

## Synoptic Gospels: Matthew Syllabus

### Contact Information

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I have taught at Luther Seminary for 12 years, and I've taught online Matthew about eight times during those years. I'm ordained in the Lutheran church and was a parish pastor in North Dakota for six years before going back to school to receive a Ph. D. from Duke University in New Testament and Christian Origins.

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**MyLutherNet class site:**

[https://myluthernet.luthersem.edu/ics/Academics/NT/NT\\_1210/2009\\_FA-NT\\_1210-50\\_GR/](https://myluthernet.luthersem.edu/ics/Academics/NT/NT_1210/2009_FA-NT_1210-50_GR/)

### Online Class Support

You have several options for course support.

#### Online Help Sources

For an overview of Luther Seminary's online environment, check out the Orientation to Online Learning (<http://www.luthersem.edu/orientation>).

For answers to many common questions, including how to access Luther Seminary resources remotely, check the TechnologyHelp Wiki (<http://wiki.luthersem.edu/bin/view/TechnologyHelp/WebHome>).

#### Real People Available by Email

With questions about MyLutherNet, contact the Learning Design and Technology team at <mailto:online@luthersem.edu>.

To troubleshoot computer problems, contact <mailto:helpdesk@luthersem.edu>.

#### Course FAQ

Maybe if you have a question about the class, others have wondered about it too. Ask your question on the FAQ discussion forum within the *Forums* area in the class site and see if anyone knows the answer to it (or maybe

someone has already asked it before you). You can also write email to anyone in the class from within the *Roster* of your MyLutherNet class site.

## Course Information

### Catalog Description

A study of the gospel of Matthew, exploring its structure, theology, and teachings within its ancient setting. Attention is given to its theological and ecclesial significance today, particularly for preaching, and its understandings of mission and making disciples. The study of this gospel is preceded by a general introduction to the synoptic gospels. Prerequisite: LG1200 Greek or equivalent for all MDiv and MA-New Testament students.

### Course Objectives

In the Luther Seminary M Div curriculum, your synoptic gospels “core elective” has these goals:

1. To offer a cursory introduction to the formation and content of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as well as a more thorough introduction to one of those gospels.
2. To introduce the idea that we all read the Bible through interpretive lenses, and to give you tools to recognize some things about your lenses and those of other interpreters.
3. To introduce you to resources available through the Luther Seminary library.
4. To keep developing your ability to learn more about New Testament texts by studying them in Greek.

### Enduring Understandings

Six weeks or six months after the coursework is done, what will you remember about the class? I’m hoping that these observations are among your enduring understandings:

1. Regular people (like you and your current/future parishioners) can gain competence in scholarly Bible reading.
2. Careful and repeated reading leads to insight missed on cursory and/or first readings.
3. Bible passages always mean more than one thing.
4. There are limits to what a Bible passage may mean. That is, some interpretations are unconvincing.
5. Matthew holds together things we have trouble holding together. For instance,
  - a. Matthew bears witness to Jesus as one concerned with both righteousness and mercy.
  - b. Matthew envisions the church as characterized both by experiences of community among members and mission beyond current membership.

## Readings

### Required Texts

A study Bible. Consider either *The Lutheran Study Bible* or the *Harper Collins Study Bible*.

Aland, Kurt, ed. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*, English ed. New York: American Bible Society, 1982. I very much prefer that you buy the Greek-English version of this book. Unfortunately it is significantly more expensive than the English-only version.

Senior, Donald. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Interpreting Biblical Text Series. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997.

### Recommended Texts

Allison, Dale. *The Sermon on the Mount: Inspiring the Moral Imagination*. Companions to the New Testament. New York: Herder & Herder, 1999.

Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996. (Note: this is available as a free electronic book inside BibleWorks 8, and an inexpensive add-on to BW 7).

If you are looking for a commentary on Matthew, any of these is good:

Allison, Dale and W. D. Davies. *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*. New York: Continuum International, 2005.

Long, Thomas. *Matthew*. Westminster Bible Companion. Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox, 1997.

Senior, Donald. *Matthew*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.

### Articles and Essays

Throughout the course, we will be reading these materials in addition to the Senior textbook and the Bible. They will be available as .pdf documents behind the *E-Reserve* link in MyLutherNet.

<i>Week</i>	<i>Reading</i>
<b>Week 1</b>	Wenham & Walton, 3-23 in <i>Exploring the New Testament</i> , vol. 1. IVP: Downer's Grove, IL, 2001.
<b>Week 2</b>	Wenham & Walton, 25-44 in <i>Exploring the New Testament</i> , vol. 1. IVP: Downer's Grove, IL, 2001.
<b>Week 3</b>	Burridge, Richard. "Four Gospels," 1-32 in <i>Four Gospels, One Jesus</i> : Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994. Taylor, Barbara Brown. "The Bible," in <i>The Preaching Life</i> (Boston: Cowley,

