



BLST 721 Studies in the Gospel of Matthew

Fall 2024

Professor: Wesley Olmstead

Email: wolmstead@briercrest.ca

Phone: (306) 801-6409

Course Dates: October 21-25, 2024

Course Delivery Method: In-Person Modular

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.

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>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- o have become familiar with the major critical approaches to the Gospels and be able to assess their relative strengths and weaknesses for Gospels study
- o have been introduced to some of the key disputes that occupy contemporary Matthean scholarship
- o 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
- o be able to discuss several of the central distinctives of Matthew's Gospel

- o understand and be able to discuss critically the primary interpretive options in selected texts in the First Gospel
- o be able to discuss Matthew's portrayal of the identity and mission of Jesus
- o be able to discuss the understanding of the church and its mission that emerges from this Gospel

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Date	Text	Class Topic	Seminar
10-21	Matthew 1.1-17	Jesus' Origins: Jesus and Israel's History	#1 Jesus and the Law: Snodgrass 1996, 99-127 Saldarini 1994, 124-64 Deines 2008, 53-84 Konradt 2022, 75-100
	Matthew 1.18-2.23	Jesus' Origins: Jesus and Israel's Prophets	
	Matthew 3.1-17	John and Jesus	
	Matthew 4.1-25	'From That Time On . . .'	
	Matthew 5.1-16	The Sermon through the Centuries	
10-22	Matthew 5.17-48	Jesus and Torah	
	Matthew 6.1-18	The Kingdom and Righteousness: I	
	Matthew 6.19-34	The Kingdom and Righteousness: II	
	Matthew 7.1-29	The Two Ways	
	Matthew 8.1-22	The Authoritative Deeds of Israel's Messiah: I	
10-23	Matthew 8.23-9.35	The Authoritative Deeds of Israel's Messiah: II	#2 The Matthean Community: Saldarini 1991, 38-61 Stanton 1996, 376-94 Bauckham 1999, 865-82 Hagner 2003, 193-209
	Matthew 9.36-11.1	The 'First Commission'	
	Matthew 11.2-12.50	The Shifting Tide	
	Matthew 13.1-53	The Kingdom in Parables	
	Matthew 13.54-15.39	A Prophet and More Than a Prophet	
10-24	Matthew 16.1-28	Towards Jerusalem	#3 Jesus and Judgement: Stanton 1992, 207-31 Luz 1996, 271-310 Grindheim 2008, 313-31 Runesson 2016, 414-28
	Matthew 17.1-18.35	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)	
10-25	Matthew 23.1-25.46	Indictment and Judgement, Eschatology and Ethics	#4 Jesus and Israel: McKnight 1993, 55-79 Saldarini 1994, 44-67 Olmstead 2011, 115-32 Konradt 2014, 167-202
	Matthew 26.1-75	Betrayal, Arrest, and Trial	
	Matthew 27.1-65	Crucifixion	
	Matthew 28.1-20	Resurrection and Commission	

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments	Primary Text Reading: The Gospel of Matthew (3x)	
	Book Review: Bonhoeffer	15%
	Book Review: Boxall	15%
	Seminar Preparation	12.5%
Mid-Course Assignments	Primary Text Reading/Questions: The Gospel of Matthew	5%
	Seminar Leadership and Participation	12.5%
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 three times before the course begins (due **October 7, 9, and 11** respectively). 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 September 1. This review is due **October 14** 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 September 1. This review is due **October 16** and should be submitted online, via Canvas.
- 4.0 Seminar Preparation (12.5%). Each student will:
 - 4.1 Prepare for and participate in a series of seminars, as scheduled in the course outline above (students must complete all the readings to be eligible to attend).
 - 4.2 Serve as a panelist on one of the four seminars. In preparation for this, students will:
 - 4.2.1 Select one essay (I will aim to keep a current roster posted on Canvas so that students can see which essays are still available) and submit a handout (maximum, 2 pages) that outlines the argument of the essay to circulate to the other members of the class. This handout is **due October 18**.
 - 4.2.2 Preparing 2-3 substantive questions for each of the other panelists. These questions, which will not be for general distribution to the class, are **due October 18**.
 - 4.3 Prepare to participate in the other three panels by submitting two thoughtful questions that engage the argument of each essay (due **October 18**).

Mid-Course Assignments:

- 5.0 Primary Text Reading (5%): Read the Gospel a fourth time in smaller portions following the course outline and, in preparation for our class discussion, post one thoughtful question to the course website about the Matthean text(s) under discussion.
- 6.0 Seminar Participation (12.5%). Each student will:
 - 6.1 Share leadership of one of the seminars. This will entail:

- 6.1.1 Presenting an oral summary (7-8 minutes) of the argument of the scholar she or he is representing.
 - 6.1.2 Representing the author of that essay in the discussion that follows by responding to questions on her or his behalf.
 - 6.1.3 Offering a very brief (no more than 1 minute) statement summarizing: 1) her or his preliminary conclusions with respect to the central issues under discussion; 2) matters that demand further attention.
- 6.2 Participate in the other seminars by putting questions to the panelists that address the most important relevant methodological, exegetical, historical, and theological issues.

Post-Course Assignments:

7.0 Students will complete their work for the course in one of two ways.

7.1 Sermon Series Outline/Sermon (40%): Students who choose this option will:

- 7.1.1 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.
- 7.1.2 Submit a manuscript (of approximately 2500 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 that will be posted to the course site). Both parts of the assignment, which is due **December 20, 2024**, will be submitted online, via Canvas.

7.2 Term Paper (40%). 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 **December 20, 2024**, 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).
- o The Reception of ... a text of your choice by ... (Both the text and the interpreter/community should be approved by the instructor.)
- o A Critical Review Essay of (a major Matthean monograph approved by the instructor)

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

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent 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 (1) 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.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. 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.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

Course Schedules

Modular 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

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#) and the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

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