

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

SYLLABUS AND COURSE INFORMATION

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS: MATTHEW
BIBL 658: FALL 2006
DR. IAN A. FAIR

I. COURSE STUDY METHODOLOGY

This course is a computer web based course taught via the Internet.

The student will be required to carefully follow the instructions laid out in this syllabus and stay in contact with the professor by e-mail.

The student will be expected to contact the professor every week by e-mail during the course of this semester.

Weekly assignments are posted in the course outline. These assignments must be completed by the required posted dates.

All late assignments will be penalized on letter grade.

We recommend that you begin by carefully reading this **Syllabus** to identify the **Course Information** that will be used for the study of this material. Pay special attention to the **Required and Suggested Reading**, and the weekly reading assignments.

Click on **Outline** in the menu to the left and survey the course outline. The Course Outline will provide links to **Notes** for the course.

We also recommend that you **Print the Web Pages** of this course and bind them into a **loose leaf folder** into which you can **add additional notes** that you may make during the course of your study. You may prefer rather to open a file on your computer into which you can scan or write additional notes. We recommend that you **personalize your notes** as much as possible.

Whenever you are advised to **Click on Links** be sure that you do so, especially to the **Glossary of Biblical and Theological Terms**.

Since this is a **Bible Course** we recommend that you **Read the Biblical Text** covered in each lesson several times while studying that section.

Be sure to **Complete Each Assignment** in the order in which they appear in the course, by the end of each week. E-mail the teacher should you need additional help. You will be required at certain stages of the study to e-mail the professor and engage in some discussion of certain vital lessons. Such Group Discussion Assignments are included in the course outline.

Discipline Yourself to work steadily through the course. You have **One Semester** in which to complete the study.

You will be required to stay in contact with the professor by e-mail according to the Outline Assignments, and you are encouraged to stay in contact with the professor as needs arise.

II. BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

In this study the teacher will be working out of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible and the Nestle-

Aland Greek text.

The student is encouraged to work out of the Bible translation with which he/she is most comfortable. We do, however, recommend any one of the following translations: The King James Version, the New King James Version, the American Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version, the New Revised Standard Version, and the New International Version.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is taught at the **graduate level** for students receiving credit towards a degree in the Graduate School of Theology of the College of Biblical Studies at Abilene Christian University.

The course includes an introduction to the study of the Synoptic Gospels, the origins of the New Testament Canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), the Synoptic Problem, Biblical Criticism, and other matters related to the study of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke).

The Course includes an Introduction to each of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), paying attention to redactional elements (the theological message), structure, and the theology of each of the Synoptic Gospels.

The bulk of the course is an exegetical (verse by verse) and theological study (the theological message Matthew wants us to know about Jesus. It will focus specifically on the theology of the Gospel of Matthew, making observation where relevant to the other Synoptic Gospels.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES

(See below at point VIII for Assessment)

To acquaint the student to the full range of Gospel studies.

To acquaint the student with the unique theology and structure of each of the Synoptic Gospels.

To introduce the student to an appropriate exegetical approach to Gospel interpretation.

To lead the student into a detailed study and knowledge of the theology of the Gospel of Matthew.

To explore the call to discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew.

To enable the student to integrate the theology of the Gospel of Matthew into personal life and ministry.

V. REQUIRED READING

Total Reading Pages:

Text Books: Hagner, 2 vols., 950 pp., Hare, 340 pp. Total pp. 1290.

Dictionary Articles: Anchor Bible Dictionary, 88 pp.

Journal Articles: 40 pp.

The following textbook readings are required for the course:

Donald A. Hagner, **Matthew 1-13**, and **Matthew 14-28** (2 vols.), Word Books, 1993, 1995 (A critical commentary on the text of Matthew.

Douglas R. A. Hare, **Matthew**, Interpretation, 1993. (This commentary was written for preachers and teachers.)

Additional Required Reading:

Read the following dictionary and journal articles:

"The Synoptic Problem," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

"Gospel Genre," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

"Gospels, Apocryphal," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

"Gospel of Matthew," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

"Gospel of Mark," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

"Luke-Acts," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

"Gospel of Thomas," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

"Apocalypses and Apocalypticism," **Anchor Bible Dictionary**. [Click Here](#)

James W. Thompson, "The Background and Function of the Beatitudes in Matthew and Luke," **Restoration Quarterly**, Vol. 41, Number 2, 1999.

[Click Here for Thompson Article](#)

You may read the above dictionary articles in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* if you do not have the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, but the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* articles are preferred.

Required Internet Journal/Article Research:

Each student is required to search the Internet (See Internet Research Links in the Course Menu) and to report on 3 journal or other significant articles covering the following list of topics (minimum 3 article reports):

Gospel of Thomas
Apocalyptic Gospels
Matthean Priority

The report is to be sent as an e-mail message and must be of at least 200 words in length. The report should comment on the content of the article and its value for Synoptic Studies.

Reading assignments for each week are made in the Course Outline.

VI. SUGGESTED READING

The following books and readings are suggested additional background reading.

The course study, however, is not dependent on the reading of these suggested books.

The first two books marked by an * are not advanced studies, and are useful recommendations to bible class teachers.

The last four are for advanced reading.

Helpful Reading for the Course

Read the *Gospel of Matthew* through twice before you begin the course study proper.

* Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992.

* R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Tyndale Commentaries, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985.

David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1972.

Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew*, Fortress Press, 1986

E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, Fortress, 1985.

VII. GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

For a detailed and comprehensive bibliography on the Gospel of Matthew see the following commentaries:

Donald Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*: Word Biblical Commentary, 1993

Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Wm. B. Eerdmans 1999.