<b>Week</b>	<b>Reading</b>
	1993), 51-62.
<b>Week 6</b>	Lischer, Richard. "The Sermon on the Mount as Radical Pastoral Care." <i>Interpretation</i> 41 (1987) : 157-69.  Hinkle, Mary E. "The Lord's Prayer: Empowerment for Living the Sermon on the Mount." <i>Word &amp; World</i> 22 (2002) : 9-17.
<b>Week 8</b>	Lowry, Eugene. "Suspending the Story," in <i>How to Preach a Parable</i> (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 115-31.
<b>Week 9</b>	Powell, Mark Allan. "The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel." <i>New Testament Studies</i> 38 (1992) : 187-204.
<b>Week 10</b>	Ramshaw, Elaine J. "Power and Forgiveness in Matthew 18." <i>Word &amp; World</i> 18 (1998 ) : 397-404.
<b>Week 11</b>	Cope O. Lamar. "'To the Close of the Age': The role of Apocalyptic Thought in the Gospel of Matthew, 113-124 in <i>Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn</i> , ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1989.
<b>Week 12</b>	Hinkle, Mary E. "People Like Us: Minor Characters in Matthew's Passion." <i>Word &amp; World</i> 25 (2005) : 76-83.
<b>Week 13</b>	Nissen, Johannes. "Mission as Disciple-Making: The Gospel of Matthew," in <i>The New Testament and Mission</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003), 21-35.

## Course Components

<b>Part of Course</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Readings, Hunts Quizzes &amp; Greek Vocabulary Test</b>	25	Each week, you will have reading assignments, activities such as scavenger hunts and other things developed for the course, and a quiz. You may take the quiz up to three times within the week it is assigned.  The Greek vocabulary test is the final vocabulary exam for LG1200, New Testament Greek. It includes words used 50 times or more in the New Testament. A list is in the <i>Handouts</i> section of MyLutherNet. Pass it with 80% or better by the end of week 2.
<b>Online Discussion</b>	25	Ten weeks during the term, you will participate in an online discussion with members of a small group. Prompts for these discussions are in the groups area in MyLutherNet. Discussions begin in Week 2.
<b>Focal Text Work</b>	25	Ten weeks during the term, your small group will work with focal texts in Greek and English. Worksheets for each text are in the <i>Handouts</i> area of MyLutherNet. Discussion questions are in your group area in MyLutherNet. Each member of your group will be the lead off hitter on a question that requires the use of Greek. Focal text work begins in Week 3.
<b>Final Project</b>	25	Prepare an appropriation of a passage from Matthew for a parish or specialized ministry setting. Your project should include exegetical (that is, interpretive) notes and the appropriation (such as a sermon, curriculum, artwork, etc.) Handouts will be available to support your preparation of the project. The final project is due by noon on Monday, December 14.

## General Weekly Deadlines

You can find a precise “to do” list for each week within MyLutherNet. Here are general deadlines for course work. These will stay the same throughout the class. We do not have class during the week of November 23 (Thanksgiving Break). The noon deadlines are meant to accommodate the work styles of both the night owl and the early riser. Replies are due on Monday so no one has work due on Sunday.

### Thursday noon.

Finish quiz on reading for the week. The idea here is that you finish the reading before you write your discussion post. Readings for the whole semester will be available to you in Week 1 of the course.

### Friday noon.

Post essay in discussion area (on weeks it is due).

### Saturday noon.

Post work on focal text (on weeks it is due).

### Monday noon (of the week after the original post).

Reply to your group’s discussion AND reply to focal text work (on weeks they are due).

## Schedule of Activities

<i>Date</i>	<i>Week</i>	<i>Class Discussion Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Focal Texts</i>
<b>Sept 8</b>	1	Jewish Background to the New Testament	Wenham & Walton chapter 1.	
<b>Sept 14</b>	2	Greco-Roman Background to the New Testament	Wenham & Walton chapter 2.	Take vocabulary test.
<b>Sept 21</b>	3	How we got the gospels	Burridge chapter. Taylor chapter. Senior ch 1.	Greek study method demo Matthew 1:18-25
<b>Sept 28</b>	4	Whirlwind Tour of the Gospels	Matt, Mark, Luke, John beginnings and endings.	Matthew 2:1-12
<b>Oct 5</b>	5	Prologue as Overture	Senior, chs. 2, 3, 8.	Baptism pericope in the synoptics
<b>Oct 12</b>	6	Sermon on the Mount	Lischer article. Hinkle article.	Matthew 6:5-15
<b>Oct 19</b>	7	Miracles, Faith, and Following	Senior, ch. 9.	Matthew 9:9-13
<b>Oct 26</b>	8	Bread and Parables	Lowry chapter. Senior, ch. 6, 10.	Library Skills Assignment
<b>Nov 2</b>	9	What’s the Buzz	Powell article. Senior ch 5.	Matthew 16:13-23

<i>Date</i>	<i>Week</i>	<i>Class Discussion Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Focal Texts</i>
<b>Nov 9</b>	10	Power & Glory	Ramshaw article. Senior ch 7.	Matthew 18:1-9
<b>Nov 16</b>	11	Apocalyptic Teaching	Cope essay. Senior, ch. 11.	Matthew 25:1-13
<b>Nov 30</b>	12	Arrest and Crucifixion	Hinkle article.	Matthew 26:20-30
<b>Dec 7</b>	13	Resurrection & Great Commission	Nissen chapter. Senior ch 4.	Matthew 28:1-10 and parallels.