

BT709 ADVANCED NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS I (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts)

Course: BT709 Advanced New Testament Synthesis I
Credit: Three credits
Semester: Summer 2026 Session 1
Dates: May 11 – June 26, 2026
Time: Tuesdays 6:00–9:00 p.m. (Central time)
Place: Microsoft Teams
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the historical backgrounds, arguments, biblical theology and interpretive issues of the four canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and the book of Acts. Students will critique the philosophy and methodology behind source criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism as related to the gospels. Students will do exegetical studies in the Greek text of these NT books.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

General Competencies to Be Achieved. The student will:

1. Explain the arguments of the following NT books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A 2, 4, 8)
2. Explain the various views on the authorship, recipients, date and place of writing and purposes of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts (PLO 2, 3, 5) (A 2, 4, 8) BT709
3. Identify the major interpretive problems for Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts and give possible solutions to them (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (A 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9)

Specific Competencies to Be Achieved. The student will:

1. Read and translate selected texts in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts in the Greek New Testament (PLO 1) (A 9)
2. Write exegetical outlines of four NT books (Matthew, Mark, John, and Acts) based upon the structural markers in the Greek New Testament (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A 2, 4, 8)
3. Critique the proposed purposes for Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts (PLO 3, 4, 5) (A 2, 4, 8)

4. Validate the correct interpretation of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts using the grammatical-historical hermeneutic (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (A 6, 7, 9)

5. Present a research paper to the class and answer questions related to the interpretation of a text selected from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (A 9)

TEXTBOOKS

The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

Green, Joel, ed. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. 2nd ed. The IVP Bible Dictionary Series. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2013. ISBN: 978-0830824564. Cost: \$44.22

Schnabel, Eckhard J. *Acts: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [ZECNT]*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. ISBN: 978-0310243670. Cost: \$43.99.

United Bible Society Greek New Testament. 5th Revised Edition. German Bible Society, 2014. ISBN: 9783438051165. Cost: \$42.91.

Wright, N. T. and Michael F. Bird. *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians*. ISBN: 978-0310499305. Cost: \$40.28

REQUIRED: ORIGINAL LANGUAGE BIBLE STUDY SOFTWARE (Accordance or Logos)

Students are required to have digital resources to engage Biblical study in the original languages, including but not limited to *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*, *Nestle Aland 28 (NA28)* – both including critical apparatus; *Septuaginta (LXX)*, a *Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG)* by Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich; *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT)* by Koehler and Baumgartner.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1: Read ten articles in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* and write a summary critique of each of the ten articles (100 points). See Assignments in Canvas for due date.

Assignment #2: Write a detailed exegetical outline of The Gospel According to Matthew. Make sure you use full sentences for each main point and subpoint. Each outline point should have a chapter and verse reference after the outline point. (100 points)

Assignment #3: Read the following sections in N. T. Wright's book *The New Testament In Its World*: "Reading the New Testament" (pages 38-85), "The World of Jesus and the Early Church" (pages 86-171) and "Jesus and the Victory of God" (pages 172-263). Write a summary critique of each of these sections in the book (100 points)

Assignment #4: Read ten more articles in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* and write a summary critique of each of these ten articles (100 points)

Assignment #5: Read "The Gospels and the Son of God" (pages 554-701) in the book *The New Testament and Its World* by N.T. Wright and write a summary critique of his views on each of the four gospels (100 points)

Assignment #6: Read through the book of Acts and 300 pages from the commentary on Acts by Schnabel. Type a review of the 300 pages read listing what you agree with and what you disagree with in the order of the chapter and verses given in the commentary. Write a list of what you agree with in Schnabel's commentary and what you disagree with. Be sure to give the exegetical reasons why you agree or disagree with his commentary for each section you choose to read (100 points)

Assignment #7: Give a 30 minute lecture on 5 verses from the Greek New Testament from one of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) or the book of Acts. You are encouraged to use PowerPoint for your lecture. Each student will present on a different text of scripture (first come, first served) (100 points). See Introductory module for an excellent example of this assignment by Carys Applebee.

