

#215 Christ in the Gospels
Western Reformed Seminary
John A. Battle, Th.D.
Fall 2019

COURSE INFORMATION

Course objectives

This course is designed to give you a detailed knowledge of the background and sources for the life of Christ on earth, and of his life itself. You will be working on three main projects during the semester. These three projects consist of (1) lectures and study of the course syllabus, including two exams over its contents, (2) reading assignments in standard works about Jesus and his life, and (3) a special assignment chosen by you from a list of possibilities. Each of these items is described below.

Course outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course you should be able to defend the historicity of the person of Jesus Christ and the trustworthiness of the Gospels. You will know the general outline of Jesus' life, be familiar with his teachings and miracles, and be prepared to teach or preach from the life of Jesus. If you are seeking ordination, you also should be prepared to pass the section of the English Bible exam dealing with the life of Jesus and the Gospels.

Required reading

The following books are to be read by the dates indicated in the course schedule below:

Reading assignment #1

- The four Gospels, in two different translations
- E. F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, ch. 5-9; OR D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.), ch. 2-6
- James Stalker, *The Life of Jesus Christ*
- Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, *The NIV Harmony of the Gospels*, Prefaces, Explanation, Essays #1-8

Reading assignment #2

- Robert B. Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus*
- E. F. Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*
- Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, *The NIV Harmony of the Gospels* (rest of book, including Essays #9-12)

It is advised that your reading in Thomas and Gundry follow as closely as possible our classroom lectures.

Bible atlas

In addition to the required reading texts, you will need to obtain either the *Satellite Bible Atlas* or the *Holman Quick Source Bible Atlas*. Bring this atlas to class, as we will be referring to it frequently during class lectures and discussions.

Special assignment

Choose one of the following:

- 1) Read a scholarly book concerning some aspect of the course and write a two-page review and critique. Use the standard format for journal articles found in the *SBL Handbook of Style*.
- 2) Translate one chapter from each of the four Gospels.
- 3) Write a five-page research paper on some controversial question of interpretation in the Gospels. Use the standard format for papers found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.
- 4) Prepare a series of at least five sermon or Bible lesson outlines on a part of the life of Jesus.

Approval by the professor is required for the special assignment.

Tests

There will be two examinations during the semester covering the lecture material. The midterm will cover questions #1-38, and the final #39-63.

Grading

The final grade will consist of the following:

- Reading 30%
- Special assignment 20%
- Midterm examination 25%
- Final examination 25%

Course schedule

Sept.	4	Introduction to the Course
	11	
	18	
	25	(G. W. Presbytery meeting; no class)
Oct.	2	(SC trip; no class)
	9	
	16	Reading Assignment #1 due
	23	Midterm Examination
	30	
Nov.	6	
	13	
	20	Special Assignment due
	27	
Dec.	4	Reading Assignment #2 due
	11	Final Examination