

Course Prospectus

For THL 135 Life, Ministry, and Teachings of Jesus

Overview

Through this course, a student encounters the gospels in a holistic manner through a verse-by-verse analysis of the biblical text. Use of a contemporary harmony of the gospels provides the student with both a chronological approach to Jesus ministry and parallel accounts from the four gospels. Through this course, a student encounters the Judeo-Christianity of the Apostolic Period and explores the basic doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth and his teaching of the individuals he prepared as apostolic leaders of the Church of God. The course is an excellent opportunity for serious students of the Bible to develop a working familiarity of the culture of Jesus' day and an understanding of the foundational truth of the Church of God Jesus established.

Course catalog description for this course

This course covers the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the four Gospels. Emphasis is on the analysis of the four Gospels in the context of the social, political, and religious conditions of the first century. Upon completion, students should be able to explain the background, purpose, message, and themes of the Gospels and the significance of Jesus Christ in the first century and beyond. The lecture core of this course is a series of recorded lectures presented by noted television evangelist, author, and pastor of pastors Dr. Roderick C. Meredith.

Prerequisites and corequisites

There are no Prerequisites or Corequisites for this course.

Course credit

Three (3) semester hours.

Instructional objectives

On successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Trace the events and statements involved in Jesus' life in a logical and chronological sequence;
2. Describe the significance of the words and works of Jesus Christ in light of the historical, geographical, and cultural context of the Gospels;
3. Describe the present implications of the basic truths revealed in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ;
4. Show the harmony of the four gospels and dispel any questions of the so-called "contradictory facts" found in each of them;
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how the life and ministry of Christ relates to prophecy, first-century Jewish and Christian life, and beyond;
6. Demonstrate skill in the analysis and exegesis of key Bible passages in the Gospels; and
7. Demonstrate an understanding of God's overall plan of redemption.

Students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities have a learning environment that provides for reasonable

accommodation of their disabilities. Students having a disability requiring an accommodation should inform the instructor through the "Contact Instructor" link on the course home page.

Technology access

This course requires web access and the student has to have an established e-mail account. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. One can download the reader free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

Course evaluation

Student input is welcome for improving this course. Making suggestions by e-mail is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course students have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make e-learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions concerning a student's experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate students letting us know how we can improve our products and services for them and other distance learners.

Textbooks

Textbooks for this course are:

Elwell, Walter A and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

and either

Robertson, A. T. *A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ* (American Standard Version). New York: Harper & Row, 1950;

or

A Thomas, Robert L. and Stanley N. Gundry. *A Harmony of the Gospels* (New American Standard Version). San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

The textbooks in this course are commercial publications. They represent the views and ideas of their authors, editors, and publishers. Living University does not endorse the texts nor vouches for their accuracy. We simply employ them in helping students master the content of the course.

As a Bible student, one needs to consult Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and biblically related magazine or journal articles for information. When doing this a student has to sort out the wheat from the chaff. That is, the student must have sufficient grounding in the Bible to sort out the correct from the incorrect, the plausible from the implausible. This is a critical thinking skill, one we want students to develop further in this course and in all LU courses.

The basic textbook we selected, Elwell and Yarbrough's *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* is a conservative approach written in an easy to read and well laid out fashion. This book has some material that is helpful, and some that is not. In the setting of this course, we want students not only to discern the difference but also to know why there is a difference. Our quest is to help students to "rightly divide the word of God" (II Tim 2:5 KJV).

Moreover, in daily life and particularly in the life of ministers, you will encounter people who identify with the evangelical thinking of this book's authors. For example, many if not most Protestants and Roman Catholics believe that the Kingdom of God exists today and equate it with the church or salvation. We hold that Jesus and the Apostles taught primarily that the Kingdom of God was not to come into being until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Part of a good theological, and biblical, education is coming to understand what others believe and why they believe it. You need to develop sufficient understanding and skills that you can demonstrate and effectively communicate what the truth of God is in such matters.

We will only deal with Chapters 2, 3, and 9 in this course. We plan to use this same text in THL 136 (Acts and the Writings of Paul) and THL 332 (The Biblical Text). Therefore, you should get a reasonable return on your investment. Our suggestion is that you take the time to mark the text correcting errors and underlying helpful points so it can be a useful handbook for you. The paper the publisher selected for this text and its wide margins lend themselves to note taking. We suggest you use a fine point Pilot pen.

