

COURSE 4: HARKINS, SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Report

Final Report for the AAAS/ Science for Seminaries Grant

Respectfully submitted by Angela Kim Harkins, Associate Professor of New Testament

December 2, 2022

In fall 2021, I revised my course on the Synoptic Gospels (TMNT 7005-01) to include readings and activities that expose students to the intersection of science and theology (see attached syllabus with highlighted areas). This is a content-rich Core course designed primarily for students who are preparing for a professional degree in ministry (M.Div.), either as a lay ministry or as an ordained minister. The course is also open to students who have an academic interest in the subject matter. Eighteen students were enrolled in the course.

My course was enriched in two ways: (1) by introducing interdisciplinary science-for-seminaries readings and (2) by designing opportunities for students to discuss these readings in small groups and Discussion Boards. In the final course evaluations, one student wrote:

"The Science for Seminaries information was focused on just the right amount. It didn't take away from the course itself but did give an additional perspective that was included in the class."

1. Introducing Science-for-seminaries Readings:

Readings that introduced science-for-seminaries concepts and teachings were strategically spaced throughout the semester at weeks 2, 3, 7, 11, 12. Foundational readings like Joel Green's discussion of the human person introduced concepts of the human person that we returned to again and again during

our discussions of healings in the Gospels. Students were invited to discuss the readings in small groups and to summarize and share key points of interest for them in plenary discussion sessions. A select number of science-for-seminaries readings were used in required Discussion Board activities.

- **Week 2, Karen Choi, "Neuroplasticity and Spiritual Formation: Changing Brain Structure and Core Beliefs through Mindfulness and Scripture Meditation/ Reflection," *Neuroscience and Christian Formation* (2016).**
 - Discussion Board Prompt: Compare and contrast the description of mindfulness in Karen Choi's essay (pp. 46-47) with your own experiences of prayer and meditation—are there specific practices of prayer or meditation that you find helpful for cultivating a heightened awareness of the mind and body? Reflect on your experience of reading the Gospel of Mark for today and compare that with listening to the Gospel of Mark (McCowan or McLean). Is listening or reading the Gospel more helpful for your personal meditation on that Gospel. Please describe how you found the two different experiences.
- **Week 3, Joel B. Green, "The Bible, the Natural Sciences and the Human Person," in *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 1-34.**
 - I was able to build on the comments from the discussion board and in-class discussion of Choi's essay, to introduce the reading by Joel B. Green, "The Bible, the Natural Sciences and the Human Person," in *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (2008), which helped to frame our discussion of hermeneutics and the human person. I returned several times to Green's essay in our subsequent discussions of healing passages in the Gospels during the weeks that followed.
- **Week 7, Glenna Andrews, "How Neuroscience Informs Teaching," *Neuroscience and Christian Formation* (2016).**
 - Discussion Board Prompt: Compare and contrast the description of learning and formation in Glenna Andrews's essay (pp. 24-25) and her description of learning interference (pp. 27-28) with your own experiences of learning and formation. Reflect on your own learning experiences and what made those experiences meaningful? In these passages about Jesus teaching, describe how you vividly imagine Jesus as he is teaching the disciples or crowds? How do you imagine Jesus as Teacher? How does he express his emotions? How do you imagine the experience of being with Jesus as he is teaching? How might Andrews's essay shape the way you teach or preach in your future ministry?
- **Week 11, Brad D. Strawn and Warren S. Brown's essay, "Christian Education as Embodied and Embedded Virtue Formation," *Neuroscience and Christian Formation* (2016).**
 - Discussion Board Prompt: Compare and contrast the description of learning and formation in Brad D. Strawn and Warren S. Brown, "Christian Education as Embodied and Embedded Virtue Formation," pp. 87-97. Compare and contrast the "dualists models of persons" (p. 88-89) with the "emergent models of personhood" (pp. 89-91). How do these models map onto your own experiences as a person of faith? How might this knowledge influence how you plan to teach or preach in your future ministry?
- **Week 12, Tanya Luhrmann, "Lord, Teach Us to Pray," *When God Talks Back* (2012), with the following reading prompts: Please answer the following discussion questions for today's class: What is the distinction between apophatic and kataphatic prayer according to Luhrmann? What**

examples of each does Luhrmann offer? What is the role of imagination in these two different forms of prayer? Do you find that your experience of prayer is more like one than the other?

2. Designing Opportunities for Teaching and Discussing the Readings: Small groups and Discussion Boards

I spent class time making sure that students understood each of the science-for-seminaries readings by inviting them to identify the major ideas and any salient points that interested them. For the three chapters from the *Neuroscience and Christian Formation* book, I also asked the students to discuss the questions that are provided at the end of each chapter in small groups of 2 or 3.

Because small group discussion does not always give students time or space to reflect or engage all voices, students also had the opportunity to use the Discussion Board from the course management system to process and engage these ideas even further. In these discussion boards, students were asked to post and to give a thoughtful response to another post. These Discussion Board prompts were always worded in such a way as to invite students to apply and reflect on how the concepts from the reading might transform how they understand their future work in ministry. Having a written record of the student reflections allows me to see how much they were able to apply the learning from the science-for-seminaries readings to their ministry work.

I was glad to be a part of this grant and found that the students were quite receptive to the teachings that were part of the science-for-seminaries revisions.

