

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Fall 2009**

Instructor: William Kurz, S.J.

Course #: THEO 2110

Sections: 901/101(Honors/Majors)

Course Title: **New Testament Selected Books: Synoptic Gospels and Acts**

Description:

(This course is for Honors and Theology Majors)

The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are the only two-volume work in the New Testament that continues the story of Jesus into the early church. Only Acts provides a framework for the isolated pieces of information about the origins of Christianity in NT letters. We shall review the major step from oral tradition to the first Gospel, Mark. We shall explain what Gospels are (using especially Mark and Luke) and how Luke-Acts continues the OT history of God's creating and saving his people. Besides using historical critical approaches to the Gospels and Acts and studying them as narratives with contemporary literary criticism, we will join the current revival of more explicitly theological biblical criticism with some reference to Church Fathers. We will also see how stories in Mark, Luke and Acts provide biblical models for, and how they can be applied to contemporary Christian living, since for Christians, Mark, Luke and Acts are also part of God's inspired Word to us today.

Most of our work will be EXEGESIS, involving extremely close reading and re-reading of Bible texts at home in preparation and together in class. Class preparation, faithful attendance and class contributions are of major importance since class-session format involves heavy use of teacher-student analysis of texts and discussion groups more than lecture. No previous Scripture courses are presupposed.

Grades will probably be based on:

- [10%] contributions to class interpretation (quality vs. quantity)
- [10% = 5% + 5%] ten brief quizzes for class preparation
- [10%] Exegetical outlined argument for thesis (preparation for final paper) 1-2 pages
- [20%] Midterm Test [25%] Final Exam
- [25%] Paper, 10-12 pages (minimum 6 pp. exegesis & 4 pp. personal synthesis & application to contemporary experience).

Required texts:

(always bring Bible to class. When doing Gospels, also bring Synopsis).

1. **Study BIBLE:** If you do not already have one, least expensive but good: *New American Bible (NAB, St. Joseph Medium Edition, paperback)*. All tests are open-Bible and open-synopsis, and quotations in questions are from *NAB*. (Two more expensive

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versions are the *Catholic Study Bible* and *St. Mary's Press College Study Bible* [both include New American Bible]).

2. Aland, K. ed., *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (American Bible Society, <http://www.bibles.com/>, Catalog #102706, ISBN 978-0-82670-500-6

plus the following paperbacks:

HOME READING (required and on quizzes & tests, but not needed in class):

- (3) David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, Donald Michie, *Mark as story: An introduction to the narrative of a Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN : Fortress Press, c1999).
- (4) Wm. Kurz, *Following Jesus: A Disciple's Guide to Luke and Acts* (Charis Books, 2003).
- (5) Wm. Kurz, *Reading the Bible as God's Own Story: A Catholic Approach for Bringing Scripture to Life* (Word Among Us, 2007)).