Icebreaker assignment

To begin this course, students must complete an icebreaker assignment to introduce themselves to their classmates through the posting of a short autobiography on the course Forum. The icebreaker assignment is due by the eighth day of the semester. Students post their biographies as a reply to the "Bios" topic on the course forum. A student can earn 25 bonus points in this course by doing so "on time." As there are people from all over the world enrolled in this course each autobiography will help all know, understand and appreciate each other. Students are to read and comment on each other's bios throughout the first week of class.

Course requirements and grades

Due dates and extensions

Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

Reading and writing exercises

Refer to "Course outline and assignments" section for reading assignments.

Filing writing assignments

For instructions in how to post assignments, visit the Frequently Asked Questions pages through the link on the course homepage.

Study tips

Distance learning emphasizes self-motivation. The instructor functions as a facilitator with the student as the driving force in mastering course content. Students are encouraged not to put off completing their readings and assignments. While there are many different learning styles, the following strategy should serve the needs of most students.

- Look over assigned readings.
- Read the assigned readings making notes before viewing the assigned lecture.
- Define terms in the assignment. The exams will specifically test basic terminology. Students should develop their biblical and theology vocabulary as they proceed assignment by assignment.
- As students view lectures, they should complete their notes.
- Complete the answers for the writing assignment.
- Each week students should review notes, geographical terms and locations, and the words they defined.
- If a student has a question, ask. Questions should arise in the teaching-learning process. By bringing questions to our attention, students not only acquire assistance but they also maintain the interaction necessary in higher education. Use the Inbox on the course home page to send questions.

Lectures

This course includes several lectures by Dr. Meredith. Links to lectures are in the lessons.

Quizzes and examinations

Each of the nine lessons has an associated online quiz of not more than 28 questions. They are open book quizzes, but under no circumstances are students to print the quiz. An open book quiz is not a workbook exercise. It is a test where the student can consult his or her notes and books. Students have ninety minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes are objective tests (which may include true/false, matching, multiple-choice questions covering lectures, readings, vocabulary words, and geographical terms and places.

News and prophecy

There is significant prophetic material in the Gospels relating to end time events. Technically such matters fall into that area of theology known as eschatology (the study of "last things" including the return of Jesus Christ, the Great Tribulation, the Millennial Kingdom of God, the resurrection of the dead, the future judgments and the eternal state of both the just and the unjust). To aid you in this task and to help you use your time effectively the announcement page of this website has a News & Prophecy feature. Here you will find abstracts of news articles bearing on eschatology. We hope this news segment will help you focus on the many things happening in this world as it proceeds to the end of the age of humankind. Each exam will include five bonus questions drawing on your mastery of the news as it relates to prophecy. To become more informed, we suggest that you also consider regularly viewing online newspapers and news forum resources. We suggest you use the University's Lexis-Nexus link to view national and regional newspapers, wire services, broadcast transcripts, international news, and non-English language sources.

Terms and phrases

Each assignment includes a set of terms and phrases for you to define. This exercise is to help you develop and expand your biblical and theological vocabulary as you proceed through the seventeen assignments and to help you focus on the context of the content you are reading. Examinations will specifically test your mastery of the basic terminology of this course.

For some terms and phrases, we have given a scriptural link. We selected the NKJ, the New King James Version, as our default for scriptural text. When alternate scriptures appear we provide the appropriate link as NASB, KJV, RSV, NIV, and the like.

This course has a glossary. Some, but not all, of the words you are to define are included in this glossary. In any case, will find that accessing a good dictionary is helpful and some dictionaries are online. English words often have a variety of meanings, or nuances of meaning, so be sure you have mastered a word's meaning in terms of the content of the Gospels and your assigned readings.

The Internet can help you in this task. For example, by using <http://www.google.com> you can quickly find the meaning of many terms.

1. Go to <http://www.google.com>
2. In the search box key the following: define: Pharisee
3. Press Enter.
4. The Google search engine then will provide you with various working definitions of the word. It is good practice to always compare these Internet results with your dictionary. The Internet often reflects personal opinions and not fact. So be careful.
5. Now look up definitions of synagogue. Key in define: synagogue in the search box and press Enter.

For fun you might want to try other search engines such as <http://www.yahoo.com> and <http://www.ask.com> and see if you like the results. We think Google works best, but if you find another search engine that does a better job with definitions be sure to let us know. If you want to avoid paying the price for a good dictionary, and besides it is quicker, go online.

Once you have a short working definition of a word commit it to memory. Many students find looking over vocabulary words just as they go to bed at night and as they rise in the morning helps them commit it to memory. Be sure to review your definitions before an examination.

