



# ST ANDREW'S GREEK ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

## B7253A The Four Gospels

---



## Semester One, 2022

### *Teaching Staff:*

Lecturer:

Associate Professor Margaret Beirne

Phone:

0418 682 133

Email:

[margaret.beirne@rscoffice.com](mailto:margaret.beirne@rscoffice.com)

## **B7253A The Four Gospels**

**Semester One, 2022**

<b>Credit value:</b>	9 credit points
<b>Mode of delivery:</b>	Face to face weekly attendance
<b>Pre-requisite unit:</b>	B7150A Introduction to the New Testament
<b>Excluded unit:</b>	B9253 Interpreting the Four Gospels

---

<b>Scheduled times and Venues:</b>	Wednesdays, 1.30 – 4.30, SAGOTC classroom
<b>Workload:</b>	Weeks in Teaching Session: 12 weeks
	Timetabled hours/week: 3 hours class; 8 hours study

---

### **Curriculum Objectives**

This course unit *The Four Gospels* builds on any introductory course unit in Biblical Studies and contributes towards the sub-major sequence in Biblical Studies. It enables students to develop the ability to research in Biblical Studies through reading the four New Testament Gospels in the light of relevant contemporary scholarly literature and accepted exegetical methodologies.

---

### **Learning Outcomes & Threshold Concepts**

At the end of this course unit, students should be able to:

1. Interpret the way that the historical, socio-cultural, and religious background of the New Testament period influenced the development of each of the four Gospels
2. Identify the principal literary forms and theological themes of the four Gospels of the New Testament to show how they communicate their theological content.
3. Exegete selected passages from the four Gospels using an accepted methodology.
4. Integrate secondary literature on the four Gospels to interpret selected Gospel passages or themes.
5. Apply insights gained from the critical study of the four Gospels to contemporary Christian preaching, teaching, and spirituality.

### **Learning Activities**

The usual pattern for each three-hour session will include

- Lecture, presenting the content of the week's topic
- Associated discussion and note-taking
- Audio-visual supplements
- Workshopping of related skills including exegetical exercises
- Student contributions from set readings

## Outline of weekly topics

<b>Week 1</b> <b>21 Feb</b>	Introduction to the course unit; the Gospel genre, its development; the differences between the four Gospels; the foundation of the Gospels in the person, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
<b>Week 2</b> <b>28 Feb</b>	Review of introductory New Testament course unit: Palestine at the time of Jesus; historical-political situation; cultural and religious background of the people and places in the Gospels
<b>Week 3</b> <b>7 March</b>	Gospel of Mark. Author, date, and place. The social and religious context of Mark's community and the Gospel's purpose. Literary structure, outline, stylistic features.
<b>Week 4</b> <b>14 March</b>	Review of exegetical approaches to the Gospels; exegetical exercises on selected passages from the Gospel. Markan Christology and discipleship.
<b>21 – 25 March      Non-teaching week</b>	
<b>Week 5</b> <b>28 March</b>	Gospel of Matthew. Author, date, and place; the social and religious context of Matthew's community. Structure, outline, and stylistic features of the Gospel. Relationship between the Gospel's structure and Matthew's Christology.
<b>Week 6</b> <b>4 April</b>	Use of <i>Gospel Parallels</i> in exegesis of Mt and Lk. "Fulfilment quotations". Exegetical exercises on selected passages. Kingdom of heaven; the Church.
<b>Week 7</b> <b>11 April</b>	Gospel of Luke; authorship, historical context. Luke's own statement of the Gospel's purpose; the Lukan community; Literary structure, style; exegetical exercises on passages from the Gospel.
<b>15 April to 1 May      Mid-semester Recess</b>	
<b>Week 8</b> <b>2 May</b>	Luke's Christology. Key themes: Universal salvation: Gentile and Jew; rich and and poor; the Holy Spirit; Mary, the <i>Theotokos</i> ; forgiveness; Lukan parables.
<b>Week 9</b> <b>9 May</b>	Gospel of John: authorship, historical context, purpose, literary structure and distinctive features; the Johannine community; the Beloved Disciple; comparison with the Synoptics; use of the <i>Synopsis</i> ; exegetical exercise.
<b>Week 10</b> <b>16 May</b>	Johannine Christology. Other Johannine theological themes: discipleship; 'believing'; the love commandment; the role of characters.
<b>Week 11</b> <b>23 May</b>	Christologies of the Four Gospels. Case study: the Resurrection narratives: similarities and differences; the Risen Jesus. Application: the Gospel readings, Sundays after Pascha.
<b>Week 12</b> <b>30 May</b>	Patristic exegesis of the Gospels; the unique value of Patristic exegesis; the apostolic fathers and apologists; from Origen to Nicaea; Nicaea to Chalcedon; the Cappadocians; Latin fathers.

