

Module Title:	Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels
Module Code:	503 TJSG
Level:	5
Credit Rating:	20 Credits
Duration:	Student Learning Time: 200 hours
Teaching Hours:	40 Hours
Academic Responsibility:	Jude Winkler OFM Conv, SSL Joseph O'Hanlon PhD

Module Aims:

This module will engage students more closely with texts which, once written, became formative and normative in Christian theological discourse, historically understood and to encourage students to confront texts in discussion. To study the processes of the production of these texts and the strategies and tactics which each gospel espoused in order to enable students to grasp the theological nature of these documents, the richness of their content, and their tentative usefulness in any historical enterprise. The students will gain knowledge of key New Testament texts in the light of current interpretive procedures.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the module students should be able to:

1. appreciate the nature of Gospel study by way of understanding how, why and when, and where the documents were produced
2. understand the necessity for critical research in biblical study
3. develop analytical and literary skills through use of texts
4. critically engage with historical, theological and ecclesial matters which concern contemporary scholarship

Indicative Module Content:

This module will seek to identify that Christology which is peculiar to each of the Synoptic Gospels. The soteriological and ecclesiological consequences of Christological options will be explored in texts. Key texts will be examined in detail and, where appropriate, synoptic parallels. Having attempted to establish the environment out of which each gospel emerged (a delicate task which will alert students to the principles of historical research and the judgements required to balance possibilities), key Christological texts in each gospel will be examined and consequential kerygmatic strategies identified.

Learning and Teaching Strategies:

The basic format of presentation will be four weekly lectures systematically treating the subject matter as described in the Indicative Module Content. Students are given specific weekly reading assignments as well as directed toward extra-curricular reading proposed by the instructor. Research interests are quickly identified and tutorial sessions, depending on individual needs of the students, arranged for clarification and direction, inclusive of suggested extra-curricular reading. Within the classroom context of lectures, active participation of students in terms of questions and, especially, discussion is strongly encouraged as a primary way of developing analytical skills, critical thinking, and clarity of expression.

Assessment:

The module will be assessed by

- a written essay of not less than 2,500 words (50%),
- and a written paper treating primary as well as secondary sources according to the research interests of the student and not exceeding 2,500 words (50%).

Indicative Essay Titles:

1. "The synoptic gospels are primarily works of faith and their purpose entirely paraenetic. As such, they are more usefully characterised as 'theological fiction' rather than historical narratives." Critically discuss the issues involved in this statement.
2. Christology is the central concern of each of the synoptic gospels but, in each case, it is christology with a pastoral purpose. Select one of the synoptic gospels and outline and critically evaluate its christological concern and the pastoral purpose(s) which that concern serves.
3. How are the synoptic gospels' accounts of the miracles of Jesus to be understood?
4. "Christians invented their own Messiah". Considering the use of the term Messiah in the synoptic gospels, how would you evaluate this assertion?

Illustrative Bibliography

Achtemeier, P. J., (et al) (2001)	<i>Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology.</i>	Eerdmans
Brown, R. E. (1997)	<i>An Introduction to the New Testament.</i>	Doubleday.
Evan, Craig, A. (1989)	<i>Life of Jesus Research: An Annotated Bibliography.</i>	Brill.
Fitzmeyer, J. A. (1981)	<i>The Gospel According to Luke I-IX.</i>	Doubleday.
Green, J., B. (1997)	<i>The Gospel of Luke.</i>	Eerdmans.
Gundry, R. H. (1994)	<i>Matthew, Ed. 2,</i>	Eerdmans.
Luz, U. (1990) _____, (2001)	<i>MATTHEW 1-7, A Commentary. MATTHEW 8-20: A Commentary</i>	T&T Clark. Fortress Press
Marcus, J. (2000)	MARK 1-8.	Doubleday.
Moessner, D. P. ed. (1999)	<i>Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy.</i>	Trinity Press Int.
Moloney, F. J. (2002)	<i>The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary.</i>	Peabody, Hendrickson Pubs