Course forum

When you take a traditional college course, you often have time for interaction with the instructor and other students. The 150+ student lecture classes are, of course, an exception. In e-learning we have to find other ways of facilitating such interaction. In introductory general education courses, such as this one, the Course Forum provides such an opportunity. In this course, you will have five forum topics posted. Your task is to add to the discussion. For credit, you will need to post two comments for each assignment. Your comment includes your identity.

Your job is to thoughtfully address each posted topic, assignment by assignment, by entering your comments on the forum, in a thoughtful positive way, and by so doing participate in a meaningful dialogue on the topic. You may comment on other people's posts. You should do your best to stay on topic and contribute to the discussion. You can earn up to 14 points for each assignment through your participation.

We do not permit proselytizing, inflammatory and defaming remarks or personal messages.

Grading

A course grade will be determined based on the number of points a student has earned over the semester as follows:

- Writing Assignments (nine, each worth 30 points, for a total of 270 points)
- Exams (three, each worth 100 points, for a total of 300 points; online, closed book)
- Quizzes (nine, each worth 40 points, for a total of 360 points; online, open book]
- Forum Topics (five, each worth 14 points, for a total 70 points)
- TOTAL 1,000 points

Posting the autobiography on time can earn a student 25 bonus points. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing.

Grades are in the traditional American style of an A, B, C, D, or F. In distance learning, we believe that the measure of mastery of course subject matter is completion of 80% of the objectives for a course. That means that we want students to earn at least 800 points in this course. If they do not do so then they have not achieved the level of the mastery we would like them to have.

We want this course to be competency-based and so it is possible for the entire class to receive an A or a B. There is no artificial curving of scores in the assignment of grades (if you do not know what that means, do not worry about it). Mastery of the material is what one's goal should be.

Grades, assigned by points, are as follows:

- A 900-1000 points
- B 800-899 points
- C 700-799 points
- D 600-699 points
- F Below 600 points

Academic irregularity

Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another's ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were the writer's own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned.

In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members may refuse to grade such papers, completely or in part, or examinations, and to record each of them as a failure.

If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of F;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University.

Course calendar

<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Readings (this is not an exhaustive list, some additional readings will be added during the semester)</i>
Lesson 1 Introduction	
Topic 1 The Middle East in the Days of Jesus	Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 2 (pp. 39-68) <i>Comments on Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 2</i>
Topic 2 The Gospel Accounts	Robertson §1 (p. 3) or Thomas & Gundry §1 (p. 19)
Topic 3 His Pre-Existence and Birth Preparations	Robertson §§2-9 (pp. 4-9) or Thomas & Gundry §§ 2-11 (pp. 19-26). Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 3 (pp. 19-35) Armstrong - <i>Is Jesus God?</i> Winnail <i>The Real God: Proofs and Promises</i> <i>Comments on Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 3</i>
Topic 4 Jesus' Birth, Boyhood, and Baptism by John	Robertson §§10-24 (pp. 9-20) or Thomas & Gundry §§12-27 (pp. 27-36) Ogwyn - <i>Is Christmas Christian?</i> Meredith - <i>Christian Baptism</i>
Topic 5 The Temptation & His Travel to Capernaum	Robertson §§25-30 (pp. 20-24) or Thomas & Gundry §§28-33 (pp. 37-41) Meredith - <i>Do You Believe the True Gospel?</i>
Lesson 2 Christ at Jerusalem, in Samaria and His Arrival at Galilee	
Topic 1 First Cleansing of the Temple at the Passover	Robertson §31 (p. 25) or Thomas & Gundry §34 (pp. 41-42)
Topic 2 Nicodemus Seeks Out Jesus at Night	Robertson §32 (pp. 25-26) or Thomas & Gundry §36 (pp. 42-43) Meredith - <i>Your Ultimate Destiny</i> Ogwyn - <i>What Do You Mean – "Born Again"?</i> Wakefield - <i>God Is Creating a Family</i>
Topic 3 John the Baptist Superseded by Jesus	Robertson §33 (pp. 26-27) or Thomas & Gundry §37 (pp. 43-44)
Topic 4 Jesus Departure from Judea, in Samaria at Jacob's Well and Sychar, and His Arrival in Galilee	Robertson §§34-36 (pp. 27-29) or Thomas & Gundry §§38-42 (pp. 44-46)
Lesson 3 Beginning of Christ's Ministry in Galilee	
Topic 1 Opposition at Home and a New Headquarters	Robertson §§37-40 (pp. 31-32) or Thomas & Gundry §§43-46 (pp. 47-49)