## Recommended References

- Beirne, Margaret. "Breathing with Both Lungs: Bringing East and West Together in Biblical Scholarship", *Phronema* 32(2), 2017, 31-48.
- Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*. ed. Francis J. Moloney. New York: Doubleday, 2003.
- Danove, Paul L. *Theology of the Gospel of Mark: A Semantic, Narrative, and Rhetorical Study of the Characterisation of God*. London UK: T&T Clark, 2019.
- Farley, Lawrence R. *The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor*. Chesterton, IN: Conciliar Press, 2010.
- France, Robert. T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2007.
- Harrington, Daniel J. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Sacra Pagina series I. Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2007.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church: The Challenge of Luke-Acts to Contemporary Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of Matthew: a social-rhetorical commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2009.
- Koester, Craig R., ed. *Portraits of Jesus in the Gospel of John: A Christological Spectrum*. London, UK; New York, NY: T&T Clark, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2019.
- Lee, Dorothy A. *The Gospels Speak: Addressing Life's Questions*. New York: Paulist Press, 2017.
- May, Jordan D. 'The Four Pillars: The Fourfold Gospel before the time of Irenaeus'. *Trinity Journal* 30NS (2009), 67-79.
- Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2012.
- Morrison, Gregg S. *The turning Point in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Markan Christology*. Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2014.
- Mullins, Michael, *The Gospel of Luke: a commentary*. Dublin: Columbia Press, 2010.
- Nolland, John. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2006.
- O'Collins, Gerald. *Christology: A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Throckmorton, Burton H. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. 5th ed. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1992.
- Trakatellis, Demetrios, 'The Four Gospels: Text as Interpretation'. *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 47:1-4, 2002, 101-110.

## Assessment

Type of Assessment Task	Value (%)	Date due	Unit Learning Outcome(s) assessed
<b>Critical Review</b>	20%	Monday 21 March 2022	Outcomes 1, 4
<b>Exegetical Essay</b>	40%	Monday 2 May 2022	Outcomes 2, 3, 4
<b>Thematic essay</b>	40%	Wednesday 8 June 2022	Outcomes 2, 4, 5

### Detailed information on assessment tasks and assessment standards

#### 1. Critical Review (1,000 words)

This task centres on the Gospel according to Mark and is in three parts.

- (1) Describe the situation of the evangelist Mark and his community. You will find the three excerpts provided in Moodle Week 1 helpful for this part.
- (2) Using the Gospel account itself, explain how the evangelist treats the theme of suffering and discipleship in the central section Mark 8:27-10:52 (no other references required for this part).
- (3) Complete your paper with a brief comment on how the situation you described in (1) has affected the way in which the evangelist treats the topic of suffering and discipleship in your response to part (2).

#### 2. Exegetical essay (2,000 words)

##### Write a critical exegetical essay on Matthew 21:1-9 (NRSV)

The primary focus of your exegetical essay is the Gospel text itself. Follow the method in the suggested outline practised in class and contained in the lecture notes. Presentation is to be a formal essay with critical references to at least five commentaries and scholarly articles, footnotes, and bibliography, including those listed in Moodle Week 4.

#### 3. Thematic essay (2,000 words)

Write an essay of approximately 1,500 words on the topic:  
“The poor and the marginalised in the Gospel according to Luke”

The thematic essay will include identifying and interpreting select passages from the Gospel of Luke on this topic. Conclude with some reflections on how what you have written might apply to the contemporary needs of humanity within the church and/or more broadly.

You will find some key examples of relevant passages in your lecture notes for Week 8; you may also include further examples from your own reading of the Gospel.

## **Course Unit Standards**

The Grading System for assessment tasks in all coursework units was revised in December 2011 and is outlined in the SCD Handbook, pp.82-85.

---

## **Course Unit Revision**

The learning activities, learning resources, and assessment details were thoroughly revised as at 13 December 2021, and updated 14 February 2022.

---

## **Extension Policy**

Students must submit all assignments by the due dates set by the lecturer and published in the course unit profiles.

---

## **Late Penalty**

Late assignments without an approved extension will attract an automatic penalty deduction of 5% of the marks available for the item of assessment for every day (including weekends and holidays), or part thereof, beyond the date and time of submission (or any extension granted).

Assignments submitted without an approved extension beyond 10 days after the due date will receive a zero mark and NOT be annotated by the lecturer.

---

## **Grounds for Extension**

An extension of an assignment's due date may be granted on the following grounds: medical illness (certified by Medical Certificate); extreme hardship; and compassionate grounds. In such cases an extension of up to 28 days may be granted without penalty but only if requested before the assignment due date. The student should submit an "Application for Extension" including supporting documentation to the Member Institution for authorising and signing by the Lecturer / Registrar /Academic Secretary prior to the due date. The student will then be informed of the result of the request.

In extreme cases, extensions beyond 28 days may be granted. Such extensions must be applied for in writing, including supporting documentation, to the Member Institution setting out the extreme circumstances. The appropriate Member Institution's committee will consider such an unusual extension and notify the student of the outcome in writing.

If the unit assessment includes an examination and an extension is granted arrangements will be made for an alternative examination to be given to the student within the extension period.

---

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use or paraphrasing of another person's work, and the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. For more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct refer to the [SCD Handbook](#).

---

## **Intellectual Property**

The Course Unit Outline from which this Course Unit Booklet is derived is the property of the Sydney College of Divinity. The particular interpretation, amplification, and extension of the Course Unit Outline that expresses the theological values of the MI and meets the needs of its stakeholder are the property of the Member Institution.