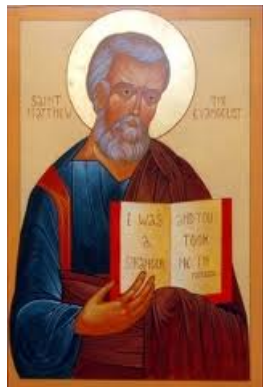


BRIERCREST

BLST 721 Studies in the Gospel of Matthew
Spring 2020



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Course Dates: May 4-8, 2020

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Early in the church's history, Matthew's Gospel became the place to turn to encounter Jesus' teaching and his mission. This course offers an introduction to contemporary Matthean scholarship and to the critical study of the Gospels but focuses on a close reading of Matthew's Gospel itself. Special attention will be devoted to the theology that emerges from this Gospel and to its importance for the church today.

COURSE TEXTS

Aland, Kurt, ed. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1982.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Discipleship*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 4. Translated from the German edition edited by Martin Kuske and Ilse Tödt by Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss. English edition edited by Geoffrey B. Kelly and John D. Godsey. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.

Boxall, Ian. *Discovering Matthew: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

France, R. T. *Matthew*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- have become familiar with the major critical approaches to the Gospels and be able to assess their relative strengths and weaknesses for Gospels study

- have been introduced to some of the key disputes that occupy contemporary Matthean scholarship
- be able to sketch the development of Matthew's story line to the degree that they can locate any passage from Matthew in that story
- be able to discuss several of the central distinctives of Matthew's Gospel
- understand and be able to discuss critically the primary interpretive options in selected texts in the First Gospel
- be able to discuss Matthew's portrayal of the identity and mission of Jesus
- be able to discuss the understanding of the church and its mission that emerges from this Gospel

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Date	Text	Secondary Reading	Class Topic
05-04	Matthew 1.1-17	France 2007, 14-22	Jesus' Origins: Jesus and Israel's History
	Matthew 1.18-2.23	France 2007, 40-45	Jesus' Origins: Jesus and Israel's Prophets
	Matthew 3.1-17		John and Jesus
	Matthew 4.1-25	France 2007, 144-52	'From That Time On . . .'
	Matthew 5.1-16	France 2007, 153-56	The Sermon through the Centuries
05-05	Matthew 5.17-48		Jesus and Torah
	Matthew 6.1-18		The Kingdom and Righteousness: I
	Matthew 6.19-34	France 2007, 263-72	The Kingdom and Righteousness: II
	Matthew 7.1-29	France 2007, 273-78	The Two Ways
	Matthew 8.1-22	France 2007, 299-302	The Authoritative Deeds of Israel's Messiah: I
05-06	Matthew 8.23-9.35		The Authoritative Deeds of Israel's Messiah: II
	Matthew 9.36-11.1	France 2007, 395-98	The 'First Commission'
	Matthew 11.2-12.50		The Shifting Tide
	Matthew 13.1-53	France 2007, 498-501	The Kingdom in Parables
	Matthew 13.54-15.39		A Prophet and More Than a Prophet
05-07	Matthew 16.1-28	France 2007, 620-25	Towards Jerusalem

	Matthew 17.1-18.35	France 2007, 672- 75; 689-99	Life in the Community
	Matthew 19.1-20.34		The First and the Last
	Matthew 21.1-27		The Prophet Enters the City
	Matthew 21.28-22.46		The Rejection of the Prophet(s)
05-08	Matthew 23.1-25.46	France 2007, 889-94	Indictment and Judgement, Eschatology and Ethics
	Matthew 26.1-75		Betrayal, Arrest, and Trial
	Matthew 27.1-65	France 2007, 1079-83	Crucifixion
	Matthew 28.1-20	France 2007, 1095-1103	Resurrection and Commission

ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-Course Assignments	Primary Text Reading: The Gospel of Matthew (2x)	
	Book Review: Bonhoeffer	15%
	Book Review: Boxall	15%
	Working Paper	15%
Mid-Course Assignments	Primary Text Reading: The Gospel of Matthew	10%
	Presentation: Working Paper	5%
Post-Course Assignment	Either: Term Paper	40%
	Or: Sermon/Sermon Series Outline	

Pre-Course Assignments:

- 1.0 Primary Text Reading: Each student is responsible to read the entire Gospel of Matthew twice before the course begins. This reading is designed to help students become familiar with the broad outlines of the story that the evangelist tells, but also provides an opportunity for preliminary research for the term paper.
- 2.0 Review Essay on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (15%). Guidelines will be posted to Canvas by January 1. This review is due **April 25** and should be submitted online, via Canvas.
- 3.0 Review Essay on Ian Boxall's *Discovering Matthew* (15%). Guidelines will be posted to Canvas by January 1. This review is due **April 28** and should be submitted online, via Canvas.