Syllabus

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

TMNT 7005-01; Fall 2021; Simboli 110

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00-9:20 AM

Dr. Angela Kim Harkins; Associate Professor of New Testament

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Office hours in Simboli 321 immediately after class or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The New Testament has four Gospels, three of which share a common view of Jesus' life and ministry, his passion and death. These three Gospels are Matthew, Mark, and Luke and are known as the Synoptic Gospels. Our study of the Synoptic Gospels will examine their historical context within late Second Temple Judaism, the distinctive literary features of each Gospel, and their distinct theological perspectives. This course will introduce students to the 'synoptic problem,' a way of referring to the scholarly investigation into how these three Gospels are related to one another. Students will use a synopsis (parallel Gospel text) and discuss common solutions to the synoptic problem. This course will discuss how the differently-abled body is presented in the Gospel texts and how these passages can be imagined and actualized for readers and hearers of the Gospels today.

This semester our Synoptic Gospels course is part of the *Science for Seminaries* grant, thus there will be an additional focus on integrating the mind and the body as we think about how the Gospels present Jesus' ministry of healing. We will use the insights from cognitive science to think about how the Gospel narratives invite readers to imagine and mentally enact the scenes of healing that are being described.

COURSE GOALS:

Learning is an ongoing process of formation. The course material has been chosen to contribute to the academic formation of future leaders in service to the Church and the world who have

- The confidence to read and interpret the Synoptic Gospels and the ability to teach and preach these texts appropriately in an ecclesial setting.
- The ability to discern how contemporary biblical scholarship relates to faith commitments.
- The awareness that we have a responsibility to read and interpret the Christian Scriptures in a post-Holocaust context and in an increasingly religiously-diverse world. As ministers in the Catholic Church, we personal responsibility to confront the anti-Jewish language found in the Gospels.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND READINGS:

- Study Bible. Even though we will consult a synopsis (see below), students are also advised to read the Gospels continuously in a Bible. Please do not rely on an electronic version. The Catholic Study Bible (NABRE) is recommended for its Reading Guide. Students may also use any study Bible that uses the NRSV translation: The New Oxford Annotated Study Bible with Apocrypha, The HarperCollins Study Bible, or the Jewish Annotated New Testament.
- A synopsis is required for this course. The bookstore has ordered Throckmorton and our reading assignments will be based on this edition: Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. NRSV version; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992. Students may also use Nestle Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. Revised Standard Version, American Bible Society, 2010.
- Richard B. Hays. *Reading Backwards*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014. Paperback.
- Louise J. Lawrence. *Sense and Stigma in the Gospels: Depictions of Sensory-Disabled Characters*. Oxford University Press, 2013. Paperback.

Please bring the physical readings and books with you to class. *Because laptops can be a distraction to you and to those around you, please do not use your laptops in class. A flat kindle is permitted. Thank you for respecting this course policy.* If you would like to have a copy of the readings printed for you, I can arrange for this if you let me know (angela.harkins@bc.edu) by the end of Week 1.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Content, Skills, and Appreciation.

Objective 1: Gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in their first century historical context. This includes . . .

- reading each synoptic Gospel with comprehension. This means understanding its literary characteristics, historical context, and theological content.
- understanding each synoptic Gospel within its contemporary contexts of Second Temple Judaism and emerging Christianity.

Objective 2: Develop skills in analyzing and critically evaluating ideas and methodological approaches associated with the study of the Synoptic Gospels. This includes the ability to . . .

- understand and apply discipline-specific methods to the study of the Synoptic Gospels and to recognize how discipline-specific methods intersect with ecclesial commitments;

to see the value and to discern the benefits and limitations of historical-critical approaches.

- draw out the relevance of scholarly approaches for one's own ministry; to build bridges between the academic and pastoral understandings of the NT.
- judiciously use reliable tools of biblical exegesis for teaching, preaching, study, and spiritual formation (knowing the differences between major commentaries, journal articles, ATLA Religion Database).

Objective 3: Develop skills in reading, actualizing Scripture, reflective writing, and mindfulness that are useful in ministry. This includes the ability to . . .

- think about the Scriptures as an encounter with the living God.
- imaginatively actualize the Scriptures in a 21st c. post-Holocaust international context, and to recognize one's personal responsibility to confront the anti-Jewish language found in the Gospels.
- articulate ideas clearly in writing and oral presentation that are respectful and open to interreligious and ecumenical engagement.
- situate the Gospels within the religious and spiritual practices of various living communities of faith today in a way that integrates the soul, mind, and body.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Engagement with the Course Materials (20%): Students are asked to prepare for class by reading the assigned materials with comprehension and by being thoughtful and respectful contributors to our conversation. As a way of facilitating our mindful presence in the class and to one another, please refrain from using electronics in class (laptops, cell phones). Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and to bring those readings to class with them. Both the quality and consistency of in-class contributions and attendance will be factors in determining the final grade.

- **In-class Contributions:** The STM is an academic context that values both Theology *and* Ministry. This classroom is a space where students practice the virtues that are needed in ministry: kindness, honesty, courage, trust, generosity, respectful and empathic listening to your classmates and the professor. Each student is expected to contribute actively to the formation of a positive and supportive classroom environment. Students are expected to treat all people with respect and dignity by referring to your colleagues by name, interacting positively with the contributions of others, encouraging and building-up your colleagues, and listening attentively and empathically to whomever is speaking. Please strive to participate in positive ways to create a professional environment that will facilitate learning, keeping in mind that our goal is to keep the discussion at a high-level with an eye on quality and not quantity of contributions. If you are normally talkative, please be considerate of your peers and try to hold back until everyone has had a chance to speak. Be mindful to keep comments 'on-topic' such that they advance the learning aims of the course and the specific content goals for each class meeting. *Contributions that directly demonstrate your reading and preparation of the primary and secondary texts are highly valued.*

