

**BNT 220: INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPELS (3 CREDIT HOURS)**  
**Cincinnati Christian University, Fall Semester 2007, TH, 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.**

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Course resources: <http://campusweb.ccuniversity.edu/moodle/>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An introduction to the critical issues affecting the study of the Gospels and the life of Jesus followed by a survey of the various genres and forms within the Gospels, focusing on principles for interpreting the Gospels, key concepts found in them, and their impact on the church and the Christian life. Prerequisites: BCS 100, BOT 150, BNT 150; Concurrent: BEX 200.

**RATIONALE**

Jesus Christ is the founder of Christianity and the central figure in its teaching. All Christian theology hinges on the appearance of Jesus in history. Understanding of the canonical Gospels, the primary source of our knowledge of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, is fundamental to all of Christian life and service.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the critical problems associated with the Gospels, especially the problems raised in the study of the life of Jesus, and to be able to defend a positive approach to the historicity of the Gospels.
2. To understand the similarities and differences among the four Gospels in light of the circumstances of their composition.
3. To know key elements of the historical background and circumstances surrounding the life of Jesus.
4. To understand the relationship of key themes and events of Jesus' ministry to his larger significance in history and theology.
5. To be able to carry out sound interpretation of the text of the Gospels, addressing the difficult and controversial aspects of the text in a manner consistent with the relevant evidence.
6. To understand the relationship of the life of Jesus to major themes of promise in the Old Testament.
7. To apply the teaching of the Gospels to contemporary problems and lifestyles.

**AGENDA**

*Note that the course meets every Tuesday and Thursday August 23 to December 6 except for October 4 (Fall Break) and November 22 (Thanksgiving). Assignments and dates are subject to change per announcement in class.*

Aug 23 Introduction to the Course

The Problem and Significance of the Historical Jesus

28 Source Criticism

Reading: Thomas and Gundry, pp. 265–68, 274–79, 302–08; Blomberg, ch. 1

Writing: Colored Synopses on Matt 8:19–22//Luke 9:57–62 and Matt 19:13–15//Mark 10:13–16//Luke 18:15–17

30 Form Criticism; Redaction Criticism

Reading: Thomas and Gundry, pp. 280–301; Blomberg, ch. 2

Writing: Reading Report 1

Sept 4 Recent Developments in Gospels Study

Reading: Johnson, “The Jesus Seminar’s Misguided Quest” and Witherington, “Why the ‘Lost Gospels’ Lost Out” (available online; see links below or on the Moodle course site)

Writing: Reading Report 2

6 Conclusions on Critical Issues

Reading: Blomberg, ch. 4

Writing: Reading Report 3

11 The Johannine Prologue; Infancy Narratives

Reading: John 1:1–18; Matthew 1–2; Luke 1–2; 3:23–37; Blomberg, ch. 5; Bock, pp. 23–76, 409–16

