, according to which Matthew and Luke based their gospels on Mark and Q.

The Existence of Q (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/q-exist.html>)

A scholarly defense of the Two Source Hypothesis according to which Matthew and Luke used Mark as well as a second non-extant source termed Q.

The Lost Sayings Gospel Q (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/q.html>)

Includes the contents of Q by verse, a synopsis for Q, links to translations of Q, links to resources on Q, an essay in defense of the existence of Q, and introductory information with scholarly quotes.

Four-Color Synopsis (<http://www.mindspring.com/~scarlson/synopt/harmony/>)

The parallel passages of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in the original Greek with color coding. Useful for identifying the double tradition material that makes up Q.

Q // Thomas Parallels (<http://www.misericordia.edu/users/davies/thomas/thq.htm>)

The parallel passages between Q and Thomas as presented by Stevan Davies

William Arnal's Summary of Kloppenborg's Q Stratification

(<http://www.misericordia.edu/users/davies/thomas/billklop.htm>)

An abstract of Kloppenborg's thesis of the formation of Q in successive stages.

Q Sayings in Luke (<http://www.misericordia.edu/users/davies/thomas/q.htm>)

The Q material as found in Luke and presented by Stevan Davies.

The Q Source Based on Luke (<http://www.uncc.edu/jdtabor/Qluke.html>)

The text of Q as preserved in the verses of Luke and presented by J.B. Tabor.

NT Gateway: Q (<http://www.ntgateway.com/synoptic/Q.htm>)

Links to articles and essays addressing the subject of Q.

The Contents of Q (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/q-contents.html>)

The verses in Q in several lists provided by modern commentators.

A Synopsis for Q (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/q-synopsis.html>)

The parallel passages between Matthew and Luke that are thought to represent Q are presented.