- **Self-assessment:** At the end of the semester, each student will be expected to give a written self-evaluation of how he/she contributed to the in-class experience of the course materials. This is a formative ungraded exercise and is marked only as complete/incomplete. This formative essay is due on Canvas one week after our last class meeting on Dec. 14, 2021.
- **Head, Heart, and Hands Essay:** Please submit one short introductory essay that describes the following three things about you: (1) *Head:* What is your academic background in the study of Theology? In the study of the Scriptures? What specific questions do you bring to the study of the Synoptic Gospels? What are your expectations for this course? (2) *Heart:* What are you passionate about with respect to the study of Theology? What compelled you to come to the STM to pursue further studies in Theology? (3) *Hands:* What were you doing prior to coming to the STM? Briefly describe your past and present life experiences outside the classroom that give insight into who you are. What specific experiences have you had that have led you to this point in your life, to prepare for a future in teaching or in ministry in the church? What do you identify as your strengths in teaching or in ministry? What else should I know about you that will assist me in guiding your learning experience? This is a formative ungraded exercise and is marked only as complete/incomplete. This formative essay may be submitted at any time prior to the Drop/Add deadline, Sept. 8, 2021. Please upload this to Canvas.
- **Contemplative Practice:** This course has a contemplative component that focuses on cultivating the *practice of slow reading and contemplation*. Each class will begin with a structured in-class contemplative practice related to one of the assigned Gospel passages. Please come to class on time so that you do not disturb your colleagues. This is an ungraded formative exercise that will take approximately 5 minutes.
 - *In-class Contemplative Practice:* During this practice, some of the following questions may be used to guide your *imaginative reflection* on the biblical text: concretely visualize the gestures, tone of voice, and postures of the characters in the biblical passage. Use your imagination to extend and complete the scene in your mind. Does changing any of the details bring to light new insights about the text? What kind of emotions do you think the characters in the passage are experiencing; what kind of emotions are stirred within you by this passage? What more might you add to the words of the individuals in the Gospel passage? Can you imagine how changing the implied reader's social location, gender, ethnicity might transform how this Gospel passage is heard? What more do you gain from the passage by imagining yourself within the biblical scene—What do you See? Hear? Smell? Taste? Touch? How is movement taking place in this scene? What does this passage reveal to you about the power of God?
 - *One-page Reflections:* Students may choose any two reflections to develop into a formal one-page reflection or into a formal homily. Upload your first reflection on Canvas by 5pm on Friday, of week 7 (Oct. 15), and the second one by 5pm on Friday of week 14 (Dec. 3).
 - *Peer Review:* Once all of the reflections are submitted, the Canvas system will shuffle them and randomly assign a peer reviewer. Peer reviews are not anonymous. Reviews should offer one or two brief comments that build on or otherwise extend

the thoughts found in the reflection. Reviews can also offer one question for further thought. Please keep these review comments brief. Reviews should be completed within one week.

- **Discussion Board (Canvas) (10%):** This course has five Discussion Boards that allow you to engage aspects of the third learning objective. Some of these are directly connected to the *Science and Seminaries* grant. The discussion prompt will ask you to think about a specific article in relation to our discussion of the Synoptic Gospels. For each Discussion Board, students should enter a post and offer a constructive reply to someone else's post. These discussion boards will be open for a fixed number of days and each has a specific prompt.
 - #1 will open on Tues., Sept. 7 at 12:00 PM and close on Wed., Sept. 15 at 5:00 PM.
 - #2 will open on Thurs., Oct. 14 at 12 noon and close on Fri., Oct. 22 at 5 PM.
 - #3 will open on Thurs., Nov. 11 at 12 noon and close on Fri., Nov. 19 at 5:00 PM.
 - #4 will open on Thurs., Dec. 2 at noon and closes on Fri., Dec. 10 at 5:00 PM.
 - #5 will open on Tues., Dec. 7 at 12 noon and close on Wed., Dec. 15 at 5:00 PM.
- **Two critical summaries (10% each; 20% total).** All students should complete two critical summaries, one of which must be of a chapter from Louise Lawrence's book. You may choose from chs. 2, 3, 4, or 5. A second summary should be completed on any other secondary reading that it is designated as a possible option in the syllabus. Your critical summary must be submitted on the day prior to our discussion of the reading. Please do not submit more than one critical summary per week. Please complete both critical summaries by Nov. 18. Each critical summary should be one-page in length (one-sided), single-spaced, 12 pt. font.
 - **Format:** Please include the following elements: (1) give the full bibliographic details of the essay or chapter that you are treating at the top of the paper using one of the following formats: the Chicago Manual of Style, the SBL style 2d ed., the STM style guide. These are available to you at the TML website (https://libguides.bc.edu/academicpapers_stm/writing_tools) or at the STM academic policies website (<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/stm/sites/audience-pages/current-students/AcademicPolicies.html>). (2) Give an accurate summary of the main findings of the chapter or essay. (3) Include a description of the author's methodological approach and data. (4) Offer a charitable acknowledgement of the contributions of this essay to our understanding of the Gospels. (5) Assess the work from an ecclesial perspective—What contribution does this study make for thinking about the Gospels within the life of the global Church today? (5) Formulate at least three questions that the article raises for your on-going understanding of the Gospels. One of these questions must be pastoral and relate to the Science and Seminaries aspect of the course (e.g., the integration of the human person as soul, mind, and body).
 - Please number each section in your summary. Proofread your work and limit your written summary or presentation handout to one page. The one-page summary must be submitted on Canvas by 5pm the evening before the chapter is scheduled in the syllabus. Unfortunately, late summaries cannot be accepted after the article or essay has been discussed in class. Students may submit only one summary per week. These article summaries are intended to help you practice the learning objectives for the course. Advanced students (Th.M., S.T.L., and S.T.D. students) are expected to

present one of their critical summaries to the class and to lead the discussion on that essay. Presentations should be ten minutes in length with fifteen minutes for discussion. If this pertains to you, please schedule this by email with the professor at least one week before the essay or chapter is scheduled in class.