Topic 2 Disciples Called and Ministry Throughout Galilee	Robertson §§41-48 (pp. 33-42) or Thomas & Gundry §§47-56 (pp. 49-57)
Topic 3 Sabbath Controversies and Withdrawal	Robertson §§49-52 (pp. 42-47) or Thomas & Gundry §§57-62 (pp. 57-62) Meredith - <i>Which Day is the Christian Sabbath?</i> Meredith - <i>The Holy Days—God's Master Plan</i>
Topic 4 Appointment of The Twelve	Robertson §53 (pp. 47-48) or Thomas & Gundry §63 (p. 63)
Topic 5 Sermon on the Mount	Robertson §54 (pp. 48-55) or Thomas & Gundry §§64-72 (pp. 63-71) Ames - <i>Prophecy Vs. the Gospel?</i> Armstrong - <i>Just What Do You Mean—Kingdom of God?</i> Comments on Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 9

EXAM 1 Covering Lessons 1-3 (100 points). Time for completion: 2 hours (120 minutes).

Lesson 4 Jewish Conflicts & The Kingdom of God

Topic 1 Growing Reputation and Emphasis on Repentance	Robertson §§55-59 (pp. 55-60) or Thomas & Gundry §§73-103 (pp. 62-100) Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 9 (pp. 137-151)
Topic 2 Public Rejection by Jewish Leaders	Robertson §§60-63 (pp. 61-64) or Thomas & Gundry §§78-81 (pp. 76-80)
Topic 3 Parables and The Kingdom of God	Robertson §64 (pp. 64-70) or Thomas & Gundry §§82-92 (pp. 80-86)
Topic 4 Continuing Opposition	Robertson §§65-69 (pp. 70-77) or Thomas & Gundry §§93-97 (pp. 87-94)
Topic 5 Final Galilean Ministry	Robertson §§70-71 (pp. 78-84) or Thomas & Gundry §§98-103 (pp. 94-100)

Lesson 5 The Ministry of Christ Around Galilee

Topic 1 Teaching Around the Sea of Galilee	Robertson §§72-77 (pp. 85-94) or Thomas & Gundry §§104-112 (pp. 101-112)
Topic 2 Ministry in Gentile Territories	Robertson §§78-95 (pp. 95-113) or Thomas & Gundry §§113-132 (pp. 112-129)
Topic 3 Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem	Robertson §§96-101 (pp. 114-120) or Thomas & Gundry §§133-138 (pp. 130-135)

Lesson 6 Concluding Ministry in Judea, Perea and Jerusalem

Topic 1 Later Judean Ministry	Robertson §§102-111 (pp. 120-130) or Thomas & Gundry §§139-160 (pp. 135-150) Ames - <i>The Unpardonable Sin</i> Armstrong - <i>The "Unpardonable" Sin</i>
Topic 2 Perea Ministry	Robertson §§112-127 (pp. 131-151) or Thomas & Gundry §§161-184 (pp. 151-173) Armstrong - <i>Lazarus and the Rich Man</i>
Topic 3 At Jerusalem Before Passover	Robertson §§128-142 (pp. 152-188) or Thomas & Gundry §§185-210 (pp. 174-205) Meredith - <i>Prophecy Fulfilled: God's Hand in World Affairs</i> Ames - <i>The Middle East in Prophecy</i>

EXAM 2 Covering Lessons 4-6 (100 points). Time for completion: 2 hours (120 minutes).

Lesson 7 The Last Supper, His Arrest and Trials

Topic 1 The First Christian Passover	Robertson §§143-152 (pp. 189-204) or Thomas & Gundry §§211-226 (pp. 206-222)
Topic 2 His Arrest and Trials	Robertson §§153-162 (pp. 205-226) or Thomas & Gundry §§227-235 (pp. 223-239)

Lesson 8 The Death of Jesus Christ

Topic 3 The Crucifixion	Robertson §§163-166 (pp. 226-235) or Thomas & Gundry §§236-241 (pp. 240-249)
Topic 4 His Interment in a New Tomb	Robertson §§167-168 (pp. 235-238) or Thomas & Gundry §§242-243 (pp. 250-251)

Lesson 9 The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ

Topic 1 The Resurrection	Robertson §§169-172 pp. 239-242) or Thomas & Gundry §§244-247 (pp. 252-254) Ogwyn - <i>The Resurrection Was Not on Easter Sunday!</i>
Topic 2 Post-Resurrection Appearances & Ascension	Robertson §§173-184 (pp. 242-252) or Thomas & Gundry §§248-259 (pp. 254-264) Elwell & Yarbrough Chapter 8 (pp. 117-136)

EXAM 3 Covering Lessons 7-9 (100 points). Time for completion: 2 hours (120 minutes).
