“The Scriptures are in fact, in any passage you care to choose, singing of Christ, provided we have ears that are capable of picking out the tune. The Lord opened the minds of the Apostles so that they understood the Scriptures. That he will open our minds too is our prayer.”

- Augustine of Hippo

Course Description and Outcomes
This course focuses on the content and message of the Gospels, as well as the theological perspectives of the Gospel writers. The practice of exegesis will be emphasized.

Students will be able to:
1. Understand the origin, message, and purpose of each Gospel.
2. Exegete this form of literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

Required Textbooks

Recommended Resources: Introductions / Lectionary Commentaries
**Recommended Resources: Individual Gospel Commentaries**


**Pre-Class Assignments**

*Pre-Class Assignments #1-4 should be posted in the “Assignments” section of the class’ Canvas site no later than June 1, 2018.*

**PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #1: Gospel Highlights** (8 pages)

1 – Read each of the four gospels slowly and in their entirety in the following order: Mark, Matthew, Luke, John.
2 – Choose two passages from each gospel that stood out to you during your reading.
3 – In two pages per gospel, write a brief description of both passages. The goal of this assignment is to do a careful reading of each story. This means paying specific attention to the details of your story and not focusing as much on doing theological analysis. A good description will answer the following questions:
   - Where in the gospel is it? What is the context? *(At the beginning of Jesus’s ministry? During Passion week? Does it happen after a confrontation with the Pharisees? etc)*
   - Who are the main characters in the narrative? *(Jesus, the disciples, Nicodemus, etc)*
   - What happens in the passage? Pay particular attention to the details, noting any phrases or ideas that are repeated or seem unusual or important.
   - What does the passage say about Jesus? *(For example, does it emphasize his divinity, his healing power, his humanity? Is Jesus compassionate, frustrated?)*

**PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #2: New Testament Worlds** (3 pages)

1 – Read Powell, chapter 1 (“The New Testament World”)
2 – In this chapter, Powell discusses several different factors that influenced the authors of the New Testament. In 2.5 pages, draw on Powell’s work and describe three aspects of each of the following “worlds”:
   - Jewish sects (pages 18-25)
   - Hellenism (pages 31-35)
   - Ancient Mediterranean Culture and Values (pages 41-45)
3 – At the end of your paper, write one paragraph on how understanding these worlds might help you better understand the gospels.
PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #3: Genre of the Gospels (2 pages)
Read Powell (pages 81-101) and Murphy (pages 1-42) and answer the following questions:

- What does the term “genre” mean? According to Powell, what is the likely genre of the gospels?
- What reasons does Powell give for arguing that the gospels should be read as an ancient biography?
- What are the differences between the gospels and other forms of ancient biography?

[Note: The list Powell gives on p. 82 should be read as a list of additional information about ancient biographies and the gospels, not as a list of all similarities or all differences. Please read that section carefully or it might trip you up.]

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #4: Your Questions (0.5 pages)
Submit 3 questions that you hope to have answered during our time together. These questions can be about anything in the gospels or from the secondary sources. These will help shape our conversations together during class.

In-Class Assignments

1) Quizzes
Quizzes will be given over each of the gospels at the beginning of the class. They will be open note, meaning any notes you took either from your reading of the secondary sources or during class can be used during the quiz. The point of these quizzes is to help you prepare for the final exam by helping you review throughout the week. Quiz questions will be similar to the type of questions you will find on the final.

2) In-Class Assignments
There will be several in-class assignments that we work on together in class. You will submit these to me at the end of each class. These will directly contribute to your participation grade in the course. The primary goal of these assignments, however, is to equip you with tools that you can use in your own study of the gospels.

3) Exegetical Worksheet
The Exegetical Worksheet is a 4-5 page guided analysis of a specific New Testament text. The goal of this assignment is to present you with a concrete method for researching a gospel text that could later be adapted to your own study of the New Testament. Ideally, your findings from the exegetical worksheet could then be used in your preaching, teaching, and other pastoral duties.

4) Final Exam
The final exam will come directly from the PowerPoints and our class discussions. It will include identification questions, multiple choice, and short essay questions.
Post-Class Assignments

The Post-Class Assignment should be posted in the “Assignments” section of the class’ Canvas site no later than August 17, 2018.

POST-CLASS ASSIGNMENT: Synopsis Assignment (3-4 pages)

1 – Analyze the passage, The Empty Tomb Pericope (will be distributed at the end of class), using the following key:
   o Blue = words found identically in all three Synoptic gospels
   o Yellow = words found identically in Matthew and Mark
   o Red = words found identically in Matthew and Luke
   o Green = words found identically in Mark and Luke

2 – Based on the analysis above, briefly reconstruct the core story that the three gospels share. Focus on including only the shared literary features and ideas and refrain from adding any extra details not in the texts.

3 – List and analyze the similarities and differences between the three accounts. Be sure to list and discuss both the similarities/differences. Note: a simple chart without further explanation will not suffice.

4 – Select one of the three accounts and consider why the author tells the story in the way that he does. What do they tell you about his conception of Jesus, other characters in the story, and so forth?

How Your Final Course Grade Is Determined

30% Class Attendance and participation, quizzes and in-class assignments
30% Timely and satisfactory completion of pre and post course work
15% Exegetical Worksheet
25% Final Exam

Grade Deduction Policy

Pre-class work must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on June 1, 2018.
Pre-class work received after the deadline will be subject to the late penalty schedule below:
- Pre-class work received between June 2-8 will receive a one-letter grade deduction.
- Pre-class work received between June 9-15 will receive a two-letter grade deduction.
- Students who have not submitted pre-class work by June 15 will be dropped from the class.

COS Grading Scale

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Guidelines for Written Assignments

- All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and on 8.5x11” paper.
- The font should be Times New Roman, 12 point.
- Margins should be 1” on all sides.
- All papers must include a page number and the student’s last name in the header or footer.
- Note the question you are answering at the beginning of each new section or page.
- All papers must be properly cited. Please use MLA formatting. This is the best website for learning more about MLA format: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/

Plagiarism Defined

“You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else’s words or ideas but fail to credit that person, leading your readers to think that those words are yours. In all fields, you plagiarize when you use a source’s words or ideas without citing that source. In most fields, you plagiarize even when you do credit the source but use its exact words without using quotation marks or block indentation” (201-202). Booth, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. The Craft of Research, Second Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Inclusive Language Covenant

The faculty of Emory Course of Study School has adopted a covenant statement encouraging inclusiveness in the use of language, as follows:

The Inclusive Language Covenant is designed to create a linguistic environment in which all students, staff, and faculty can grow in understanding and appreciating the rich diversity of God’s people. The COS faculty commits itself through continued discussion, reflection, and exploration to using language in such a way that we respond to the fullness of God’s presence among us as much by our choice of words as by our care for one another. Recognizing that our experience with inclusive language is an integral part of theological formation, we invite students and others to share as partners with us in this learning process.

We understand “covenant” more in terms of its biblical and theological meaning than in a legal or contractual context. Covenant signifies the common commitment of a community of faith in response to God’s revelation and in participation with one another. The values implied in the covenant have morally persuaded us to try to generate patterns of speech and behavior that bond the members of the community in mutual respect. We expect all members of the community to address issues of diversity constructively. The entire Inclusive Language Covenant can be found on the COS website, and you are encouraged to read the whole covenant.