- **Exegesis of a Text (20%):** One exegetical analysis of a specific passage from the Gospel of Mark is required for this course. Options are identified in the syllabus. Your exegesis should be submitted on Canvas by 5PM on the day prior to our discussion of that passage. Please submit your exegesis by Dec. 1.
 - Please follow the general format provided in R.B. Hays, "Exegesis," pp. 122- 128 in *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1995). Use relevant headings from the Hays essay in your text analysis.
 - In addition to the sections outlined in the Hays article, please add a concluding discussion of how you understand the relationship between the three Synoptic Gospels in the passage that you have chosen.
 - Use two book-length bible commentaries for this assignment, one Catholic and one non-Catholic.
 - For your Catholic commentary, you may choose from either the Sacra Pagina commentary series or the Catholic Commentary series by Baker Academic.
 - The second commentary should be one other book-length commentary from a non-Catholic perspective. Some recommended commentary series include the New Testament Library, Word Biblical Commentary, Hermeneia, Anchor Bible, International Critical Commentary, Zondervan Critical Commentary, etc.
 - Your exegesis should select relevant sections from Hays's essay. In your concluding paragraphs, please also formulate a clear statement that describes the relationship between the Gospels based on your passage. And include a statement on the distinctive perspective of each Gospel in light of our class discussion. Your exegesis should have a section of three discussion questions, one of which must be pastoral.
 - The final text analysis should be 5-pages in length. Please use headings throughout your exegesis. This should be submitted to Canvas by 5pm prior to our scheduled discussion of the passage.
 - **Advanced students (Th.M., S.T.L., and S.T.D. students)** are expected to present your exegetical analyses to the class as a formative exercise. Please be sure to make arrangements with the professor in advance. The aims of this presentation are to (1) Give an oral exegetical presentation of a biblical passage in light of the commentaries that you are comparing. (2) Identify two salient points for discussion that emerge from a comparison of these two commentaries. (3) Discuss where this passage appears within the larger literary structure of each Gospel. (4) Offer a clear statement about the relationship of the Gospel parallels to one another. (5) Formulate 3 discussion questions, one of which must be pastoral. Presentations should be 10 minutes in length with an additional 15 minutes for questions and discussion. **Presentation Handout:** Please make a two-sided handout for the class. In your handout, please outline the passage, situate the passage within the larger Gospel unit, make note of any words or phrases that need further elucidation, and

include your discussion questions. Please reference the Synoptic parallels whenever relevant.

- **Your presentation handout should be sent as an email attachment to angela.harkins@bc.edu by 5 pm on the day prior to the scheduled presentation so that copies can be made for the class.** In addition to emailing your handout to the professor, please upload your presentation handout to the Canvas portal for 'Text Analysis: Class Presentation'.
- **In-class Final Exam (30%); Scheduled for Thurs., Dec. 9.**
 - Format: Fill-in-the blank, short answer, and essay questions.
 - All students are expected to submit five vocabulary words from our study of the Synoptic Gospels and to formulate 1 essay question for each of the learning objectives listed in this syllabus. **This is a formative assignment that should be completed by the end of Week 14 at midnight (Dec. 3, midnight).** These submissions will be circulated that weekend. Final exam questions may or may not be taken from the submissions.
 - Advanced students (Th.M., S.T.L., and S.T.D. students) should undertake a RESEARCH PAPER OPTION instead of the final exam. This is also permitted for students with a strong interest and demonstrated ability to work with ancient languages. The intent to write a research paper must be declared by Week 7, and a topic must be chosen in consultation with the professor. The thesis, abstract, and bibliography must be submitted by Week 10. Final papers should have footnotes and use the SBL style guide (2d ed.) or the Chicago Manual of Style. More information on this option is available upon request.

Resources for Exegesis

- Aland, Kurt. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels. English Edition.* United Bible Societies, 1982.
- *The Catholic Comparative New Testament.* Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Kohlenberger, John R. (ed.). *The Contemporary Parallel New Testament.* Oxford University Press, 1997.

Schedule of Assignments:

Our class will use the Throckmorton Synopsis to move through the Synoptic Gospels, but students are also advised to read in their Study Bibles for reader notes, so please prepare for our meetings by reading the primary text carefully along with the notes in your Study Bible.

Throckmorton Synopsis: Prior to class, please do the following: (1) use red to underline the exact words that appear in all three Gospels (Mark, Matthew, and Luke); (2) use blue for any uniquely Matthean language; and (3) use yellow for any uniquely Lukan passages. (4) Formulate one statement that describes what you see as the relationship between these Gospels. In other words, which of the three gives rise to the others? (5) Finally, what do you think is the distinctive perspective of Mark, Matthew, and Luke in this passage? *Come to class with steps 1, 2, and 3 completed and be prepared to share your findings with your classmates in a small group.*

Secondary essays are chosen because of their methodological approach, global perspective, or ecclesial framing. Please read them so that you can participate in the discussions of them, even if you are not submitting a summary of that essay. Please complete the assigned readings before class and bring them to class with you.

