**COS 321 – Bible III: Gospels**

ALPS/Tennessee-Western Kentucky/Holston Course of Study

Part I: September 5-6, 2025 (Zoom teleconferencing)

Part II: September 26-27, 2025 (Zoom teleconferencing)

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**Course Content and Learning Goals**

This course focuses on the content and message of the Gospels, as well as the theological perspectives of the Gospel writers.

By the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, message, and purpose of each Gospel.

2. Demonstrate faithful and fruitful exegesis of selected portions of these biblical books.

3. Apply the fruits of exegesis to preaching, to other pastoral responsibilities, and to issues of the present day.

**Required Text**

Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey. Second Edition* (Baker Academic, 2018) ISBN 978-0-8010-9960-1

**Reference Texts:**

*The New Interpreter’s Study Bible* (based on the New Revised Standard Version),

or *The NIV Study Bible* (based on the New International Version),

or *The CEB Study Bible with Apocrypha* (based on the Common English Bible)

*Oxford Bible Atlas* (Third or Fourth Edition)

Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., ed., *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels, Fifth Edition* (Thomas Nelson, 1992) ISBN 978-0-840-77484-2

**Supplementary Texts**

Frederick J. Murphy, *An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels* (Abingdon Press, 2005) ISBN 978-1-426-74915-5

M. Eugene Boring and Fred B. Craddock, *The People’s New Testament Commentary* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2009) ISBN 978-0-664-23592-5)

**Required Written Work**

1. Pre-course paper assignment

2. Mid-course paper assignment

3. Final exam

**Grading System**

Pre-course paper(s) 30 %

Mid-course paper(s) 30 %

Final exam 30 %

Class participation 10 %

*Note Regarding Assignments:* Failure to submit the pre-course assignment, the mid-course assignment, or the final examination will result, not simply in a grade of F for that assignment, but for the class as a whole.

**Pre-Course Assignments**

Read pages 17-203 in Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*.

A majority of New Testament scholars agree that the Gospel of Mark was composed first, and that Matthew and Luke had access to Mark’s Gospel, but supplemented it with some material that Matthew and Luke shared in common (the “Q” source) and some material that was distinctive to Matthew and Luke, respectively (the “M” material and the “L” material).

Read the account of Jesus’ baptism in Mark 1:9-11. Then read the accounts in Matthew 3:13-17 and Luke 3:21-22. Write a 900-word paper (three typed, double-spaced pages, 12-point font) discussing the following: How are the three Synoptic accounts of the baptism similar? What do Matthew and Luke change or add to the story? What distinctive emphases do Matthew and Luke provide?

Read the account of Jesus’ temptation in Mark 1:12-13. Then read the accounts in Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13. Write a 900-word paper (three typed, double-spaced pages, 12-point font) discussing the following: How are the three Synoptic accounts of the temptation similar? What do Matthew and Luke change or add to the story? What distinctive emphases do Matthew and Luke provide?

Read Jesus’ instruction on prayer in Mark 11:25. Then read the accounts in Matthew 6: 5-15 and Luke 11:1-4. Write a 900-word paper (three typed, double-spaced pages, 12-point font) discussing the following: How are the three Synoptic accounts of Jesus’ instruction on prayer similar? What do Matthew and Luke change or add to the story? What distinctive emphases do Matthew and Luke provide?

The three-part pre-course paper assignment is due by Friday, August 29 . Please submit as Microsoft Word documents and send as email attachments to the instructor’s email address listed above.

The topic for the mid-course paper assignment will be assigned at the end of the Zoom session on Saturday, September 6. The mid-course paper assignment is due by Thursday, September 25. Please submit as a Microsoft Word document and send it as an email attachment to the instructor’s email address listed above.

Please scan and attach to the pre-course paper assignment, the mid-course paper assignment, and the final examination a completed and signed “Cover Sheet”, indicating that you are abiding by the Honor Code of the ALPS-TWKH Course of Study. To access that cover sheet, please [**Click here**](https://www.alpsumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/academic-honor-code-MTH-updated-10-11-15.pdf).