

CH 262 Synoptic Gospels Fall, 2010

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Office Hours posted on office door, or e-mail to schedule

Teaching Assistants: Jennifer Miles and Chris Wehrman

Course Description: Our study of the synoptic gospels will focus on Luke. We will read the Gospel of Luke as story, using the critical tools of narrative criticism. We will experience reading an entire gospel, tracing themes through the narrative. We will consider the author's purpose and particular emphases in the way the writer tells the story of Jesus. We will examine the relationships among the three synoptic gospels with the use of gospel parallels. We will give attention to contexts, both first century and twenty-first century, which are critical for interpreting Luke.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand the relationships among the synoptic gospels
2. To learn how to read a gospel as a complete narrative, reading the parts in relationship to the whole story
3. To gain confidence in using critical methods of gospel study
4. To engage secondary sources and read them critically
5. To read and interpret the gospels in light of relevant contexts, ancient and contemporary

Required Texts:

NRSV study bible: HarperCollins preferred, newest edition of Oxford Annotated acceptable

Gospel Parallels. Ed. Burton Throckmorton, Jr., NRSV edition

Brawley, Robert, *Luke-Acts and the Jews*

Corley, Kathleen, *Maranatha: Women's Funerary Rituals and Christian Origins*

Salmon, Marilyn, *Preaching Without Contempt, Overcoming Unintended Anti-Judaism*

Schottroff, Luise, *The Parables of Jesus*

Swanson, Richard, *Provoking the Gospel of Luke*

Recommended Texts:

Fredriksen and Reinhartz, editors, *Jesus, Judaism, and Christian anti-Judaism*

Hayes, Richard and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*

Reid, Barbara E., *Parables for Preachers Year C*

Sloyan, Gerard, *Why Jesus Died*

Tiede, David, *Luke* (Augsburg New Testament Commentary)

Supplementary Texts:

Swanson, Richard, *Provoking the Gospel of Mark*,

Swanson, Richard, *Provoking the Gospel of Matthew*

Course Requirements:

1. Read assigned texts, primary (biblical) and secondary (commentary, articles, etc.) and be prepared to discuss them.
2. Attend class meetings and participate in class discussions. If you know that you will miss a class, please let me know. If you miss more than one class, please see me about making up for what you missed.
3. Complete all written assignments and hand in when due. Late assignments will not be accepted unless arrangements are made prior to the due date to negotiate another due date. All written assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Evaluations: Final evaluations for the course will be based primarily on the written assignments, with extra weight given to the final exam. Written work will be evaluated on the basis of following: attention to directions and the questions asked; skill in using critical methods to interpret biblical texts; knowledge and awareness of relevant contexts; evidence of critical thinking skills; engagement with secondary literature where appropriate; effective written communication skills.

Policy on Extensions:

The faculty voted to approve the following policy on extensions in April, 1999:

The work for a course is terminated at the end of the final class session. The performance in the course is evaluated on the basis of the work submitted by that time, unless an exception is made by the instructor, in which case a formal petition for extension must be approved by the instructor by the end of the final class session. Extensions (of course work) beyond the end of the semester will be approved only under extraordinary circumstances. Each instructor will include this policy on each course syllabus as well as the criteria by which she or he will grant such an extraordinary exception.

For this course, extraordinary circumstances include: death in the family, hospitalization for illness or injury, or serious illness of self or family member. If you think you have an extraordinary circumstance that affects your ability to complete the course, please talk with me about it.

Policy on Plagiarism: See Student Handbook. If I see evidence of plagiarism in written work, one of the following will occur: I will note it and suggest you be more careful in the future; I will request that you resubmit the paper with proper acknowledgement of sources; I will give a failing grade for the paper; I will give a failing grade for the course.