General Bibliography:

Donald Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, 1993.

Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, 1995.

David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Eerdmans, 1972.

Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation, 1993.

Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew*, Fortress Press, 1986.

Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, Fortress Press, 1975.

Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Wm. B. Eerdmans,

1992.

- R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Tyndale Commentaries, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985.
- John R. W. Stott, *Christian Counter-Culture*, IVP, 1978 (Now published as *The Sermon the Mount*.) This is an excellent study on the Sermon.
- R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, Brill 1967 (The product of Gundry's doctoral studies. An excellent resource to Matthean studies).
- R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, Eerdmans, 1982.
- E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, Fortress, 1985.
- W. D. Davies and D. C. Allen, Jr., *A Critical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, ICC, 3 vols., 1988, 1981.
- R. H. Mounce, *Matthew*, NIBC, Hendriksen, 1991.
- Joseph A Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, The Anchor Bible, 1981. (An excellent commentary and comparative work to the study of The Gospel of Matthew.)
- Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke, X-XXIV*, The Anchor Bible, 1985. (An excellent commentary and comparative work to the study of The Gospel of Matthew.)

VIII. OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Student learning and comprehension of the content and theology of the course will be measured by assignments, tests and a final exam. Students will be required at certain points in the course to respond (reflective responses) by e-mail to the materials covered in a specific section of study. The assignments, tests, exams, and reflective responses will be graded and recorded in the student's grade book.

OBJECTIVE	ASSESSMENT
1. To acquaint the student to the full range of Gospel studies.	1. Regular assignments
2. To acquaint the student with the unique theology and structure of each of the Synoptic Gospels.	2. Assignments on each Gospel, e-mail discussion with faculty.
3. To introduce the student to an appropriate exegetical approach to Gospel interpretation.	3. Assignments, e-mail discussion and discussion groups with students and faculty.
4. To lead the student into a detailed study and knowledge of the theology of the Gospel of Matthew.	4. Assignments, e-mail discussion and discussion groups with students and faculty .
5. To explore the call to discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew.	5. E-mail discussion and discussion groups with students and faculty.
6. To enable the student to integrate the theology of the Gospel of Mathew into personal life and ministry.	6. Assignments, discussion group with students and faculty and a final integrative paper.

IX. COURSE PROGRESS

Since this course is a partially self guided course, the student must be disciplined enough to work systematically and regularly through the course. All reading and other assignments must be completed by the assigned dates. Failure to do so will result in a loss of one grade point for each late assignment. The student has one semester in which to complete the course.

The professor will at strategic points insert a no notes assignment in addition to those listed in the Course Outline.

X. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT

According to the schedule assigned the student will present to the professor an integrative paper of approximately 3000 words in which the student will demonstrate a knowledge of the theology of The Gospel of Matthew and an understanding of how this theology will integrate with the student's personal life and ministry. In other words, the student must reflect an understanding of the theology of Matthew and then demonstrate how this theology impacts life and ministry. The professor is not so much interested in a long paper on the theology of Matthew, merely two pages should be adequate for a summary of the theology. The paper will concentrate on how this theology impacts the student's life and ministry.

The paper will be presented as an attachment to an e-mail addressed to the professor. The paper must be in Microsoft Word. If this presents any problems then please contact the professor. The paper must include the student's name, title, and pagination. Footnotes or endnotes may be included, but since this is a personal reflection and integrative paper, not a research paper, footnotes and endnotes are not mandatory.

XI. GRADES AND GRADING POLICY


The final grade will be based on the following scale:

- Assignments: 30% of grade
- Final exam: 30 % of grade
- Integrative Paper: 30% of grade
- Discussion Page: 10% of grade

Grades will be posted on secure web pages (username and password protected) to which only the student and faculty will have access.

Grades will be awarded according to the following scale:

- A = 90%+ Excellent work
- B = 80%+ Good work
- C = 70%+ Acceptable work
- D = 60%+ Poor work
- F = 59%- Failing work

All late assignments, exams, and papers will be penalized by one letter grade. No exceptions to this rule! 

XII. THE TEACHERS PHONE NUMBER AND INTERNET ADDRESSES

- Home Phone: (970)259-4781
- Cell phone: (970)903-4356 (Please use only when I am away from home.)
- E-Mail: fair@animas.net
- Web: <http://www.centerce.org/BIBL658/Matthew658Home.htm>

XVII. RESEARCH RESOURCES

Click on Internet Research Links in the Menu of the Internet course to go to an exhaustive list of Internet Research links.

XVIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

The Internet course includes a detailed list of weekly reading and assignments.

- Week 1** Introduction to the Course
 - The Synoptic Gospels
 - The Gospels in the Life of the Church
 - The Nature and Purpose of the Gospels
- Week 2** Biblical Criticism and the Gospels
 - The Synoptic Problem
 - The Historical Jesus
 - Reading and Research Assignment #4 on Biblical Criticism and the Synoptic Problem
- Week 3** Synoptic Gospel Introductions:

- Introduction to Mark
- Introduction to Luke
- Week 4** Introduction to Matthew
- Advanced Introduction
- Preview Literary Structure
- Week 5** Matt 1
- Matt 2-3
- Week 6** Matt 4
- Week 7** Matt 5-7 The Sermon on the Mount
- Matt 8-10, The Limited Commission
- Week 8** Matt 11-12
- Week 9** Matt 13 Kingdom Parables
- Week 10** Matt 14-16
- Matt 17-18 The Christian Community
- Theological Reflection Assignment**
- Week 11** Matt 19-22
- Week 12** Matt 23-25 The Destruction of Jerusalem
- Week 13** Matt 26
- Matt 27-28
- Week 14 Review**
- Final Exam**