Week 1

Tues., Aug. 31 Introduction to the Course

- Dan Harrington, "Reading the Bible Critically and Religiously." Pages 80-125 of *The Bible and the Believer: How to Read the Bible Critically and Religiously*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Vatican II documents: *Dei Verbum* (1965); *Nostra Aetate*, especially §4 (1965); available online at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html
- Recommended: Pontifical Biblical Commission. "Document on the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," Sept. 21, 1993. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993.

Thurs., Sept. 2 Overview of the Synoptic Problem

- Synopsis: §6 (Mark 1:9-11) The Baptism of Jesus
- Read: 7:31-37 (The Healing of the Deaf Person with a Speech Impediment)
- Stanley E. Porter and Bryan R. Dyer, "The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction to its Key Terms, Concepts, Figures, and Hypotheses," in *The Synoptic Problem: Four Views* (ed. S. E. Porter and B. R. Dyer; Baker Academic, 2016), 1-26.
- R.B. Hays, "Introduction," in *Reading Backwards*, pp. 1-16.
- Louise J. Lawrence, "Introduction," and "Looking through a Glass Darkly," in *Sense and Stigma in the Gospels*, pp. 1-9, 10-30.

Week 2

Tues., Sept. 7

Mark's Gospel

- For today, please read the entirety of Mark's Gospel, preferably in one sitting.
- After reading the Gospel on your own, watch/listen to one of the following YouTube performances of it. You don't have to watch the entire video, but you should choose at least two miracle stories to listen to carefully.
 - Alec McCowan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBw66sx61JU>
 - Max McLean: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVFQfPTJPq8>
- What was surprising to you about the Gospel of Mark when you read through it in one sitting? Which passage in Mark's Gospel was the most memorable to you or the most confusing and why?
- For today, read Karen Choi, "Neuroplasticity and Spiritual Formation: Changing Brain Structure and Core Beliefs through Mindfulness and Scripture Meditation/ Reflection." Prepare the discussion questions on pages 64-65 for class today.

Discussion Board #1.

This discussion board will open on Tues., Sept. 7 at 12 noon and close on Wed., Sept. 15 at 5 PM. Please answer the following questions in a paragraph and post it to the discussion board. Then, go back and offer a thoughtful response to a post(s) of a classmate.

PROMPT: Compare and contrast the description of mindfulness in Karen Choi's essay (pp. 46-47) with your own experiences of prayer and meditation—are there specific practices of prayer or meditation that you find helpful for cultivating a heightened awareness of the mind and body? Reflect on your experience of reading the Gospel of Mark for today and compare that with listening to the Gospel of Mark (McCowan or McLean). Is listening or reading the Gospel more helpful for your personal meditation on that Gospel. Please describe how you found the two different experiences.

Thurs., Sept. 9

Discussion of Hermeneutics

- Joel B. Green, "The Bible, the Natural Sciences and the Human Person," in *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 1-34.
- On Catholic Hermeneutics:
 - Luke Timothy Johnson, "Imagining the World that Scripture Imagines," *The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2002), 119-142.
 - Daniel J. Harrington, "How Do Catholics Read the New Testament?" in *How Do Catholics Read the Bible?* 81-94.
- Critical Summary Option (due by 5pm the previous day)
Jin Young Choi, "The Passive Body (Mark 7:31-37)." Pages 109-131, notes at 177-186, in *Postcolonial Discipleship of Embodiment: An Asian and Asian*

Week 3

Tues., Sept. 14 The Priority of Mark

- Re-read the following passages from the Gospel of Mark:
 - §113 (Mark 6:45-52) The Walking on the Water
 - 7:31-37 (The Healing of the Deaf Person with a Speech Impediment)
 - 8:22-26 (The Blind Man of Bethsaida)
 - 14:51-52 (Naked Youth Running Away)
 - 16:1-8 (The Empty Tomb)
 - 16:9-20 (The “Longer” Ending of Mark)
- R.B. Hays, “Figuring the Mystery: Reading Scripture with Mark,” in *Reading Backwards*, pp. 17-34.
- Critical Summary Option (1 page, single-spaced due by 5pm on Canvas the day before):
 - Mark Goodacre, “Setting in Place the Cornerstone: The Priority of Mark,” in *The Case Against Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), 19-45.

Thurs., Sept. 16 Overview of the Gospel of Matthew

Read the following passages in Matthew’s Gospel in your Study Bible along with the accompanying footnotes and also in the synopsis. Bring your synopsis to class.

- The Birth Narrative, Matthew 1:1-2:23
- Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7 (only in Matthew)
- Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees, Matthew 23:1-36
- Passion Narrative in Matthew 26-28
- Richard Hays, “Torah Transfigured: Reading Scripture with Matthew,” in *Reading Backwards*, pp. 35-54.
- **Anti-Jewish Passages from Matthew in the Catholic Lectionary:**
 - Mt 6:1-6; 16-18 “Beware the hypocrites in the Synagogue” (Ash Wednesday)
 - Mt 22:1-14 “The Parable of the Marriage Feast” (28th Sunday- Year A)
 - Mt 21:33-43 “The Parable of the Wicked Tenants” (27th Sunday— Year A)
 - Mt 26:14-27:66, esp. note 27:24 “The Blood Curse” (Passion Sunday—Year A)
- Daniel Harrington, “Introduction,” *Commentary on Matthew*, Sacra Pagina series (Michael Glazier, 2007), 1-25.
- David Barrett Peabody, “The Two Gospel Hypothesis,” in *The Synoptic Problem*, pp. 67-88.
- Critical Summary Option (1 page, single-spaced due by 5pm on Canvas the day before):
 - Louise Lawrence, Chapter 2 “Blind Spots and Metaphors,” in *Sense and Stigma*, pp. 31-56.