4.0 Working Paper (20%). This assignment is due **May 2** and should be submitted online, via Canvas.

Each student will prepare an exegetical working paper, not to exceed three pages in length, single-spaced. These papers will focus on one of the textual units we are scheduled to discuss (e.g., Matthew 28.1-20; see Course Outline) and serve as a basis for initiating class discussion on the texts with which they deal. Students should inform the instructor in writing of the text they prefer to work on, which will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Your paper should follow this format:

- **Literary Context.** What role does this text play in structure of the wider narrative? Does our author anticipate, or return to, important themes?
- **Outline of the passage.** Not just a listing of the contents ("and then...and then..."). Try to sketch a short outline that illumines the structure and function of the text. How are its parts related to one another and how do they work?
- **Optional: Text-Critical Issues.** If you read Greek, you may choose to include a very brief survey of the textual issues in the passage; where you judge them significant, include a brief discussion of the relevant evidence.
- **Key exegetical issues.** Identify the major exegetical problems in the passage. Do not labor over every jot and tittle; labor over only those jots and tittles that materially affect the interpretation of the text. Seek to identify the crucial particulars of the text which either demand interpretation or facilitate it. Having identified them, briefly enumerate possible resolutions to the problems and indicate how one might choose among the possibilities.
- **Significance of the passage.** Here you have scope for theological reflection and originality. What are the important questions (theological, pastoral, personal) raised for you by the passage? How might the text be used (or misused) in preaching? Students with an interest in the history of theological interpretation or in the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the text might want to include here some reflections on how the text has been read and applied by interpreters who have preceded us in the faith (patristic period, Reformation, etc.).
- **Discussion questions.** Formulate three incisive questions about the text that might be used to initiate and guide class discussion.
- **Sources Consulted.** Include a working bibliography. If you find secondary material that is especially helpful to you in reading the text, please draw that to our attention.

Mid-Course Assignments:

- 5.0 Primary Text Reading: Read the Gospel a third time in smaller portions following the course outline and, in preparation for our class discussion, post one thoughtful question to the course website about either the Matthean text(s) under discussion or (for texts where you'll read France's commentary) France's reflections (see further secondary reading below).
- 6.0 Secondary Reading (10%): Prior to class each day students will read short excerpts from one of the course texts (France) in preparation for our class discussion.
- 7.0 Working Paper: Presentation. Students will be given 5 minutes at the beginning of class to introduce the passage (this means, of course, that they will have to choose to discuss only part[s] of their working paper) and will conclude by leading us in prayer (or song), ideally leading us in reflection on some part of the text.

Post-Course Assignments:

- 8.0 Students will complete their work for the course in one of two ways.
- 8.1 Sermon Series Outline/Sermon (35%): Students who choose this option will:
- 8.1.1 Plan a series of 8-12 sermons based on one part of Matthew's Gospel (typically 3-5 chapters). Students will submit a short essay of 1200-1500 words that 1) briefly examines the rationale for a series based on these chapters in Matthew's narrative; 2) discusses the major themes that come to special prominence in this part of the Gospel; 3) outlines the series.
 - 8.1.2 Submit a manuscript (of approximately 2000 words) for one of the sermons in the series. Naturally, the sermon should emerge from careful study but it should be presented in oral style as a sermon and not as a term paper (see the suggestions will be posted to the course site). Both parts of the assignment, which is due July 8, 2020, will be submitted online, via Canvas.
- 8.2 Term Paper (35%). Students who choose this option will write an essay (of approximately 3500-4000 words), addressing one of the topics listed below (or one of your choice approved by the instructor). This paper is due July 8, 2020, and should be submitted online, via Canvas.
- o Characterization and Reader Response: Matthew's Portrait of the 'Marginal Characters'
 - o Matthew's Portrait of Discipleship
 - o The Use of Israel's Scriptures in [a selected text]
 - o The Final Judgement in Matthew's Narrative
 - o The Christology of the First Gospel
 - o The Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew's Vision
 - o John the Baptist's Role in Matthew's Gospel

- o Plot and Reader Response: The Gentiles in Matthew's Story
- o The Mission to Israel in Matthew's Gospel
- o The Death of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel
- o Jesus and the Law
- o Jesus and the Purity Code
- o The God of Israel in Matthew's Gospel
- o Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Matthew's Gospel
- o Wealth and Poverty in the Gospel of Matthew
- o The Date of the Composition of Matthew's Gospel
- o The Relationship of Matthew's Gospel to Mark's
- o The 'Matthean Community': Vital Context or Scholarly Invention?
- o An Exegesis of . . . a text of your choice, approved by the instructor (e.g., Matt 5.38-42; 9.2-8; 17.24-27; 19.3-12).

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Course Schedules

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

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