Assignment #8: Write an exegetical research paper (25-30 pages double spaced and following Turabian style format) on a text from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John or Acts that is selected by you and approved by the professor. Present the results of your research in the last class. The exegetical research paper should include: your translation of the Greek text, context, exegetical outline and exegetical idea, your commentary explaining the meaning of the verses in context, biblical theology, textual criticism problem, applications and annotated bibliography of sources used in your research (300 points)

This paper should:

State the purpose and scope of the research

Reflect interaction with academic sources

Demonstrate exegetical rigor

Evaluate opposing views accurately

Validate your conclusions

Here are a couple of websites that are helpful in writing good research papers in New Testament studies:

Tavis Bohlinger, “How to Do New Testament Research,” @
<https://academic.logos.com/using-secondary-literature-in-nt-research/>

John Piper, “Guidelines for Writing a Research Paper in New Testament Exegesis,” @
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/guidelines-for-writing-a-research-paper-in-new-testament-exegesis>

POINTS AND FINAL GRADE

960-1000 points A

940-959 points A-

920-939 points B+

880-919 points B

860-879 points B-

0-859 points F

SCHEDULE

Week 1 Course welcome
 Introduction to the Gospels
 The Synoptic Problem

Week 2 The Gospel of Matthew
 Introduction
 Structure
 Argument
 Purpose
 Destination
 Theology
 Synthesis

Week 3 The Gospel of Mark
 Introduction
 Structure

Argument
Purpose
Destination
Theology
Synthesis

Week 4 The Gospel of Luke
Introduction
Structure
Argument
Purpose
Destination
Theology
Synthesis

Week 5 The Gospel of John
Introduction
Structure
Argument
Purpose
Destination
Theology
Synthesis

Week 6 The Gospel of John
Introduction
Structure
Argument
Purpose
Destination
Theology
Synthesis

Week 7 The Book of Acts
Introduction
Structure
Argument
Purpose
Destination
Theology
Synthesis

Week 8 Ph.D. Student Research Paper Presentations

NOTE: All adequately written work receives a B+ grade (this assumes good English and writing skills). Exceptional work (good English and writing skills) will receive a higher grade (A-, A). Less than adequate written work will receive a lower grade than B+.

HELP FOR STUDENTS

Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support.

The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu) is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for Calvary University students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.

EXPECTATIONS

Attend class in Microsoft Teams. Each PhD student is expected to be at every class on time. Make class attendance a priority.

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as copying any content without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person's or AI entity's ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. The use of AI generated content in student work is prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Any assignment that includes plagiarism will receive a zero (0) grade.

Use Turabian style for all research papers. All class papers must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 edition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Habermas, Gary. *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*. Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1996.
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Scroggie, W. Graham. *A Guide to the Gospels*. Tarrytown, New York: Fleming H. Revell.

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Wilkins, Michael and Moreland, J.P., eds. *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

Williams, Peter J. *Can We Trust the Gospels?* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2018.

Witherington, Ben. *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1997.

Witherington, Ben. *What Have They Done With Jesus?* New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here is a helpful article: “The Synoptic Problem,” by Dan Wallace (22 pages). Available here: <https://bible.org/article/synoptic-problem>

A helpful read: Stephen Travis, “Form Criticism,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, 153-64, ed. I. Howard Marshall. Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1977. Available here: https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/nt-interpretation/09_form-criticism_travis.pdf

Helpful read: John Piper, “Do We Have the Exact Words of Christ or a Paraphrase?” @ <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/do-we-have-the-exact-words-of-christ-or-a-paraphrase>.

Watch: Watch video by Andreas Köstenberger: <https://www.mbts.edu/2019/02/chapel-with-dr-andreas-kostenberger/>

This is a very helpful 40 minute video on the introduction to John’s Gospel and demonstrates how the highest level of scholarship get disseminated down to the sheep.

Think: Give serious thought to your final research paper!! Start gathering sources and begin reading!