Week 4

Tues., Sept. 21 Overview of the Gospel of Luke

- The Birth Narrative, Luke 1:5-2:52
- Sermon on the Plain, Luke 6:20-49
- Luke's Special Section (9:51-18:14)
- Passion Narrative, Luke 22-24
- Richard Hays, "The One Who Redeems Israel," in *Reading Backwards*, pp. 55-74.
- Critical Summary Option (1 page, single-spaced due by 5pm on Canvas the day before):
 - Mark Goodacre, "The Farrer Hypothesis," in *The Synoptic Problem*, pp. 47-66.

Thurs., Sept. 23 The Double Tradition in MT and LK (Q)
and the Major and Minor Agreements between MT and LK

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §1 (Mt 1:1-2:23; Mk 1:1; Lk 1:1-3:38) Genealogy and infancy narratives
 - §2 (Mt 3:7-10; Lk 3:7-9) John's Preaching of Repentance
 - §4 (Mt 3:11-12; Mk 1:7-8; Lk 3:15-18) John's Preaching about the Coming One
 - §73 (Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23) Beatitudes
 - §75 (Mt 5:39-42, 44-48) On Love of One's Enemies
 - § Mt 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 Lord's Prayer
- Critical Summary Options (1 page, single-spaced due by 5pm on Canvas the day before):
 - Ronald A. Piper, "Q: The Sayings Source," in *The Blackwell Companion to the NT*, edited by David E. Aune (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 254-271.
 - Mark Goodacre, "The Major and Minor Agreements," in *The Case Against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Trinity Press International, 2002), 152-169.

Jesus' Galilean Ministry (Matthew 3-18; Mark 1-9; Luke 3:12-9:50)

Week 5

Tues., Sept. 28 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §1 (Mark 1:1-6) John the Baptist
 - §8 (Mark 1:12-13) The Temptation
 - §9 (Mark 1:14-15) The First Preaching in Galilee
 - §11 (Mark 1:16-20) The Call of the First Disciples
- Critical Summary Option (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - E.P. Sanders, "Jesus, Ancient Judaism, and Modern Christianity: The Quest Continues," in *Jesus, Judaism, and Christian Anti-Judaism*, edited by P.

Fredricksen and A. Reinhartz (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 31-55.

Thurs., Sept. 30 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §12 (Mark 1:21-28) Jesus in the Synagogue at Capernaum
 - §13 (Mark 1:29-31) The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law
 - §14 (Mark 1:32-34) The Sick Healed at Evening
 - §15 (Mark 1:35-38) Jesus Departs from Capernaum
 - §16 (Mark 1:39) A Preaching Journey in Galilee
 - §45 (Mark 1:40-45) The Healing of a Leper
 - § 52 (Mark 2:1-12) The Healing of the Paralytic
- R.B. Hays, "Exegesis," in *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 122-128. *This essay discusses Mark 2:1-12 and provides the format for the text analysis assignment.*

Week 6

Tues., Oct. 5 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - § 69 (Mark 2:23-28) Plucking Heads of Grain on the Sabbath
 - § 70 (Mark 3:1-6) The Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand
 - § 71 (Mark 3:7-12) Jesus Heals the Multitudes
- Critical Summary Option (due by 5pm the previous day)
 - Matthias Henze, "Did Jesus Abolish the Law of Moses?" in *Mind the Gap*, 115-146.
 - Henry J. Mugabe, "Markan Healings through African Eyes." *Review and Expositor* 107 (2010): 363-379.
- Passages available for text analysis (due by 5pm the day before):
 - Mark 2:23-3:6 Lectionary, 9th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

Thurs., Oct. 7 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - § 72 (Mark 3:13-19) The Call of the Twelve
 - § 85 (Mark 3:19b-22) Accusations against Jesus
 - § 86 (Mark 3:23-30) A House Divided
 - § 89 (Mark 3:31-35) Jesus' True Relatives
- Pheme Perkins, "The Quest for Sources," *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 105-114.

Week 7

Tues., Oct. 12. No Classes—Today follows a Monday Schedule

- First Contemplative Reflection is due this week on Fri., Oct. 15, on Canvas. Reviews are due one week after the due date.

Thurs., Oct. 14 Jesus as Teacher

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - § 90 (Mark 4:1-9) The Parable of the Sower
 - §91 (Mark 4:10-12) The Reason for Speaking in Parables
 - §93 (Mark 4:13-20) The Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower
 - §94 (Mark 4:21-25) The Purpose of the Parables
 - §95 (Mark 4:26-29) The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly
 - §97 (Mark 4:30-32) The Parable of the Mustard Seed
 - §99 (Mark 4:33-34) Jesus' Use of Parables
- Read Glenna Andrews, "How Neuroscience Informs Teaching," pp. 21-32. Prepare the discussion questions on pp. 31 for today.

Discussion Board #2.

This discussion board will open on Thurs., Oct. 14 at 12 noon and close on Fri., Oct. 22 at 5 PM. Please answer the following questions in a paragraph and post it to the discussion board. Then, go back and offer a thoughtful response to a post(s) of a classmate.

