

## **New Testament 1: Gospels and Acts**

### **Syllabus for fall term 2018**

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### ***Student Learning Objectives***

1. Content: Know the content, including basic ideas, of the four NT Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.
2. Context: Understand historical and cultural context out of which, and into which, each of these documents was written.
3. Interpretation: Gain facility in applying historical-critical methods to these texts, including the comparison and contrasting of the Gospels with one another; this facility is to be demonstrated by exegetical exercises.
4. Application: Think through consequences of interpretation for teaching and preaching in the church today as well as in the past.

### ***Required Readings***

Every student should possess and use regularly the following:

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible (including the Apocrypha) in at least one of these:

*The HarperCollins Study Bible* (1997)

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (2018)

Kurt Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (United Bible Societies, 2010 or earlier)

This edition only, please—either the Greek-English or the English-only version; if you know any Greek, or think you might want to learn Greek, then get the Greek-English version. In any case, get Aland's edition, *not* something called *Gospel Parallels* or any other synopsis. If you're unsure, ask me.

M. E. Boring and F. B. Craddock, *The People's New Testament Commentary* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004)

Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament* (Baker Academic, 2009)

### ***Suggested Readings***

Besides NRSV, you should have (and consult regularly) two or three other English translations of the NT. Aland's Synopsis provides the text of the four Gospels in Revised Standard Version (RSV), but you should have the RSV of the whole Bible (including Apocrypha); RSV reveals the structure of the original languages more readily than NRSV, though NRSV is now the most widely used English translation in our churches. In addition, I recommend the Authorised (King James) Version, the New Jerusalem Bible, and the Revised English Bible. There are many others, all with their advantages and their shortcomings; sample as many as you can.

Articles on each Gospel and on Acts, and on the people and places and ideas mentioned in the biblical text, are provided in any Bible dictionary, but not all Bible dictionaries are created equal. The best (most recent, most reliable, most helpful) are these two multivolume sets, available in the reference section of the library:

*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*

*The New Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*

A handy one-volume Bible dictionary is this one:

Mark Allan Powell (ed.), *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (HarperOne, 2011)

In addition to the one-volume commentary by Boring and Craddock listed above, become familiar with this set:

*The New Interpreter's Bible* (**not** its predecessor, called simply *The Interpreter's Bible*)

Also useful:

*The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. A.-J. Levine and M. Z. Brettler, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford, 2017)

### ***Calendar of Class Meetings***

*Students are expected to come to each class meeting having read the material (both NT and secondary) and to be prepared to ask questions and to participate in discussion.*

*In what follows, the word “pericope” [not “periscope,” which is how word-processing programs sometimes “correct” it] means “section” or “passage,” and Aland’s Synopsis numbers these sections. The index in the back of Aland is a wonderful resource for seeing relationships between pericopes in different Gospels and the varying sequences in which they occur. Each pericope also has a (usually) helpful title, which of course is not part of the biblical text.*

18 August

Birth narratives; Aland, pericopes 1, 2-12

Krister Stendahl, “*Quis et Unde—Who and Whence? Matthew’s Christmas Gospel*”  
(to be distributed electronically in advance)

25 August

John the Baptist and the baptism and temptation of Jesus

Aland, pericopes 13-20

8 September

Call stories (Jesus, disciples); Aland, pericopes 21-34

Beginning of Jesus’s ministry; Aland, pericopes 35-49

22 September

Sermon on the Mount/Plain; Aland, pericopes 50-83

29 September

Jesus’s ministry in Galilee; Aland, pericopes 84-156

13 October

Passion predictions and Transfiguration; Aland, pericopes 157-173, 251-268

27 October

Jesus’s last journey (in Luke); Aland, pericopes 174-237

10 November

Jesus in Jerusalem; Aland, pericopes 230-250, 269-304

17 November

Jesus’s passion, crucifixion, and resurrection; Aland, pericopes 305-367

8 December

The Acts of the Apostles

C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (Harper, 1962)

**Written Assignments**

*Three exegetical papers are required, one each on a pronouncement story, a parable, and a conflict story. At least one of these pericopes should contain an Old Testament quotation or allusion, and at least one of these pericopes should be from John's Gospel. In addition, there will be a final essay examination at the end of the course. The mark attained on each of these assignments will be 25% of the final grade for the course. Details of how to write the exegesis papers will be provided, and due dates will be negotiated at the first class meeting.*