Policy on Cell Phones: Please turn cell phones off during class.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments:

9/13 Introduction
Meeting each other
Overview of the course
Review of Narrative Criticism
Authorship of Luke-Acts
Beginnings and Endings: Luke 1:1-4

9/20 The prologue to the gospel
Read: Lk 1:5-2:-52
Brawley, Introduction (pp 1-5)
Swanson, Preface, 1,2 (pp 7-51)
Salmon, ch 1 (pp 17-36)
Hayes and Holladay, chapter on literary criticism
Recommended: Fredriksen, "The Birth of Christianity and the Origin of Christian Anti-Semitism," ch 1, *Jesus, Judaism & Christian Anti-Judaism*

Write: What evidence do you see in the first two chapters of Luke that the author context of author and audience (implied) is within Israel (Judaism)? Think in terms of the identity signs (Salmon, ch 2). Do not quote verses. Describe what you see and indicate references in parentheses by chapter and verse. (about 500 words, or two pages)

Prepare to Discuss: Swanson places Luke within the context of the years following the Jewish revolt against Rome, written to an audience in grief. What are some suggestions he makes for Christian readers today? How will we read if we follow his advice? How do you react to his assertion that we are reading a gospel that was not written for us?

9/27 Two stories in the prologue
Read: 1:47-55; 2:41-52
Swanson, 69-86
Paul Minear, "Dear Theo: (on reserve in the course packet for CH 219)
Tiede, 38-33
a sermon or preaching resource on these texts; note similarities and differences in comparison to the above readings

Prepare to Discuss: (1) There are different ways of stating the author's purpose. Do you find one particularly compelling? (2) What different views did you find in the preaching resources you read? (3) Consider different possibilities for re-imagining Mary. Consider different possibilities for re-imagining Jesus in the Temple.

10/4 John the Baptist and Baptism; Synoptic Relationships

Read: Luke 3:1-4:13; gospel parallels in Mark and Matthew; color (guide is at the end of the syllabus)

Swanson 59-69 (Advent 2 and 3)

Hayes, ch on redaction criticism

Tiede or another another commentary on Luke 3

Write: Note the distinctive features of Luke's gospel pertaining to John. Think back to the first two chapters. Discuss Luke's portrayal of John in a short presentation you might make for an adult education class, including your interpretation or "meaning-making" of the relationship between John and Jesus or the preaching of John. (500 words)

Prepare to Discuss: Think about how you would tell the story, or stage, the baptism according to Mk? According to Luke? How would you convey differences?

10/11 Jesus' Identity and Mission

Read: Luke 4:14-30

Parallels in Mt and Mk

Brawley, ch 2 (read very carefully, perhaps more than once)

Swanson, Epiphany 3 and 4

Tiede, "No Prophet Is Acceptable in His Own Country" (in packet on reserve)

Recommended: commentary on this pericope in either I.H. Marshall or J. Fitzmyer (commentaries on Luke on reserve)

Prepare to Discuss: What evidence do you see that this is the author's literary creation? Consider the placement of this story within the gospel as well as features within the story. Who is Jesus, according to Luke? What is Jesus' mission, according to Luke? What is the effect of dividing the story into two parts, as the lectionary does?

10/18 Jesus (and Paul) and Torah Observance

Read: Luke 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 10:25-28;

Gospel parallels; color; note where there are none

Acts 15:1-16:6; 21:17-26; 23:1-10

Salmon, ch 3

Brawley, ch 6

Swanson, 161-167; 180-182

Selection from Mishnah (see handout)

Write: Choose one of the texts from Luke, above, and retell the story in a way that shows an understanding and appreciation for who the Pharisees were in Jesus' time or Luke's time. (250-450 words)

Prepare to Discuss: How does the author prepare the reader/listener to hear these stories in a way that assumes the legitimacy of the Pharisees and of observance of the Law?

Reading Week: classes do not meet

11/1 Journey Narrative

Read: Luke 9:51-19:28

First, read “vertically” within Luke’s story; watch for clues, or reminders that we are on a journey; see study bible commentary for guidance

Second, read with parallels, noting how the writer has placed common material within the journey, and noting material only in Luke Handout on 9:51-62 (Salmon’s essay for workingpreacher.org)

Prepare to Discuss: This is Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem, but it is also the “journey of every disciple” or follower of Jesus. Describe this journey in terms of expectations, relationships, etc. What does it mean to follow Jesus? Could you use this journey as a guide for your own journey? Could you imagine this as a teaching series on “the Christian life?”