PROMPT: Compare and contrast the description of learning and formation in Glenna Andrews's essay (pp. 24-25) and her description of learning interference (pp. 27-28) with your own experiences of learning and formation. Reflect on your own learning experiences and what made those experiences meaningful? In these passages about Jesus teaching, describe how you vividly imagine Jesus as he is teaching the disciples or crowds? How do you imagine Jesus as Teacher? How does he express his emotions? How do you imagine the experience of being with Jesus as he is teaching? How might Andrews's essay shape the way you teach or preach in your future ministry?

Week 8

Tues., Oct. 19 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §105 (Mark 4:35-41) The Stilling of the Storm
 - §106 (Mark 5:1-20) The Gerasene Demoniac
 - §107 (Mark 5:21-43) Jairus' Daughter and a Woman's Faith
- Critical Summary Option (due by 5pm the previous day)
 - Matthias Henze, "In a World of Demons and Unclean Spirits," in *Mind the Gap* (Fortress Press, 2017), 87-114.
 - Louise Lawrence, Ch. 4, "The Stench of Untouchability: Sensory Tactics of a Leper, Legion, and Leaky Woman," pp. 76-97.

Thurs., Oct. 21

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - § 108 (Mark 6:1-6a) Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth
 - § 109 (Mark 6:6b-13) The Sending out of the Twelve
 - § 110 (Mark 6:14-16) Herod Thinks Jesus is John, Raised
 - § 111 (Mark 6:17-29) The Death of John
 - § (Mark 6:30-44) Mark 6:30-44 The Return of the Twelve, and the Feeding of the Five Thousand
- Passage available for Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 6:30-44 The Return of the Twelve, and the Feeding of the Five Thousand

Week 9

Tues., Oct. 26 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §114 (Mark 6:53-56) Healings at Gennesaret
 - §115 (Mark 7:1-23) What defiles a Person
 - §116 (Mark 7:24-30) The Syrophoenician Woman
- Critical Summary Option (due by 5pm the previous day)
 - Jennifer Glancy, "Jesus, the Syrophoenician Woman, and Other First Century Bodies," *Biblical Interpretation* 18 (2010): 342-363.

Thurs., Oct 28 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §118 (Mark 8:1-10) The Feeding of the Four Thousand
 - §119 (Mark 8:11-13) The Pharisees Seek a Sign
 - §120 (Mark 8:14-21) The Yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod
- Critical Summary Option (due by 5pm the previous day)
 - Lawrence, Ch. 3, "Sounding out a 'Deaf-Mute,'" in *Sense and Stigma*, pp. 57-75.

Week 10

Tues., Nov. 2 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §121 (Mark 8:22-26) The Blind Man of Bethsaida
 - §122 (Mark 8:27-33) The Confession at Caesarea Philippi and the First Prediction of the Passion
 - §123 (Mark 8:34-9:1) The Conditions of Discipleship
 - §124 (Mark 9:2-13) The Transfiguration
- Passage available for Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 9:2-13 The Transfiguration (Lectionary Reading for Lent, Wk 2, Year B)

Thurs., Nov. 4 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §124 (Mark 9:14-29) Healing of the Boy with a Spirit
 - §125 (Mark 9:30-32) The Second Prediction of the Passion
 - §129 (Mark 9:33-37) Dispute about Greatness
 - §130 (Mark 9:38-41) Another Exorcist
 - §131 (Mark 9:42-48) On Temptations
 - §132 (Mark 9:49-50) Concerning Salt
- Critical Summary Option (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Lawrence, Ch. 5, "Sense, Seizures, and Illness Narratives," in *Sense and Stigma*, pp. 98-123.
- Passage available for Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 9:14-29; Healing of the Boy with a Spirit

**The Judean Section (Matthew 19-27; Mark 10-15; Luke 18:15-23:40)
The Journey to Jerusalem: Mt 19-20; Mk 10; Lk 18:15-19:27**

Week 11

Tues., Nov. 9

Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §187 (Mark 10:1-12) Marriage and Divorce
 - §188 (Mark 10:13-16) Jesus Blesses the Children
 - §191 (Mark 10:32-34) The Third Prediction of the Passion
 - §192 (Mark 10:35-45) Jesus and the Sons of Zebedee
 - §193 (Mark 10:46-52) The Healing of Bartimaeus
 - §196 (Mark 11:1-10) The Entry into Jerusalem
 - §198 (Mark 11:11) Jesus Cleanses the Temple
 - §199 (Mark 11:12-14) The Cursing of the Fig Tree
 - §200 (Mark 11:15-19) The Cleansing of the Temple
- Passage available for Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 10:17-30 The Rich Young Man (28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)
 - Mark 11:1-10 The Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday, Year B)

Thurs., Nov. 11

Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §202 (Mark 11:27-33) The Question about Jesus' Authority
 - §203 (only Matthew 21:28-32) Parable of the Two Sons
 - §204 (Mark 12:1-12) The Parable of the Wicked Tenants
 - §205 (Matt 22:1-14 and Luke 14:15-24) The Parable of the Wedding Banquet
 - §206 (Mark 12:13-17) The Question of Paying Taxes to Caesar
 - §208 (Mark 12:28-34) The Great Commandment
- Passage available for Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 11:27-33 The Question about Jesus' Authority

- Matthew 21:33-43 The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (27th Sunday, Year A)
- Brad D. Strawn and Warren S. Brown, "Christian Education as Embodied and Embedded Virtue Formation," pp. 87-97. Please read and prepare the discussion questions on p. 95-97 for today.

Discussion Board #3.