Writing: Reflection Questions on the Johannine Prologue and Infancy Narratives

- 13 Infancy Narratives (continued)  
 Reading: **Entire Gospel of Matthew**; Blomberg, ch. 6  
 Writing: Reading Report 4; **Gospel of Matthew Summary of Themes**
- 18 John the Baptist  
 Reading: Matt 3:1–17//Mark 1:1–11//Luke 3:1–22; John 1:19–36; 3:22–36; Bock, pp. 77–88, 416–19  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on John the Baptist
- 20 The Temptation  
 Reading: Matt 4:1–11//Mark 1:12–13//Luke 4:1–13; Bock, pp. 89–91, 559–65  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on the Temptation
- 25 Jesus Proclamation of the Kingdom  
 Reading: Matt 4:12–17//Mark 1:14–15//Luke 4:14–15; Matt 11:2–19//Luke 7:18–35; Matt 12:22–37//Luke 11:14–22; Luke 17:20–21; Bock, pp. 92–95, 178–81, 188–92, 565–93; Stein, ch. 4  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on the Kingdom
- 27 Miracles  
 Reading: Matt 9:1–8//Mark 2:1–12//Luke 5:17–26; Matt 8:28–34//Mark 5:1–20//Luke 8:26–39; Matt 14:13–33//Mark 6:30–52//Luke 9:10–17//John 6:1–21; Matt 8:5–13//Luke 7:1–10; John 9:1–41; Bock, pp. 109–12, 158–59, 164–65, 216–18, 446–49, 469–73; Blomberg, ch. 3  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Miracles
- Oct 2 The Sermon on the Mount/Plain  
 Reading: Matt 5:1–8:1//Luke 6:17–49; Stein, ch. 1–2; Bock, pp. 124–55  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on the Sermon on the Mount/Plain
- 9 The Sermon on the Mount/Plain (continued)  
 Reading: **Entire Gospel of Mark**; Stein, ch. 5–6  
 Writing: **Gospel of Mark Summary of Themes**; Reading Report 5
- 11 *Meshalim*: Parables and Such  
 Reading: Matt 13:1–53//Mark 4:1–34//Luke 8:4–18; Luke 10:25–37; 15:1–16:31; John 10:1–21; Bock, pp. 198–210, 254–56, 280–88, 473–76; Stein, ch. 3  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on *Meshalim*: Parables and Such
- 16 Sinners and Disciples  
 Reading: John 1:35–51; 2:23–3:21; 4:1–42; Matt 4:18–22//Mark 1:16–21; Luke 5:1–11; Matt 9:9–13//Mark 2:13–17//Luke 5:27–32; Luke 7:36–50; Matt 15:21–28//Mark 7:24–30; Matt 19:13–30//Mark 10:13–31//Luke 18:15–30; Bock, pp. 98–99, 106–07, 112–14, 185–87, 221–22, 301–05, 419–22, 430–38, 623–37  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Sinners and Disciples
- 18 **Midterm Exam**
- 23 Opposition  
 Reading: Matthew 9:14–17; 12:1–14//Mark 2:18–3:6//Luke 5:33–6:11; Matt 15:1–20//Mark 7:1–23; John 8:1–59; Bock, pp. 114–20, 219–21, 461–69  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Opposition
- 25 Peter’s Confession: Christ/Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man  
 Reading: Matt 8:18–22//Luke 9:57–62; Matt 16:13–20//Mark 8:27–30//Luke 9:18–21; Bock, pp. 161–63, 230–31, 593–623; Stein, ch. 7  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Peter’s Confession and Christology
- 30 The Way to the Cross  
 Reading: Matt 16:21–28//Mark 8:31–9:1//Luke 9:22–27; Matt 20:20–28//Mark 10:35–45; Luke 9:51–56; 14:25–35; Bock, pp. 232–34, 248–50, 279–280, 308–09  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on the Way to the Cross
- Nov 1 The Transfiguration  
 Reading: Matt 17:1–23//Mark 9:2–32//Luke 9:28–45; **Entire Gospel of Luke**; Bock, pp. 234–38  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on the Transfiguration; **Gospel of Luke Summary of Themes**
- 6 The Entry into Jerusalem  
 Reading: Matt 21:1–22//Mark 11:1–18//Luke 19:29–44//John 12:12–19; Bock, pp. 313–23, 484–86  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on the Entry into Jerusalem
- 8 Jerusalem and the Parousia  
 Reading: Matt 21:23–46//Mark 11:27–12:12//Luke 20:1–19; Matt 24:1–51//Mark 13:1–37//Luke 21:5–36; Matt 25:1–46; Bock, pp. 323–27, 338–54, 637–42  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Jerusalem and the Parousia

- 13 Jerusalem and the Parousia (continued)
- 15 The Final Plot, The Upper Room and Farewell Discourses  
 Reading: Matt 26:1–29//Mark 14:1–25//Luke 21:1–20; 13:1–17:26; Bock, pp. 354–62, 491–525, 642–48  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on the Final Plot, The Upper Room and Farewell Discourses  
*Reminder: Attend the National Missionary Convention at the Cincinnati Convention Center, November 15–18.*
- 20 Gethsemane  
 Reading: Matt 26:30–56//Mark 14:26–52//Luke 22:39–53//John 18:1–12; Bock, pp. 366–70, 525–27  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Gethsemane; Reflection Questions on National Missionary Convention Experiences
- 27 Trials  
 Reading: Matt 26:57–27:26//Mark 14:53–15:15//Luke 22:54–23:25//John 18:12–19:16; Bock, pp. 370–83, 527–35  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Trials
- 29 Crucifixion  
 Reading: Matt 27:27–66//Mark 15:16–47//Luke 23:26–56//John 19:16–42; Bock, pp. 384–94, 535–41  
 Writing: **Reflective Essay on Servanthood**, Reflection Questions on Crucifixion
- Dec 4 Resurrection  
 Reading: Matt 28:1–20//Mark 16:1–//Luke 24:1–53//John 20:1–21:25; Bock, pp. 394–405, 542–57  
 Writing: Reflection Questions on Resurrection
- 6 Overview of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; Review  
 Reading: Blomberg, ch. 7; **Entire Gospel of John**  
 Writing: Reading Report 6, **Gospel of John Summary of Themes**
- 11 **Final Exam (10:00–11:50 a.m., tentative)**

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS

Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987.

Bock, Darrell L. *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002.

*Course Pack for Introduction to the Gospels*. (available online via course site on Moodle: <http://campusweb.ccuuniversity.edu/moodle/>; students are individually responsible to download and print materials).

