

## **New Testament Studies**

### **Penn West Conference Academy for Ministry**

Rev. Dr. Ruth E. Shaver, Instructor

[revdruthucc@icor1348.com](mailto:revdruthucc@icor1348.com) or (814) 317-6331

#### Textbook:

Johnson, Luke Timothy. The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation. Third Edition.

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.

NOTE: Please go by the chapter numbers in the Table of Contents, not in the chapter headings, as due to editing errors during the printing process, the chapters may not be properly numbered within the text itself.

#### Additional Books:

Miles, Jack. Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God. New York City: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, Inc., 2001. (Mark: Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit working through silent, language, art, music, ritual and symbols across generations and contexts.)

*Seniors in the Academy will have the option to do a presentation on a relevant topic in the May session of this year in lieu of a written assignment on that same topic. Information on this option will be provided to students when appropriate.*

#### Course Purpose:

To provide students with an appropriate understanding of the corpus of the Greek Scriptures and the exegetical skills necessary for the pastoral and educational leadership of a Christian congregation in the United Church of Christ tradition. This provides students with specific experience for the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ for “Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions”:

- Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.
- Nurturing effective proclamation and preaching.
- Understanding the history of the Christian church, from biblical times forward.
- Bringing life to the sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.
- Leading faith formation effectively across generations.

Assignments and expectations of participation reflect these specific Marks and are designed to help students discover how study of Scripture applies to other constellations of Marks, as well, as noted in this syllabus.

Course Expectations/Marks:

- That each student will be prepared for class to the best of his/her ability. If circumstances limit your ability to prepare, please notify me as soon as possible so that I can adapt or assist you to make the most of your class experience. Mark: Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the church.
- That each student will attend every class session. Again, if circumstances do not allow for this, please let me know as far in advance as possible so that we can make suitable alternate arrangements. Mark: Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the church.
- That written assignments will be the work of the individual submitting them, and that resources used in the preparation of assignments will be noted and referenced as appropriate (you may use footnotes, endnotes, parenthetical references, and/or bibliography as you see fit). Mark: Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.  
This includes for published materials the author's name, the title of the book/article, the page number(s) for the reference, the publisher, and the date of copyright and publication *at a minimum*. For web-based resources, this includes the full url in addition to the author's name and any copyright notice published on the site as well as the date on which you viewed the website. You may also use video or audio resources; note the type of resource in the bibliographic information (these are not actual resources as given!):  
— Ehrman, Bart. *Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel of John*. Great Courses, 2007. Audio CD.  
— *The Lost Years of Jesus*. National Geographic Productions, 2000. Videotape.  
— "Paul's Ephesus," *The Naked Archaeologist*. Discovery Communications, 2009. Recorded broadcast, The History Channel, 18 May 2010.
- When a given number of pages is expected, that number is based on 12-point type, double spaced, with 1" margins all around. Generally speaking, this is 250 words/page. A 4-5 page essay is 1000-1250 words, give or take. You are welcome to use larger fonts; please do not use anything less than 12 point type or less than 1.5 spaces between lines... Mark: Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.
- That help will be sought when needed and that questions will be asked. Learning takes place best when the instructor knows what the students need and questions are the best way to communicate this information. Marks: Attending to one's own spiritual and pastoral care and engagement in supervision, as appropriate. Demonstrating excellent communications skills. Practicing self-care and life balance.
- That opinions will be respected and that learning will take place in an environment of honest questioning. Each person's faith experiences are as individual as his or her fingerprints and thus we all encounter Christ differently. Marks: Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives. Practicing the radical hospitality of God. Identifying and working to overcome implicit bias in all ministry settings and in the life of the church.
- That there will be joy and laughter as we encounter God, Christ, and Spirit together. Mark: Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual nurture and development.

## **2016-2017: The Synoptic Gospels and Acts**

September: The Gospel of Mark

October: The Gospel of Matthew

March: The Gospel of Luke

May: The Acts of the Apostles

### **Session 1 (September)**

Continuing students should prepare the following ahead of time; new students are encouraged to have materials before class if at all possible:

- Read the Gospel of Mark.
- Read Johnson Introduction and Chapter 7 and answer the study questions at the end of each chapter for discussion purposes only.
- Prepare a sermon based on any chapter from James, 1 Peter, or 2 Peter, or from Jude. (New students are exempt from this assignment.)

In this session, we will examine what it means to live in a “symbolic universe” and how that affects the presentation of Scriptural material. Mark: Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit working through silent, language, art, music, ritual and symbols across generations and contexts.

We will examine the Gospel of Mark as a literary document and as a witness of faith.

We will reflect briefly on the exegetical process for preaching.

### **Homework for Session 2**

- Read the Gospel of Matthew.
- Read Johnson Chapter 8 and answer for discussion purposes only the Study Questions at the end of each chapter.
- Read Miles Prologue, Note to the Reader, and Part One. Take good notes throughout your reading for class discussion.
- NEW STUDENTS ONLY: please read Johnson chapters 1-3. In no more than 3 pages, briefly explain the importance of Roman Rule, Hellenistic Philosophy, Rabbinic Tradition, Jewish Worship, and the Jewish Diaspora on early Christianity and the New Testament. This is to be turned in at the October session.

### **Session 2 (October)**

In this session, we will examine the Gospel of Matthew as a literary document and as a witness of faith.

We will discuss the necessity of challenging our own understanding of Jesus by looking at Jesus through “a stained-glass window” (Miles, pg. 13) and the first part of Miles’ work.

### **Homework for Flipped Classroom Session 3**

- Read the Gospel of Luke.
- Read Johnson Chapter 9 pages 187-209 and answer study questions 2-9 on page 222 for discussion purposes only.
- Read Miles Part Two. Take good notes throughout your reading for class discussion.
- View the lecture before class (link to be sent via e-mail by February 12).

### **Session 3 (March)**

We will work together to compile a comparison of the stories that are told by each of the three Synoptic writers (or by any two of them) and how those stories reflect each writer's particular perspective and intent. Mark: Understanding community context and navigating change with a community.

We will discuss how our tendencies to harmonize the Gospels affects our understanding of Christ in relationship to the understanding presented by the Synoptic writers and to John, based on our reading of Miles to this point.

#### **Homework for Session 4**

- Read the Book of Acts.
- Read Johnson Chapter 9 pages 209-222 and answer study question 1 and 10-16 for discussion purposes only.
- Read Miles Part Three. Take good notes throughout your reading for class discussion.
- Using our class discussion notes, choose one story that is presented in at least two of the three Synoptic Gospels. In a 3-4 page paper, examine the similarities and differences between or among the accounts. Be sure to note how each story as presented reflects the broader audience and theological intention of the author and how harmonization has influenced our modern understanding of the story. Marks: Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives. Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives. Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.

### **Session 4 (May)**

In this session, we will examine the Acts of the Apostles as a literary document and as a witness of faith.

We will reflect on what it means that the Synoptic Gospels are part of our sacred story and what that means to us as preachers and teachers of the faith.

We will continue our look at Jesus through “a stained-glass window” in part three of Miles' work.

#### **(Proposed) Homework for Session 1 of Year Two**

- Read the Gospel of John.
- Read Johnson Chapter 24 and answer the study questions at the end of the chapter for discussion purposes only.
- Read Miles Part Four. Take good notes throughout your reading for class discussion.
- Prepare a sermon from any chapter of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or Acts.