This discussion board will open on Thurs., Nov. 11 at 12 noon and close on Fri., Nov. 19 at 5 PM. Please answer the following questions in a paragraph and post it to the discussion board. Then, go back and offer a thoughtful response to a post(s) of a classmate.

PROMPT: Compare and contrast the description of learning and formation in Brad D. Strawn and Warren S. Brown, "Christian Education as Embodied and Embedded Virtue Formation," pp. 87-97. Compare and contrast the "dualists models of persons" (p. 88-89) with the "emergent models of personhood" (pp. 89-91). How do these models map onto your own experiences as a person of faith? How might this knowledge influence how you plan to teach or preach in your future ministry?

Week 12

Tues., Nov. 16 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §207 (Mark 12:18-27) The Question about the Resurrection
 - §209 (Mark 12:35-37a) About David's Son
- Richard Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," pp. 216-238 in *The Art of Reading Scripture*. Edited by Ellen F. Davis and R.B. Hays. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Tanya Luhrmann, "Lord, Teach Us to Pray," in *When God Talks Back* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 157-188. Please answer the following discussion questions for today's class: What is the distinction between apophatic and kataphatic prayer according to Luhrmann? What examples of each does Luhrmann offer? What is the role of imagination in these two different forms of prayer? Do you find that your experience of prayer is more like one than the other?

Thurs., Nov. 18 The Synoptic Apocalypse (Mt 24:4-36; Mk 13:5-37; Lk 21:8-36)

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §210 (Mark 12:37b-40) Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees
 - §214 (Mark 13:5-8) The Signs of the End of the Age
 - §215 (Mark 13:9-13) The Coming of Persecution
 - §216 (Mark 13:14-20) The Desolating Sacrilege
 - §219 (Mark 13:24-27) The Coming of the Son of Man
- Critical Summary Option (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day)

- Lawrence, Ch. 6, "Sensory-Disabled Characters Refiguring God," in *Sense and Stigma*, pp. 124-132.

Week 13

Tues., Nov. 23 --- No Class-- Professor at Conference

During this week, please review the syllabus and the learning objectives listed on page 2. All students will be asked to submit 1 essay question for each of the learning objectives listed in this syllabus. **This is a formative assignment and every student should complete this exercise by 5 PM on December 1.** Final exam questions may or may not be taken from the submissions.

Thurs., Nov. 25 – No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday!

Week 14 The Passion Narrative

Tues., Nov. 30

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §231 (Mark 14:1-2) The Conspiracy against Jesus
 - §232 (Mark 14:3-9) The Anointing at Bethany
 - §233 (Mark 14:10-11) Judas agrees to Betray Jesus
 - §234 (Mark 14:12-16) Preparation for the Passover
 - §235 (Mark 14:17-21) The Traitor
 - §236 (Mark 14:22-25) The Institution of the Lord's Supper
 - §238 (Mark 14:26-31) Peter's Denial Predicted
- Passage available for Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 14:3-9, The Anointing at Bethany (part of Passion Sunday, Year B)
- Second Contemplative Reflection is due at the end of Week 14, by Fri., Dec. 3 at 5PM. Please upload this to Canvas. Peer review responses (brief) are due one week after the due date.

Thurs., Dec., 2 Synopsis Work

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §239 (Mark 14:32-42) Jesus in Gethsemane
 - §240 (Mark 14:43-52) Jesus Taken Captive
 - §241 (Mark 14:53-72) Jesus before the Council. Peter's Denial
 - §242 (Mark 15:1) Jesus Delivered to Pilate
 - §244 (Mark 15:2-5) The Trial before Pilate
 - §246 (Mark 15:6-15) The Sentence of Death
 - §247 (Mark 15:16-20) The Mocking of the Soldiers
 - §248 (Mark 15:21) Simon of Cyrene Carries Jesus' Cross
- Passage available for Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 14:32-42 Jesus in Gethsemane (part of Passion Sunday, Year B)

Discussion Board #4: Why should Christians be concerned about how Jews are portrayed in actualizations of the Gospel text today (movies, homilies, scholarship)? How might you bring greater awareness to this interreligious issue in your future teaching and preaching? For this discussion board, please also re-read the Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*. Please post a thoughtful comment and then post one thoughtful reply to a classmate's post. This discussion board opens on Thurs., Dec. 2 at noon and closes on Fri., Dec. 10 at 5:00 PM.

Week 15 Death and Resurrection
Tues., Dec. 7

- Throckmorton Synopsis
 - §249 (Mark 15:22-32) The Crucifixion
 - §250 (Mark 15:33-41) The Death on the Cross
 - §251 (Mark 15:42-47) The Burial of Jesus
 - §253 (Mark 16:1-8) The Empty Tomb
 - Matt 28:9-20; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:13-53 (Resurrection)
- Last opportunity to complete a Text Analysis (due on Canvas by 5pm the previous day).
 - Mark 15:33-41 The Death on the Cross (part of Passion Sunday, Year B)
- Kelly R. Iverson, "The Present Tense of Performance: Immediacy and Transformative Power in Luke's Passion," in *From Text to Performance* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 131-57.
- Hays, "Retrospective Reading," in *Reading Backwards*, pp. 93-110.

Discussion Board #5: The last discussion board will open on Tues., Dec. 7 at 12 noon and close on Wed., Dec. 15 at 5:00 PM. Please offer one thoughtful comment and reply to a classmate's posting. *What was surprising to you about the study of the Synoptic Gospels this semester? What connections did you see between your learning in this course and in your other courses this semester? What will you carry away from this course and bring to your future ministry or teaching?*

Thurs., Dec. 9 In-class Final Exam