11/8 Parables

Read: Luke 10; 15; 18:1-14; parallels (color)

Schottroff, chapters 1, 10, 11, 12, 14, 19, 20, 24

Reid, 13, 9, 15, 19, 20

Swanson, 161-169; 194-198; 128-134; 213-220

Recommended: Levine, “Matthew, Mark and Luke: Good News or Bad?” in *JJ&CJ* (chapter 4)

Write: Retell one of the parables that shows an appreciation for the parable within the context of Luke’s story, within the framework of the journey, within the context of late first-century Judaism, and early twenty-first century churches. You might choose to consider the season in which the lectionary assigns the parable. Choose one of the following: 10:25-37; 15:1-10; 18:1-8; 18:9-14. (We will work with the third parable in chapter 15 in class.)

11/15 Table Fellowship

Read: Luke 5:27-32; 7:36-50; 10:1-12; 14:1-24; 15: 1-32; 22:14-28; 24:28-35

Gospel Parallels; color

Recommended: Sanders, “*Jesus, Ancient Judaism, and Modern Christianity*,” in *Jesus, Judaism & Christian Anti-Judaism*”

Prepare to discuss: What happens at the table? What is Jesus’ role? What difference does it make, if any, that questions, disagreements, etc. occur around the table? What is the connection between shared meals in the present and the heavenly banquet, as Luke tells it? Can you think of ways that the Prologue prepared you to read these texts? What are some connections between table

fellowship and sacramental meals in contemporary contexts? Christian? Jewish? Muslim? Other?

11/22 *Maranatha: Women's Funerary Rituals and Christian Origins*

Read: Maranatha

This book by Kathleen E. Corley (Fortress Press, 2010) connects communal meals to particular women's rituals around death and funerals. Thus, I think it makes a good transition between the theme of table fellowship and Jesus' passion and death in our study of Luke.

Write: See separate handout for a paper on this book

NOTE: I will be attending the Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Atlanta and will not be here for class. Some of you may decide to meet to discuss the book and paper assignment, but this is optional. The paper is not due until next week, but I do encourage you to think of it in terms of this week's assignment so that you have time to prepare for our work on Luke's Passion Narrative.

11/29 Passion Narrative and Empty Tomb

Read: Luke 19:28-24:53

Gospel Parallels; note both similarities and differences; note what is found only in Luke

Salmon, ch 5

Sloyan, pp 1-61

Swanson, 134-146

Recommended: New Proclamation Year C 2007 Advent Through Holy Week
Pages 239-240 Passion Sunday (on reserve)

Prepare to Discuss: We have emphasized reading parts in relationship to the whole narrative and considered how the beginning of the story prepared us to read later parts. How does the Prologue prepare the reader for the Passion Narrative or Resurrection? How does the journey narrative lead to a different entry into Jerusalem than we see in the other gospels? How does the Emmaus story "fit" with other themes in Luke?

12/6 Wrap-up and Review

Reading backwards and forwards: reread Lk 1-2 and selected texts (TBA)

Luke-Acts and relating the two books

12/13 In class exam

The exam will ask you to write on two or three questions. You will have some choice. Use the syllabus as a review guide. There will not be anything on the exam that we have not covered in class. You will bring a Bible and you may bring a page of notes.

Guide for Coloring Gospel Parallels

Color the parallel texts using the following color code:

Underline in Red	words found in Mt, Mk, Lk
Underline in Blue	words found in Mt and Mk but not in Lk
Underline in Green	words found in Lk and Mk but not in Mt
Underline in Black	words found in Mt and Lk but not in Mk
Underline in Brown	words in Mk only
Underline in Yellow	words in Mt only
Underline in Orange	words in Lk only