Johnson, Luke Timothy. “The Jesus Seminar’s Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus.” *Christian Century* 113 (1996) 16-22. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost. A link to the material is available on the Moodle course web site or [here](#).

Stein, Robert H. *The Method and Message of Jesus’ Teaching*. Rev. ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994.

Thomas, Robert L. and Stanley N. Gundry. *A Harmony of the Gospels with Explanations and Essays*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978.

Witherington, Ben. “Why the ‘Lost Gospels’ Lost Out: Recent Gadfly Theories About Church Council Conspiracies That Manipulated the New Testament into Existence Are Bad—Really Bad—History.” *Christianity Today* 48, no. 6 (2004) 26-32. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost. A link to the material is available on the Moodle course web site or [here](#).

### ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The attendance policy in the CCU student handbook will apply to this course: students who miss more than four sessions of the class will receive the grade of FA (failure due to absences) unless they can document that their absences were for school-sponsored travel, illness or family emergency. Students who are chronically tardy or asleep or who read, play computer games, instant message or do other “multitasking” in class may also be counted absent. No other specific penalty for absences will be assessed, but students are reminded that there is no substitute for active participation in class sessions.

Likewise, policies regarding academic integrity as published in the CCU student handbook will apply in this course. Because this course encourages group work on some assignments, students are urged to observe that group work can be done *only* on the assignments so designated and that groups *may not divide up those assignments* for individual contributions but must work together on the entire assignment with all group members participating throughout the assignment.

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING FORMULA**

No assignment for this course may be turned in late (i.e. after class on the date indicated in the agenda). Students absent for planned travel must submit assignments before leaving. Students who have a legitimate excuse for not turning in an assignment on time must submit that excuse (illness, family or ministry emergency) to the professor in writing, indicating the assignments missed and the reason. Legitimate excuses will excuse the student from submitting the assignment for credit, though completing the missed work will still be an important learning activity. *Any assignment turned in late for any reason (including "I had it done on time but I forgot to turn it in") will be returned without a grade. Do not bother asking for exceptions to this policy.*

#### **Colored Synopses** **5%**

For the texts indicated on the agenda for August 31, the student should photocopy the relevant pages from Thomas and Gundry and mark the *words* (not just concepts) of the text according to their appearance in each Gospel, using the following key:

words appearing in Matt, Mark and Luke: red  
 words appearing in Matt and Mark only: yellow  
 words appearing in Matt and Luke only: orange  
 words appearing in Mark and Luke only: green

words appearing in Matthew only: blue  
 words appearing in Mark only: purple  
 words appearing in Luke only: brown

#### **Reading Reports and Reflection Questions** **10%**

Students will complete the questions in the course pack per the agenda above. These questions will require answers in paragraphs, not isolated words, phrases or single sentences. Answers may be handwritten or word processed in the spaces below the questions.

Students are strongly encouraged to form groups of 3–5 to work on reading reports and reflection questions together and submit a single assignment for the entire group under the following conditions: (1) the group must agree to meet for the entire semester; (2) every member of the group must complete all reading assignments and participate in discussion to answer all questions (i.e. there can be no dividing up of assignments among group members). *By submitting any assignment as a group project, students are affirming that all members of the group worked on the entirety of the assignment (i.e. assignments cannot be divided up among group members).*

#### **Reflective Essay on Servanthood** **15%**

Each student must write an essay of 1250–1750 words on the topic, “Servanthood in the Gospels and in My Experience of Christian Service.” Essays should lay out the basis and meaning of being a servant in the Gospels and offer comparison between that material and the student’s own experience of service in the current semester. *This assignment assumes that all students are regularly involved in a service activity that is specifically Christian, per the CCU Christian service requirement.* Essays will be graded on their grasp of the teaching of the Gospels, the quality of their integration of Scripture and experience, their clarity and coherence, and the interest that they create for the reader. *This assignment cannot be done by groups.*

#### **Summary of Gospel Themes** **10%**

During the semester and by the dates indicated on the agenda (around the middle of each calendar month), each student must read through each canonical Gospel in its entirety and write a 1–2 page essay summarizing, with citation of relevant texts, two key themes from each Gospel. Students may consult any secondary sources they wish for this assignment, but the essay should be based primarily on one’s own reading of the text, and submission of the essay is a statement by the student that he or she has read the entire Gospel text during the semester. *This assignment cannot be done by groups.*

**Midterm Exam** 25%

**Final Exam** 35%

Both exams will consist of 30 objective questions (true or false and multiple choice) and three essays. Specific topics for review will be distributed before each exam. *Students who receive a grade of F for both the midterm and the final exam will receive F as their semester grade for the course, regardless of their grades on other assignments.*